

Allan Kardec

The Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

January 1861

Bulletin of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

Excerpts from the minutes

Friday, November 16th, 1860

(Private session)

Admission of two new members.

Multiple communications:

1st – Several dissertations obtained outside the sessions are read.

2nd – Letter received from Mr. de Porry, from Marseille, who sends the second edition of his poem *Uranie* as a gift to the Society. The Society thanks the author and is happy to see he has taken the same appreciation of his talent and applied them to spiritist ideas. These ideas adorn a graceful form of poetry and have a charm that makes them more easily accepted by those who could be shocked by the severity of dogmatic expressions.

3rd – Letter from Mr. L... providing new details about the rapping and obsessing spirit that has already been discussed by the Society (see report below).

4th – Letter from Mrs. G... from the Indre Department, about pranks and plundering that has victimized them for several years, attributed to a malicious spirit. The events involve six sisters and despite every precaution that they might have taken, their clothes are thrown out of their drawers, although duly locked, and frequently torn apart.

5th – Mr. Th... reports a case of violent obsession exerted upon a medium by a bad spirit, who he was able to dominate and expel though. The spirit wrote to Mr. Th...: *"I hate you because you dominate me."* He has not showed up ever since and the medium has no longer been molested in the exercise of his mediumship.

6th – Mr. Allan Kardec cites a personal case of remarkable accuracy related to an indication given by the spirits: in a conversation that took place the other day with his familiar spirit, he was told: *"You will find in today's Le Siècle an article about this subject which answer your question. We were the ones who inspired the author with the thesis that he exposes, given his adhesion to the great humanitarian reforms in preparation."*

The article that was unknown to Mr. Allan Kardec and to the medium was in fact in the referred periodical, under the designated title, demonstrating that the spirits may be aware of earthly publications.

Works carried out in the session:

Spontaneous teachings. Communication received by Mr. Didier, signed by Cazotte. Another communication by Mrs. Costel, with complaints from a suffering and selfish spirit.

Evocations:

Second conversation with the gastronome spirit who used the name Balthazar and that someone thought to have known by the name of Mr. G... de la R..., confirmed by the spirit.

Multiple questions:

Questions addressed to St. Louis about the rapping spirit mentioned in Mr. L... letter, as well as the case of the harassing spirit of Mrs. G... and sisters. As for the latter St. Louis acknowledges it to be easier to moralize him since he is more mischievous than a dangerous spirit.

Friday, November 23rd, 1860

General session

Multiple communications:

Some messages received outside the session were read:

- A sinner enters the spiritual world, received by Mrs. Costel and signed by Novel;
- The punishment of the selfish, by the same lady. This message is related to another from the same spirit, obtained in the previous session;
- Another message about the free-will, signed by Marsillac. Thoughts from the *Spirit of Truth* about the communications regarding the punishment of the selfish, received by Mr. M. C...

Works carried out in the session:

Spontaneous teachings:

1st – The family leprechaun, signed by Charles Nodier, received by Mrs. Costel;

2nd – Parable of Lazarus, signed by Lamennais, received by Mr. A. Didier;

3rd – The spirit of Alfred de Musset is introduced through Ms. Eugenie; he offers to discuss a subject chosen by the audience; since he was asked to choose it himself he gives a remarkable dissertation about the consolations of Spiritism. He then offers to respond to questions and deals with the following themes: What is the influence of poetry on Spiritism? Will there be a Spiritist art, as there has been a Pagan and a Christian art? Women's role in the XIX century?

Evocations:

Evocation of Cazotte who had spontaneously manifested in the previous session. Several questions were addressed to him about the gift of premonition that he seems to have had when alive.

Several questions and problems:

About the spirits' ubiquity in visual manifestations;

About the spirits of darkness, regarding the manifestations of Mr. Squire, that can only be produced in the dark.

Note: We will deal with this subject in a special article and we will refer to Mr. Squire.

Mr. Jobard reads three charming poems of his authorship: *Le Bonheur des Martyrs*, *L'Oiseau de Paradis* and *L'Annexion*, the last one being a fable.

Friday, November 30th, 1860

Private session

Administrative matters:

Collective letter, signed by several members, with respect to Mr. L... The Society accepted the conclusions from the Committee's report.

A letter from Mr. Sol..., requesting to be dismissed from his position as a Committee member, due to his frequent business trips that keep him away from Paris most of the year.

The Society regrets Mr. Sol... decision but feels happy to be able to keep him as a member. Mr. President is assigned with the task of responding in the following terms: His replacement shall be done in due course.

Multiple communications:

1st – Spontaneous dissertation by St. Louis with explanations about ubiquity. Discussion about this communication.

2nd – Another one signed by Charles Nodier, obtained by a medium uninvolved with the Society and transmitted by Mr. Didier Sr., regarding the article against Spiritism in the *Journal des Débats*.

3rd – Mr. D... from the Vienne Department insistently asks that Mr. Jean-Baptiste D..., his father in law, be evoked. The Society never attends such requests when the objective is of private

interest, particularly when the persons involved are absent or when those persons are unknown to the members. Nevertheless, considering the dignifying character and the official position of the corresponding member; the special circumstances surrounding the deceased and his life-long sustained atheism, the Society decides that such evocation may be useful as a subject of study. As a consequence, he was included in the day's schedule.

4th – Several members reported an interesting phenomenon of physical manifestation witnessed by them. It consists of the lifting of a person only by mediumistic influence of two young ladies, age 15 and 16 years old respectively, who place two fingers on the frame of a chair to have it raised nearly 3 ft. from the floor, regardless of the weight of the person sitting in the chair, as if it was something extremely light. The phenomenon was repeated several times and always with the same result. The explanation will be given in a special article.

5th – Mr. Jobard reads his article entitled *La Conversion d'un paysan*.

Works carried out in the session:

Spontaneous teachings:

Dissertation about the ubiquity, from Ms. Huet, signed by Channing.

Another from Mr. A. Didier, signed by André Chénier, about the article in the *Journal des Débats*.

And another dissertation signed by Raquel, received by Mrs. Costel.

A remarkable fact about two previous communications is that when a given subject of some importance is listed to be discussed on a given day it is common to have it discussed by several spirits through different mediums and in different places. It seems that each spirit who is interested in the subject wants to contribute to the teaching which is a consequence of the communications.

Evocations:

1st – Mr. Jean-Baptiste D..., mentioned above, and his brother, both materialists and atheists. The situation of the first one who committed suicide is deplorable.

2nd – Evocation of Mr. C... de B..., from Brussels, following the request of his personal acquaintance Mr. Jobard.

Friday, December 7th, 1860

Private session

Admission of Mr. C..., a Professor from Paris, as a member.

Several communications:

Reading of a dissertation signed by the *Spirit of Truth*, obtained in a private session, at Mr. Allan Kardec's house, with respect to the definition of art and the distinction between Pagan, Christian and Spiritist art.

Mr. Theub... complements the definition saying that one can consider pagan art as the expression of the material feeling; Christian art as the expression of expiation and the Spiritist art as the expression of victory.

Works carried out in the session:

Spontaneous teaching:

Dissertation signed by Lamennais, through Mr. Didier.

Another dissertation through Ms. Huet, signed by Charles Nodier, in which he continues to develop the subject initiated on August 24th, 1860, although nobody had any memory of that fact.

And another signed by Georges, received by Mrs. Costel.

Evocations:

Dr. Kane, American traveler and explorer of the North Pole, who discovered an open sea just beyond the polar glacial belt.

Several questions:

Questions addressed to Charles Nodier about the causes that may influence the communications in certain sessions, particularly when the spirits don't show their usual eloquence. The point was discussed.

Friday, December 14th, 1860

General session

Mr. Indermuhle, from Berne, pays tribute to the Society with a German brochure published in Glaris, in 1855, entitled *L'Eternite n'est plus un secret* or *Revelations les plus evidentes sur le monde des Esprits*.

Several communications:

1st – Reading of a very interesting evocation and several spiritist dissertations obtained outside of the sessions.

2nd – The event of visual manifestation referred in the letter of Mr. Indermuhle addressed to the Society.

3rd – Personal fact that occurred with Mr. Allan Kardec and that can be considered as a proof of identity of the spirit of a former character. Ms. J... received several communications with John the Evangelist, always with a very characteristic writing and completely different from her usual way of writing. At her request, Mr. Allan Kardec evoked that spirit instead through Mrs. Costel, it was attested that the writing had absolutely the same traces as that through Ms. J..., although the new medium did not know about the fact; besides, the movement of the hand showed in both cases a rare smoothness, constituting a similarity; finally, the answers agreed in all points with those obtained through Ms. J... and there wasn't anything in the language that was not at the level of the evoked spirit.

4th – News sent by Mr. D... about the remarkable case of a farmer who had a vision and a revelation a few days before his death.

Works carried out in the session:

Spiritist spontaneous communications:

Three characters: Hamlet, Tartuffe and Don Juan, message by Mr. A. Didier, signed by Gerard de Nerval.

Fantasy, through Mrs. Costel, signed by Alfred de Musset.

The trial, by Ms. Eugenie, signed by Leo X.

Evocation of the above mentioned farmer. He gives some explanations about his visions. The spelling issues and the language very similar to a country person constitute a remarkable fact.

Several questions addressed to St. Louis about issues related to this evocation.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

January 1861

The Mediums' Book

This book was announced long ago but its publication was postponed due to the importance of the subject, to finally be released between January 5th and 10th by Mr. Didier & Co. editors and booksellers, *Rue Quai des Augustins, 35*¹. It is the complement of *The Spirits' Book* and contains the experimental part of Spiritism, as the first contains the philosophical part.

In this book are the results of long experiences and laborious studies, as we try to clarify all questions related to the practice of the manifestations. It contains the theoretical explanations of all phenomena and the conditions required for their occurrence, according to the spirits. The part related to the exercise and development of the mediumship, however, was the object of special attention from our side.

Experimental Spiritism is prone to many more difficulties than generally thought and the hurdles that we find are innumerable. That is the reason for so many deceptions from the part of those who get involved with such practice without experience and without the required knowledge. Our objective was to forearm against such hurdles that are not always free from inconveniences by those who venture themselves through this new terrain without caution. We could not have forgotten such a capital point and as such we gave the subject the attention equivalent to its importance.

The inconveniences are almost always originated from the lightheartedness with which such a serious issue is handled. The spirits, all of them, are the souls of those who have already lived. Sooner or later we will infallibly share their environment. Thus, every spiritist manifestation, intelligent or not, has the objective of putting us in touch with those very souls. Since we pay respect to their physical remains, with even more reason we must respect the surviving intelligent being who is the true individuality. When we transformer the manifestations into pastime games we fail them with the respect that perhaps we ourselves may demand one day, and that never goes unpunished when violated.

The initial moment of curiosity caused by these strange phenomena is over; now that we know the source, let us avoid its profanation with inappropriate jokes and let us strive to find in them the necessary

1 Equally found in the office of the Spiritist Review, at Rue de Sainte-Ane, 59 – passage Sainte-Ane, large volume, in-18, 500 pages, Paris 3.5 francs, by mail 4 francs.

teachings that will ensure our future happiness. The field is really wide open and the objective very important to deserve our full attention.

Up until now our efforts have been dedicated to drive Spiritism through this serious avenue. We will be plentifully rewarded for our care and vigilance if this new book can contribute to avoid having Spiritism veered off from its providential objective by making it even better understood.

This book, no doubt, will raise criticism from those who are displeased by the severity of its principles, as from those who already accuse us of creating a school of Spiritism, since they see things from another point of view. If *creating a school of this science* is a way to find a valuable and useful objective to humanity, we believe to have the right of feeling flattered by the accusation. However, such a school does not require any other leader besides the common sense of the masses and the wisdom of the good spirits who created it, regardless. That is why we reject the honor of having founded it; nonetheless we are happy for being under its flag; aspiring the modest title as its promoter.

If a name is needed we will then write on its facade: *School of Moral and Philosophical Spiritism*, and invite all those in need of hope and consolation.

Allan Kardec

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

January 1861

***“La bibliographie Catholique”* against Spiritism**

Up until now Spiritism had not been seriously attacked. When certain writers of periodicals in the press gave it an air of their attention, in their leisure time, they did so to ridicule it. Whether it be about filling out the space of a column, producing an article of a given number of lines, regardless of the subject and as long as it fits the space properly. *“What can I say about it? Should I discuss this or that? That is what the editor of the entertaining journal asks himself. No, not this: it is too serious. The other one is something overly spoken about. Should I invent an authentic adventure of high society or a popular one? Nothing comes to mind in those fifteen minutes and the column with the scandal of the week is still empty. Ah! I had an idea! I found the subject! I saw somewhere the title of a book talking about the spirits and everywhere there are people foolish enough to take it seriously. What are the spirits? I know nothing about it. But who cares! It must be funny. For starters I don’t believe absolutely in spirits since I have never seen them and even if I had seen them I would not have believed because that is impossible. Hence, no man of wisdom may believe in such things. Either this is illogical or I don’t know myself. Let us then talk about the spirits since they are in fashion these days. This matter as any other will entertain our readers. The subject is very simple: There is no spirits; they cannot and must not exist, then everyone who believes in them is mad. Now, time to get to work and embellish this. Oh! My good spirit! How can I thank you for such inspiration! You spare me a great embarrassment since I need this article for tomorrow and I had nothing.”*

Then comes a serious person and says: “One must not joke about serious things; this is more serious than initially thought; nobody should believe that this is something that disappears easily. Such belief is inherent to humanity which has always believed in the marvelous at all times, in the super natural, in the fantastic. Who would doubt that in the XIX century, in this century of enlightenment and progress, even after Voltaire had clearly demonstrated that the emptiness waits for us, and after so many wise men had sought and not found the soul, who would guess that people still believe in spirits; in turning tables; in witches and wizards; in the power of Merlin, the enchanter; in the divining rod; in Mademoiselle Lenormand, the fortune teller? Oh Humanity! Oh Humanity! Where shall you go if I don’t come to help you and pull you away from the swamp of superstition?”

They unsuccessfully tried to kill the Spirits by ridicule. Far from that, the contagious disease made unceasing progress; ridicule seems to revive it and if it is not eliminated it may soon have all of mankind infected. Since this method, usually so effective has become powerless, it is now time for the scientists to get involved and stop it once and for all.

Bantering is not the reason. We speak on behalf of science. Let us demonstrate that men have been foolish in all epochs for believing that there is a power above them, that they could not overpower nature. Let us demonstrate to them that everything attributed to supernatural forces can be explained by the

simple laws of Physiology: that the survival of the soul and its ability to communicate with those alive is an illusion and that the belief in an afterlife is sheer madness. If people are not convinced after digesting four volumes of good reasons, we can only regret the fate of humanity that instead of progressing, quickly moves backwards towards the barbarism of the Middle Ages and shortly then to its downfall.

Mr. Figuier should hide his face since he has so ostentatiously announced his book, highly praised by the champions of materialism, and which produced a result quite contrary to what he expected.

But here comes a new champion who asserts to crush Spiritism in another way: it is Mr. Georges Gandy, editor of *La Bibliographie Catholique*, who throws his hat into the ring, in the name of threatened religion. That is a good one! Religion threatened by something that you call a utopia! It means that you have so little faith in its strength that you suppose it is vulnerable enough to be shaken by the ideas of a few dreamers. Do you consider such an enemy so terrible to the point of attacking it with so much rage and fury? Will you achieve better results than the others?

We doubt it since rage is a bad adviser. In case you are successful in scaring a few feeble souls aren't you afraid of arousing the curiosity of an even larger number of other people? Consider the following: in a town with a certain number of spiritists and a few private groups dealing with the manifestations, a priest once gave a scathing sermon against what he called the devil's work, pretending that he alone went to speak at these satanic meetings, whose members were all notoriously doomed to eternal damnation. What happened next? On the very next day a good number of your listeners started to seek those spiritist gatherings, wanting to hear the devil, curious about what he could tell them, since you had spoken so much about it that your listeners were no longer afraid. Well then, they saw serious people in those meetings, respectable, educated, and praying to God, by the way, something that they had not done since their first communion; people believing in their souls, in its immortality, in future penalties and rewards, working to better themselves; striving to practice Christ's moral, not saying anything bad of anybody, even of those who project hate towards them. These people then understood that if the devil was teaching these things the reason was that the devil had converted.

When they saw the treatment of their dead friends and relatives with respect and reverence, and that they were given good advice and consolation, it was then impossible to believe that such gatherings were offices of Satan, particularly considering that they did not see owls, black cats, crocodiles, books of witchcraft, tripods, magic wands or any other accessory of sorcery, not even an old woman with a long and twisted chin and nose.

They also wanted to speak, one with his mother, the other with a dear son, and when recognizing them, it seemed difficult to believe that the mother and the son were devils. Happy for having the proof of their existence and the certainty that they would meet again in a better world, they asked themselves what was the objective of those who tried to scare them away? This led them to reflections that they had never thought before. The result was that they liked these places where they found consolation better than the other ones that scared them to death.

That priest, as we have just seen, took the wrong path, leading us to say: better to have an enemy than an unfit friend. Does Mr. Georges Gandy hope to be happier? We reproduce below his text, literally, for the enlightenment of our readers:

"At all great trying times of the Church and its future triumphs there were always diabolical conspiracies where the actions of the demons were visible and tangible. Sorcery and magic had never been so strong in the heart of Paganism when Christianity began to spread all over the world. Luther had dialogues with Satan unfolded into acts of witchery and diabolic communications in Europe when the Church was

operating the great Catholic reform to triple its forces, and when the new world welcomed it with a glorious destiny in an immense space. In the XVIII century, on the eve of the day when the axe of the executioners should repaint the Church with the martyrs' blood, the devil-idolatry flourished in the cemetery of Saint-Médard, around the wands of Mesmer and the mirrors of Cagliostro. Today, in the fight of Catholicism against all powers of hell, Satan's conspiracy is visibly a supporting philosophy. Hell wanted to consecrate the works of violence and cunningness exercised for over four centuries, in the name of naturalism, promptly crowning it with a supreme imposture. That is the whole secret of the so called Spiritist Doctrine, a pile of absurd, contradictions, hypocrisy and blasphemies, as we will see below, which is trying with its last deception, to glorify Christianity only to shame it later on; to disperse it to later subtract it, affecting the respect towards the divine savior and so as to remove from Earth everything he had conceived with his blood, replacing his immortal kingdom by the dictatorship of ungodly daydreams."

"By bringing about the analysis of these strange pretensions that we have not yet, we believe, sufficiently exposed and retorted, we ask our readers to follow our journey a bit longer, through this diabolic maze from which this sect expects to emerge victorious, after having abolished the divine name forever, to which we will see it bow down before."

"Despite its ridicules, its revolting desecrations, its never ending contradictions, Spiritism is a precious teaching to us. The madness of hell had never paid such a dazzling tribute to our sacred religion. God had never before condemned it with a greater sovereign power, confirmed by these words of our divine Master: - Vos ex patre diabolo estis.²"

Such beginnings may give you an idea of what is still to come. The readers who want to learn about the source of evangelical charity may have the pleasure of reading *Bibliography* #3, September 1860, rue de Sèvres 31. Still once more, why such a rage, such repulsion against a doctrine that, as you say, is the work of Satan, and cannot prevail against the work of God, unless you impiously admit that God is less powerful than Satan? We have many doubts about this rosary of slander and that fever, that profusion of epithets that Christ had never used against his greatest enemies, to whom he begged for God's mercy and not his vengeance, by saying: - *Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing*. We doubt, we were saying, that such a language may be persuasive. Truth is calm and does not require deliriums, and with such rage that reveals your own weakness. We confess that this singular policy of Satan is not much understandable, *glorifying Christianity and casting shame on it, spreading it now to suppress it later*. In our opinion this is not very smart and seems like the farmer who did not want potatoes and so he plants potato seeds all over the farm in order to destroy the species. When we accuse others of committing sin by default reasoning, we must start with ourselves in order to be logical.

Mr. Georges Gandy mortally attacks Spiritism by the fact that it is supported by the Gospel and Christianity, but in fact we don't know the reason. What would he then say if supported by Mohamed? Certainly much less since a fact that must be mentioned is that Islam, Judaism and even Buddhism are subjects of much less virulent attacks than the dissident sects of Christianity. With certain people it is either everything or nothing. There is one point above all that Mr. Gandy does not forgive in Spiritism, which is that of not having proclaimed this absolute maxim: - *there is no salvation outside the Church*, thus admitting that someone who does good but is not with the Church may be targeted with the eternal flames. Evidently such a doctrine could only have come from hell. His ears burn particularly in the following passage:

² You are of your father the devil (N.T.)

“What does Spiritism want? It is an American import, initially protestant, that had already triumphed – allow me to say so – upon all fields of idolatry and heresy; such are its mundane titles. Would it then be case that truth and wisdom would come to us from the grounds of classical superstition and religious madness?”

That certainly is a great offense. Had it been born in Rome would it then be the voice of God; since it was born in a protestant country, it is the voice of the devil. But what will you say when we have demonstrated – we will do that one day – that Spiritism was present in Christian Rome well before it was in the protestant America? What will you say about the fact that there are more Catholic-Spiritists these days than Protestant-Spiritists?

The number of believers who believe nothing, who doubt everything, even God, is considerable and grows in an alarming proportion. Will it be through your intense loathing, your threats with hell, and your choleric speeches that you will bring them back? No, since it is your own violence that keeps them away. Should they be blamed for having taken Christ's charity and kindness seriously, as done with God's infinite benevolence? Now, when they hear those who pretend to speak in His name throwing threats and calumnies they immediately doubt Christ, God and everything else. Spiritism conveys words of peace and hope to them and since they carry the burden of doubt and need consolation, they are thrown into the arms of Spiritism because they prefer the welcoming things rather than those who scare them away. Then they believe in God, in Christ's mission and his divine moral. In one word, from incredulous and indifferent they become believers. That is what led a respectable father of the Church to answer one of his penitents who asked him about Spiritism: - *Nothing happens beyond God's will; God allows these things in order to rekindle the extinguishing faith* – Had this father used another language he could perhaps have scared that person away forever. You want Spiritism to be a sect, at any price, when in reality it only aspires the title of a moral and philosophical science, respecting all serious beliefs. Why then try to pass an idea of separation to those who don't think like that? If you reject those who Spiritism has redirected to the belief in God; if you don't offer them another perspective but hell, you shall then be the ones responsible for a fissure that you have provoked. St. Louis told us one day: - *They mocked the turning tables; they will never mock, however, the philosophy, the wisdom and charity that shines out of the serious communications.*

He was mistaken because he did not count on Mr. Gandy. The writers often make fun of Spiritism and its manifestations, not thinking that one day they could be the target of jokes from their successors. Nevertheless, they always respected the moral part of the science. It was reserved to a Catholic writer, a fact that we sincerely regret, of turning into ridicule accepted maxims by using the most vulgar sense. He mentions a good number of passages from *The Spirits' Book*. We will only mention a few that give a good idea of his appreciation.

“– God prefers those who adore him from the bottom of their heart than those who do so externally”. The text from The Spirits' Book continues: “God prefers those who sincerely adore him, doing good and avoiding wickedness, to those who think to honor him through ceremonies that don't make them better with respect to their fellow human beings.”

Mr. Gandy admits the contrary but as a man of good faith he should have cited the entire passage, instead of truncating it and changing its meaning.

“- Every animal destruction that surpasses the limit of necessity is a violation of God's law, meaning that the moral principle that guides pleasure is equally applied to hunting and killing.”

Precisely. It seems however that Mr. Gandy is a hunter and thinks that God created the hunt to give man pleasure, instead of feeding him, by the useless killing of innocent animals.

“Pleasures are bounded by nature: the limit of need. Excesses lead us to satiation. - It is the moral of the virtuous Horace, one of the fathers of Spiritism.

Since the author criticizes this maxim it seems that he sees no limit to pleasures, something that is certainly not very religious.

“In order to be legitimate a property must be acquired without any harm to the law of love and justice; - thus, someone who owns without respecting the duties of charity that commands individual or social reason, is a usurper of other people’s properties; according to Spiritism we are living a true socialism”

The text actually says: *The only legitimate property is that acquired without causing any loss to others. The law of love and justice forbids to do to others what we don’t others do to us;* hence it condemns every means of acquisition that is contrary to that law. There is no *“that commands individual or social reason”* in the text, a perfidious addition. We don’t believe that someone may own something in detriment of justice, with a clean conscience. Mr. Gandy should let us know the cases for which he considers spoliation to be legitimate. Thankfully the courts don’t share his opinion.

“Indulgence awaits, outside of this life, the suicidal embraced by necessity and who wanted to avoid shame on his children or family. As a matter of fact, St. Louis, whose spiritist’ functions we will report soon, tell us that there are excuses for the suicide for love. As for the penalties of someone who commits suicide these are not fixed. What is certain is that there is no way out of disappointment. In other words, the person is trapped, as commonly said in this world.”

This passage is entirely adulterated by the requirements of Mr. Gandy’s criticism. We would need to transcribe seven pages of the original to reestablish the truth in this text. With such a system it would be easy to ridicule the most beautiful pages of our best writers. It seems that Mr. Gandy does not admit gradation in the faults or in the penalties beyond the grave. We believe that God is just and hope that Mr. Gandy may never need to claim the benefit of attenuating circumstances in his favor.

“Death penalty and slavery were, are and will be contrary to the laws of nature. Men and women are equal before God and must be equal before men”. Would it be the errant soul of some terrified Saint-Simonist looking for a free woman, making this spicy revelation to Spiritism?”

Thus, death penalty, slavery and the submission of women that tends to be abolished by civilization are intuitions that Spiritism has no right to condemn. Oh fortunate medieval times, why have you gone and why haven’t you come back? Where are you oh! Burning stakes that could have saved us from the spiritists?

Here is one of the most benign passages: *“Spiritism cannot deny such a salad of contradictions, absurd and madness that belongs to no philosophy or language. If God allows such impious manifestations it is for the fact that He gives the devil, as taught by the Church, the power of deceiving those who call him, violating his law.”* The devil then comes handy since he unwillingly makes us love God.

“As for the truth, it is brought to us by the Church. It tells us through the sacred books that the angel of darkness transforms into an angel of light and that it is necessary to refuse even the testimony of an archangel, if contrary to the doctrine of Christ, from which its infallible authority is true depositary. As a

matter of fact, the Church has the safe and evident means to distinguish between the diabolic prestige and the divine manifestations.”

It is really true that one should refuse even the testimony of an archangel if that is contrary to the doctrine of Christ. However, what is it that such a doctrine tells us and that Jesus preached by words and examples?

- Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy;
- Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God;
- Anyone who is angry with a brother or a sister will be subjected to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘*Raca*’, is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘*You fool!*’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.
- But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for He causes his sun to rise upon evil and good, and sends rain to the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
- In everything do unto others as you would have them do to you.

Charity is thus the fundamental principle of Christ’s doctrine. From that we conclude that every word and every action contrary to charity cannot be, as we say with perfect truth, inspired by Satan, even if it had taken the form of an archangel. That is why Spiritism says: *Without charity there is no salvation*.

Regarding the same subject we refer our readers to our responses in the *Univers*, issues May and July 1859, and to the *Gazette de Lyon*, October 1860. As a refutation to Mr. Gany we also recommend *Letter of a Catholic about Spiritism*, by Dr. Grand. If the author of that brochure³ is condemned to be in hell, there will be many others there and we will see, strangely enough, those who preach love for all, while heaven will be reserved for those who lash out in abomination and curses. This would be a singular misinterpretation of Jesus’ words. Due to lack of space we will provide our answer to Mr. Deschanel, from the *Journal des Débats*, in the next issue of our Review.

3 Large, in-18, price 1 franc; by mail 1.15 francs. It can be found at the office of the Spiritist Review and at Palais-Royal, Ledoyen bookstore.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

January 1861

Letter about incredulity

Part I

One of our colleagues, Mr. Canu, formerly a devout materialist who learned from Spiritism to have a healthier appreciation of things, accused of having been the propagator of doctrines that he now considers subversive of the social order. Aiming at the reparation of what he considers to be his fault, and so as to enlighten those who he had mislead, he wrote a letter to one of his friends, requesting our advice. The letter seemed so attuned to his intentions that we decided to request his permission to have it published here, something that will certainly please our readers.

Instead of discussing the issue of Spiritism up front, which would have been repelled by those who don't admit the soul as a principle, and particularly instead of placing before their eyes the strange phenomena that they could deny or attribute to vulgar causes, he goes back to the origin. He rightly tries to make them spiritualists before spiritists. He arrives at the spiritist idea as a consequence through a perfectly logical train of thoughts. This is obviously the most rational path. The scope of this letter obliged us to share it in this publication.

**

“Paris, November 10th, 1860

My dear friend,

You would like to receive a long letter about Spiritism. I will try to satisfy your wishes the best I can, while I await the publication of an important book about the subject that must be published towards the

end of the year. I am forced to start by some general considerations for which it is necessary to refer back to the origin of mankind. This will make my letter a little bit longer but it is necessary for the understanding of the subject. People commonly say: Everything perishes with time! Yes, time consumes everything but generally a different meaning is also given to this expression. Time consumes everything but it is only matter that ends. Everything is consumed in the sense that everything moves forward and follows its natural course, but not a blind and aimless course, and yet it must never end. Motion is the great physical as well as moral law of the universe, and the objective of all that movement is the betterment; it is an active, incessant and universal work; it is what we call progress.

Everything is submitted to such a law, with the exception of God. God is its author; the creature is the instrument and object of application of the law. Creation consists of two distinct natures: the material and the intellectual nature. The latter is the active instrument; the former is the passive instrument.

These instruments complement each other reciprocally, that is, one without the other would be totally useless. Without the intellectual nature, or the intelligent and active spirit, the material nature, that is, the unintelligent and inert matter would be perfectly useless, since it could not do anything on its own. Without the inert matter the same would happen to the intelligent spirit. Even the most perfect instrument, would be the same as any other, if there was no one to use it. The most skillful worker, the top notch scientist, would be as impotent as the most perfect idiot, if they did not have instruments to develop their science and demonstrate it.

Here is the place and time to note that the material instrument is not only the carpenter's planer, the sculptor's chisel, the painter's palette, the surgeon's scalpel, the astronomer's compass and telescope: it also consists on the hand, tongue, eyes, and brain, in short, in the union of the material organs necessary to the manifestation of thought, thus implying the denomination of passive instrument to the matter upon which the intelligence, properly speaking, works. That is how a table, a house, a picture, considered in their forming elements, are not less instruments than the saw, the planer, the ruler, the trowel, the paint brush which has products on it; for the hand and eyes to direct them; finally, the brain which presides over the action. Now, all that, including the brain, was the complex instrumentation used by the intelligence to manifest its thoughts, its will, as in producing a form, or a table, or a house, or a painting, etc.

Inert by nature and formless in its essence, matter only acquires useful property by the form given to it, which led a renowned physiologist to say that the form was more necessary than matter, a somewhat paradox proposition, but demonstrates the important role played by the form in the modifications of matter. It is according to this law that God, if I can say so, incessantly created and modified the worlds and their inhabiting creatures, according to the forms that are more adequate to his designs following the universal harmony. It is always according to that law that the intelligent creatures concur to the continuous transformation of matter, incessantly acting upon it like God but having a secondary role; each level of that continuous transformation is one step towards progress, simultaneously to the manifestation of the intelligence that leads to such transformation. That is how everything is always in a progressive movement; that the mission of the intelligent beings is to drive that movement towards progress, sometimes unknowingly; that the role of the material creature is to obey such movement and manifest the progress of the intelligent being; that creation, considered in whole or in parts, incessantly realizes God's designs.

Without leaving our planet, how many intelligent creatures accomplish an unsuspecting mission! From my side, I confess that not long ago I was among those. I would not feel embarrassed at all for dropping a few words here about my own story. Please forgive this short digression that may perhaps carry a useful side.

Raised in the school of the Catholic dogma, only much later having developed the taste for reflection and analysis, I was a keen believer for a long time; you certainly have not forgotten that. You know, however, that later on I was dragged down by the contrary excess. From the denial of certain principles that my personal reason could not accept, I reached the most absolute denial. The dogma of eternal punishment in particular, outraged me. I could not reconcile the idea of a God that was said to be infinitely merciful with the perpetual punishment of a transient fault. The picture of hell, its flames, the material tortures, it all seemed ridiculous and more like a parody of Tartarus of the Pagans. I recalled some impressions from my childhood and remembered that during my first communion we were told that one should not pray for the damned because it would not do them any good; whoever did not have faith was doomed to the flames; that one single doubt about the infallibility of the Church was enough to be damned; that for God our good deeds were not enough to save us because faith was one of the most elevated human actions.

That doctrine made me unforgiving and hardened my heart. I used to mistrust men and the simplest sin would make me see someone condemned, and that person would be someone from whom I should stay away, as someone does with a plague, to whom I would then refuse a glass of water, given my indignation, telling myself that one day God would refuse that person even more than I had just done. If they could still burn people at the stake, I would gladly throw in the fire all of those whose faith was not orthodox enough, even if that person was my own father. Hence, given my state of mind, I could not love God, I was afraid.

Later and following a large number of events that would take too long to enumerate, I had my eyes opened, rejecting the dogmas that did not fit my reason, because I had never been taught to place moral above exterior form. From the religious fanaticism I fell into the absolute incredulity, like so many other childhood friends of mine.

I will not get into the details that will take us to off topic. I will only add that after having lost for fifteen years the sweet illusion about the existence of an infinitely good, powerful and wise God; about the existence and immortality of the soul, I finally found it again, not an illusion, but a certainty as absolute as the belief in my own existence, and that is what I write about to you now. That is, my friend, the greatest event of our time, the greatest moment that we can witness in our day: the material proof of the existence and immortality of the soul. Let us return to that fact.

Nevertheless, to make you understand Spiritism, let us go back to the origins of mankind, a theme that will not take us long.

It is evident that the planets that populate the vastness were not uniquely made as a means of decoration. Besides the pleasantries, they also have utility: produce and feed the material beings, docile instruments appropriate to this infinite multitude of intelligent beings that populate space and are definitely the masterpiece, or better, the purpose of creation, since they are the only ones capable of knowing, admiring and adoring the author. Each and every one of the globes scattered in space had their beginning, regarding the formation, more or less long ago. As for the age of the material which it is composed of, it is a secret that is irrelevant to us now, since the form is the object of our concern. In fact, we don't care if matter is eternal, or just created before the formation of the globe, or even contemporary to that formation. What one needs to know is that the globe was created to be inhabited. It is not perhaps useless to add that such formation does not take place in a day, as found in the Scriptures; that a planet cannot come out of nothing and be covered in forests, fields and inhabitants; like Minerva born fully matured with a suit of armor from the head of Jupiter. No. God acts infallibly but slowly. Everything follows a slow and progressive law, not because God hesitates or requires to move slowly, but because his laws are such and unchangeable. As a matter of fact, what we as transient creatures call slowness is not slow to God for whom time does not exist.

Now, let us take a forming globe or an already existing one if you like. Many centuries or perhaps thousands of centuries must pass before it is inhabitable. However, the moment comes. After multiple and successive changes on its surface, it begins to be covered by vegetation – I speak of Earth and don't pretend to speak of other globes but by analogy, whose evident objective is the same, and whose phases may change from one to the next. Side by side with the vegetation comes animal life, one and the other in their utmost simplicity, these two branches of organic life support one another, mutually fertilizing and feeding one another, simultaneously elaborating the inorganic matter in order to make it gradually more adequate to the formation of more elaborated creatures, up until the time when it can produce and sustain the body capable of providing housing and operating as an instrument to the being by excellence, that is, the intellectual creature that will use such a body and that waits for its occurrence and without which that intelligence could not advance. That is when we get to mankind! How was man formed? That is not the issue. Man was formed according to the great law of formation of the living creatures, and that is all. Just because it is not known, it does not mean that such a law does not exist. How were the first individuals of every species of plant formed? How were the first individuals of each species of animals formed? Each one was formed in their own way, but following the same law. What is certain is that God had no need to become a potter or get his hands dirty in the mud in order to create man, or to remove a man's rib to create a woman. Such apparently absurd and ridiculous fables may well be an ingenious image hiding a meaning that can perhaps be reached by more insightful minds than mine. Since I don't understand that, I stop here. Thus, here is the physical man, inhabiting Earth and inhabited himself by an immaterial being, to which he serves as an instrument. Incapable of anything on its own, as matter is generally incapable, he cannot become capable but through the intelligence that animates him; that very intelligence, however, is imperfect as any other creature or anything else but God, that intelligence needs perfecting and it is for that perfecting that a body was given, since the spirit could not manifest without matter, and consequently could not improve, to establish itself and finally advance.

From a collective standpoint, humanity is like the individual: ignorant at the infancy, becoming enlightened with time. That is naturally explained by the actual state of imperfection of the spirits whose advancement depends on that humanity. However, considered individually, the spirit cannot achieve the required sum of progress in one existence only. That is why a more or less large number of corporeal existences are needed, according to the way that each one of those existences are lived. The more the spirit works its own betterment on each existence, the lesser the number of required existences to come. As each corporeal existence is a trial, an atonement, a true purgatory, it is in the spirit's own interest to advance as fast as possible, to become subject to the lesser possible number of new existences, considering that the spirit cannot move backwards. Each level of achieved progress is definitely granted and cannot be taken from the spirit. According to this now demonstrated principle, it becomes evident that the faster the spirit advances, the sooner the objective is reached. As a consequence from the preceding, each one of us today is not in their first corporeal existence – and perhaps still very far away from the last one – because our primitive existences must have taken place on planets inferior to Earth where we arrived when our spirit had achieved a level of advancement compatible with this globe. In the same way we shall move on to superior worlds as we advance, worlds much more advanced than Earth on every aspect, step by step, always to a better condition. Before we leave a world, as it seems, we go through several existences whose number is not limited but submitted to the actual progress that we may have achieved there.

I can foresee an objection coming out of your lips. All that, you will say, can be true but since I cannot remember anything, like everybody else, everything that might have happened in our prior existences is the same as if it had not happened. If that is the case in each new existence, then to my spirit it is irrelevant to be immortal or to die with the body, since it does not have any awareness of its own identity during life.

In fact, it would be the same but that is not the case. We don't lose the memory of the past but only temporarily during this corporeal life; we recover the memory with death, that is, when the spirit wakes up in his true existence, the spiritual life, an effect similar to the one that the sleep has on the body.

What happens to the soul of the dead while waiting for a new incarnation?

Those who don't leave Earth remain in the so called errant⁴ state on its surface. As spirits they can certainly go where they please or, at least, where they can, according to their progress, but in general they don't stay away from the living particularly from those they loved, unless imposed by a duty of service somewhere else. We are then surrounded by a multitude of spirits, all the time, known and unknown to us, friends and foes, who see, observe and hear us; some of them share our sufferings as well as our happiness, while others suffer with our pleasures or enjoy our pains, and others still are indifferent to everything, exactly as it happens on Earth among the mortal beings, whose affections, antipathies, vices and virtues are kept in the other world. The difference is that the good ones enjoy a happy state that is unknown to us on Earth, and that is understandable since they no longer have material needs to satisfy or material obstacles to overtake them. If they lived well, that is, if they have nothing or almost nothing to regret from their last corporeal life, they peacefully enjoy the testimony of their conscience and their good deeds. If they were malicious, nasty, and considering that in the spiritual world they are in the open and cannot dissimulate anything under a material covering like we do here, they then suffer the shame of being known and uncovered; they suffer with the presence of those who they have offended, or neglected or oppressed, as well as with the impossibility of avoiding their eyes. Finally, they suffer the effects of a corroding remorse until regret may bring them some relief – it happens sooner or later – or when a new incarnation may subtract them from one's own eyes but not from the spirits' eyes, by momentarily removing the awareness of his identity. Then, losing the memory of the past, the spirits feel relieved. That is when a new trial begins. If they are lucky to have advanced when leaving this new life, they enjoy the merit and some progress is granted; if they don't improve, they then find the same torment again, until they finally repent or take advantage of a new existence.

There is another kind of suffering: the one experienced by the worst and more perverse spirits. Inaccessible to shame or remorse, they don't feel the torments. Their sufferings, however, are more vivid because they are only excited by evilness but unable to realize it. They suffer by the envy of seeing others happier or better than themselves, simultaneously suffering by the hatred towards those who they can no longer reach and the incapacity of satisfying their bad inclinations. Oh! Those suffer more, as I told you, but that will only last until they decide to improve. Or, put differently, up until the day they become better. They often don't foresee such a horizon. They are so bad, so blind by evilness that they become oblivious to a better state of things; as a consequence, they cannot see that their suffering may one day end, a fact that makes them more obstinate in evil, further aggravating their sufferings.

However, since they cannot escape indefinitely the common fate reserved by God to every creature, without exception, there will be a time when they will be required to follow the common path. Sometimes it is closer than thought just by observing their evilness. There have been some, who have converted suddenly, and their suffering stopped; however, they still have tough trials to face in their next existence on Earth. They need to purify, atoning their own faults, and that is definitely more than fair. Nevertheless, they no longer have fear of losing their accomplished progress, since they cannot go backwards.

⁴ Errant state or 'erraticity' may be understood as a spiritual life that is still attached to Earth by many bonds such as those of family, moral debts and compensations that will require new existences on this planet (N.T.)

There you have it my friend, in short and as clear as I could make it, a presentation of the spiritist philosophy, as it was possible for me to deliver in a letter. You will find a better explanation and the most thorough development of these ideas in The Spirits' Book, the source which made me what I am today.

Let us now move on to more practical terms."

(Conclusion in the next issue)

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

January 1861

The rapping spirit of Aube

One of our subscribers sent us some very interesting details about manifestations that have occurred and still do in a town located in the Aube region. We will hide the name of the person involved to protect their anonymity in order to avoid being surrounded by flocks of curious visitors who might destroy his peace of mind. These noisy manifestations have already attracted more than an inconvenience; moreover, our correspondent tell us what he has seen and we do know him well enough to trust his testimony. The reader will find below the most interesting passages of his report:

"Four years ago (in 1856), in the town where I live, at the house of Mr. R... there were manifestations that up to a certain degree were similar to those of Bergzabern⁵. At that time I did not know that gentleman; it was only later that we became acquainted and that is how I learned about the facts that had already occurred. The manifestations had stopped long ago and Mr. R... thought that he was free from them when all of a sudden they started again, the same as before. I was then able to witness them for several consecutive days. I will tell you what I saw with my own eyes."

5 Spiritist Review, May-July 1858 (N.T.)

“The person who is the target of these manifestations is Mr. R’s...sixteen year old son, who was therefore only twelve when they occurred for the first time. The boy is mentally challenged; he cannot read or write and rarely leaves his home. As for the manifestations that occurred before my eyes, with the exception of the rocking bed and the magnetic levitation, the spirit more or less reproduced everything that happened in Bergzabern: the knocks and scratches were the same; he whistled, imitating the sound of a tree being sawed, and threw pieces of charcoal that would come from who knows where into the bedroom, since there was no coal to be found anywhere else in the house. The phenomenon starts when the boy lies down and begins to fall asleep. During his sleep, he speaks to a spirit with authority, assuming the perfect voice of command of a superior officer, despite the fact that he had never watched any military exercises. He then simulates a combat, commands the maneuvers, conquering victoriously and believing that he has risen to the rank of general on the battlefield. When he commands the spirit to knock a few times it sometimes happens that the spirit knocks more than requested. The boy then asks: - How do you intend to remove the additional knocks? The spirit then starts to scratch, as if erasing something. When the boy commands the spirit, he seems very agitated and sometimes screams so much that his voice trails off into a sort of groaning sound. Following the command, the spirit then knocks every French or foreign military march, even Chinese ones. I could not attest their accuracy since I don’t know them. But the boy often said: - That is not right. Start all over again. And the spirit obeyed. I must say and in-passing that the boy sounds really rude during his sleep and when commanding.”

“One evening I was watching these things; Mr. R’s...son was in great agitation for about five hours. I tried to calm him down through magnetic passes. He soon became furious and made a mess in his bed. The next day he lied down on my arrival and as usual he soon fell asleep. The knocks and raps began again. He suddenly ordered the spirit: - Come here. I will make you sleep. And to our great surprise he magnetized the spirit, despite his resistance and refusal, as we gathered from the conversation that followed. He then woke the spirit up, demagnetizing him like a professional magnetizer would have done. I then noticed that he seemed to have retrieved too much magnetic fluid, kind of throwing it towards me, causing me harm. When he woke up he had no memory of the event.”

“Far from calm, the facts became more serious and more afflictive each day in a distressing manner by the exasperation of the spirit, who is certainly afraid of losing his dominance upon the boy. I wanted to ask his name and background, but only got lies and blasphemies as an answer. I must let you know at this point that the spirit speaks through the boy’s mouth, who serves him as a speaking medium. I unsuccessfully tried to excite good feelings in him through good words. He answered that the prayers were nothing to him; that he tried to approach God only finding ice and fog. He calls me a bigot and whenever I pray in silence I notice that he gets angry and raps with double intensity. He brings heavy objects every day, iron, copper, etc. When I ask him where he finds them he says that he takes them from dishonest people. If I preach morality to him, he becomes furious. One evening he said that if I continued to come, he would break everything and that he would not leave before Easter. He then spat on my face. Once asked about the reason why he was attached to the young Mr. R... in such a way he said: - if it was not him it would be someone else. The father himself is not free from attacks of that malevolent spirit. He is often interrupted in his work by the rapping spirit, who pulls his clothes and pinches him to the point of bleeding. I did what was possible but I am out of resources. Besides, it is very difficult to obtain good results considering that Mr. and Mrs. R... don’t help due to their inconsistent faith, despite their desire to get rid of the spirit and the true losses and prejudices they suffer due to their son.”

Several details were omitted for they would only reinforce the report. However, we showed enough to demonstrate that one can say that like certain wrongdoers, this spirit is of the worse kind. We addressed the following questions to St. Louis in the session of the Society on November 9th:

1. Could you kindly tell us something about the spirit that obsesses the young R...? – A. The boy's intelligence is of the weakest kind and when the spirit takes over he becomes completely hallucinated, and even more so when his body is deeply asleep. Thus, reason has no domain over his brain that is dominated by this tempestuous spirit.
2. Can a relatively superior spirit exert a magnetic action and paralyze his faculties? – A. A good spirit can only do act upon another morally, not physically. In order to paralyze through the magnetic fluid it is necessary to use matter and the spirit is not matter like a human being.
3. How come the young R... pretends to magnetize and lead the spirit to sleep? – A. He believes it and the spirit gives him that illusion.
4. The father wants to know if there is any means of getting rid of that unwelcome guest; if his son will remain under this influence for a long time... – A. When the young man is awake one must evoke the good spirits, together with him, so that he can be in touch with them and through that he can keep the bad spirits who obsess him in his sleep away.
5. Could we help from here, evoking that spirit in order to moralize him, or perhaps the spirit of the boy himself? – A. It might not be possible at the moment. They are both too much materialized. It is necessary to act directly upon the body of the living one, through the presence of good spirits who will come to him.
6. We don't understand your response very well. – A. I said that it is necessary to request the support of the good spirits who will help to make the boy less accessible to the impressions of the bad spirit.
7. What can we do for him? – A. The bad spirit that obsesses him will not let him go easily, since he is not strongly pushed away by anyone. Your prayers and evocations are a weak weapon against him. It would be necessary to act physically on the person that is tormented by him. You can pray since it is always beneficial. You will not succeed, however, if not supported by those directly involved in the case, the father and mother. They unfortunately don't have the faith in God that multiplies their strength a hundred times, and God does not hear but those who address him with faith. Thus, they cannot complain about an evil against which they do nothing to eliminate.
8. How can we win over the subjection of this young man to the empire of such an evil spirit, with the authority that the boy has over the spirit, once it seems that he commands and the spirit obeys? – A. The spirit of that young man is not very advanced spiritually but it is more advanced than you think in terms of intelligence. He abused that intelligence in other existences, not directing it to a moral objective, but on the contrary to ambitious objectives. He is facing punishment now in a body that does not allow free access to his intelligence and the bad spirit takes advantage of such weakness. He allows to be driven in questions of minor importance because he knows that the boy is incapable of commanding serious things. He gets a kick out of that. Earth has swarms of spirits like this, punished in human bodies. That is why there are so many diseases of all kinds.

OBSERVATION: The observation of the facts confirms the explanation. During the sleep the boy shows intelligence incontestably superior to that in his normal state, demonstrating a previous development, but reduced to a latent state in the rough covering of the body. It is only at the times of emancipation of the soul in which there isn't much influence of matter that his intelligence expands, in which he also exerts authority upon the creature that subjugates him. However, returning to his waking state his faculties are annihilated by the limited body that compresses them. Isn't that a moral teaching of practical reach?

We thought of evoking the spirit but none of the mediums present at the meeting showed interest to serve as interpreter. Ms. Eugenie who also showed disgust, suddenly took the pencil and in an involuntary movement wrote:

1. You don't want it? Ah! You will write. Oh you think that I will not dominate you? Well, then! I am here but don't be so scared. I will make you feel my force.

NOTE: The spirit then made the medium swing a strong punch on the table, breaking several pencils.

2. Since you are here, tell us why you have attached yourself to Mr. R... – A. Do you really believe that I would have to confide in you! For starters, know that I have a great need to torment somebody. A medium who can think would reject me. I attach myself to an idiot who opposes no resistance.
3. Note: Someone thought that despite the cowardly act the spirit is still intelligent. He then answers without having the question directly asked to him: – A. A little bit. I am not as silly as you think.
4. What did you do when alive? – A. I didn't do much. A man that did more evil things than good, for what he is punished even more.
5. Considering that you are punished for having practiced bad things, you must understand the need to do good. Don't you want to improve? – A. If you wanted to help me I would waste less time.
6. We don't ask more than that, but it is necessary that you show the will. Pray with us. This will help you.
(Here the spirit answers with blasphemy)
7. That is it! We will hear no more. We hoped that we could awake some good feelings in you. That is why we called you. However, since you respond to our benevolence with rude words, you might as well leave. – A. Ah your charity ends here! Just because I was able to resist a little I can see that your charity ends soon. It is because you are not much better than I am. Yes, you could enlighten me more than you think if you behaved accordingly, to begin with, in the interest of this suffering idiot, in his father's interest who is scared of me too and in my own, if that pleases you.
8. Tell us your name so that we can call you. – A. Why bother with my name! *Call me the spirit of the young idiot*, if you like.
9. If we wanted to stop you it was for the fact that you used blasphemy. – A. Ah! Ah! You were shocked. To know what is in the mud you have to move it.
10. Someone said: - This image is compatible with the spirit. It is despicable. – A. Would you like poetry, Sir? To get to know the rose's perfume one needs to smell it.
11. Since you said that we could be of some help, one of the participants is offering to instruct you. Would you like to attend his evocations? – A. I want to see if it is convenient first. (After a few moments of reflection he adds:) Yes; I will.
12. Why would Mr. R's... son get mad when Mr. L... wanted to magnetize him? – A. It was not him that got mad but me.
13. Why? – A. I have no power over that man, who is above me, that is why I cannot stand him. He wants to take my domain away from me and I cannot accept that.
14. You must see happier spirits around you. Do you know why? – A. Yes, I do. They are better than I am.
15. Would you then understand that if instead of doing bad things you did good ones you could also be happier like them? – A. I wanted nothing more than that but it is difficult to be good.
16. Perhaps difficult for you but not impossible. Do you understand that prayer can have a great influence upon your improvement? – A. I don't say no. I will think about that. Call me again.

OBSERVATION: As seen above, the spirit did not deny his character. However, he seemed less unwilling towards the end, and that is a proof that he is not entirely impervious to reason. There is

remedy for him but to have him entirely dominated he needs the support of people who are not helping at this moment. This should be a lesson to those who may be going through similar situations. There is no doubt that this is a very bad spirit, belonging to the dregs of the spiritual world. One can say that he is brutally bad but that there are more resources against spirits in that category than to the hypocrites. There is no doubt that they are much less dangerous than the fascinating spirits, with the support of a certain amount of intelligence and a false appearance of virtue, they know how to inspire a blind confidence in certain people, a confidence that sooner or later will victimize them, since those spirits never act for the good of anybody. They always have a second intention.

The result of *The Mediums' Book* – so we hope – will be to guard us against their suggestions, something that certainly will not please them. As it can be seen, however, we are as much affected by their bad influence as we are from that of incarnated spirits, which they can incite against us. The bad spirits, as much as men, do not see with pleasure those who, upon unmasking their wickedness, deprives them of the means to harm.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

January 1861

Spontaneous teaching of the spirits

Dissertations obtained or read at the Society by several mediums

The three characters

(Medium Alfred Didier)

There are three eternal characters in the world. The great writers depicted them as they were in their times, correctly guessing that they would always exist. These are the characters: first it is Hamlet, who tells himself in a monologue: to be or not to be, that is the question; then comes Tartuffe who moans his prayers while thinking of evil things; finally there is Don Juan, that tells everyone: I believe nothing. Molière alone found these two characters. He stigmatized Tartuffe and chastised Don Juan.

Man remains in doubt like Hamlet without the truth, without conscience like Tartuffe and without a heart like Don Juan. Hamlet doubts, it is true, but he seeks, he is unhappy, disbelief bothers him, his kindest illusions vanish, and the ideal and the truth that he seeks fall into the great abyss, and like Ophelia it remains lost forever. He then becomes mad and dies in desperation. God will forgive him though, because he had a heart, loved and it was the world that took away what he wanted to keep.

These two characters are atrocious, they are selfish and hypocritical, each in their own way. Tartuffe wears the mask of virtue, making him hateful. Don Juan believes nothing, not even in God.

Have you ever had the impression of seeing in that famous symbol of Don Juan and in the statue of the Commander, the skepticism before the turning tables; the corrupted human spirit before the most brutal manifestation? Up until now the world has only seen a human figure in them. Don't you think that you should see something more? That the incomparable genius of Molière showed common sense in his work with respect to spiritual things as he always had with respect to human faults?

Gérard de Nerval

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

January 1861

Spontaneous teaching of the spirits

Dissertations obtained or read at the Society by several mediums

Cazotte

(Medium Alfred Didier)

It is curious to see the formation of a group of men of good faith, amidst materialism, propagating Spiritism. Yes, it is in the deepest darkness that God sheds light and it is at that moment when we forget, when He shows us best; like the sublime thief mentioned in the Gospel, coming to judge the world when least expected. But God does not come to you to surprise you. On the contrary, he comes to warn you that the great surprise that takes men at their time of death must be dismal or happy.

God sent me to the middle of a corrupt society. Thanks to the clairvoyance, some of those revelations that seemed so marvelous in my time are perceived as natural today. All those memories are like dreams to me and – thank God – the awakening was not painful. Spiritism was born or resurrected in your time; magnetism comes from mine. You must believe that the great revelations precede the great exclamations.

The author of *The Devil in Love* reminds you that he has already had the honor of speaking with you and would be happy to continue that friendly relationship.

Cazotte

In the following session the questions below were addressed to the spirit of Cazotte:

- You kindly told us last time, when you spontaneously came to us, that you would return. We take the opportunity to address some questions to you, if you are alright with that.
- 1. The story of the famous dinner in which you predicted the fate of every guest, is that entirely true? – A. It is true in the sense that there was a prediction but carried out over several dinners, in which I made fun of my dear guests through sinister revelations.
- 2. We know the effect of second sight and we would understand that you were able to see remote things that were happening at that point in time, given the faculty you had. How could you have seen future things that had not happened yet, and see them accurately? Can you also tell us how such accurate details were given to you? Did you simply speak out of inspiration, not seeing anything, or you could see the pictures of the events, like an image presented to you? Kindly describe that the best you can for our instruction. – A. Man has a moral instinct in his reason that drives him to predict certain events. It is true that I was endowed by great clairvoyance, but not always human, regarding the events that would take place. Would you believe that with common sense or with good judgment of earthly things, you can anticipate years ahead of time certain circumstances? No. Added to my natural wisdom, there was a combination of a supernatural skill: second sight. When I revealed to those around me the terrible events that were supposed to happen I evidently spoke as a man of logic and wisdom; however, when I saw small details of those events, vague and generic, when I noticed this or that victim, I then spoke not only as a skilled man but as someone inspired.
- 3. Regardless of this, have you had other examples of predictions during your life? – A. Yes. They were all more or less about the same subject. Nevertheless, I studied the occult sciences as a pastime, and got involved with magnetism.
- 4. Has such a predictive faculty followed you in the spiritual world, that is, after your death can you still foresee certain events? – A. Yes. That gift remained but much more purified.

OBSERVATION: One could see here a contradiction with the principle that opposes the revelation of the future. In fact, the future is hidden from us as the result of a very wise law from the Providence, since such knowledge would harm our free-will, leading us to neglect the present by the future. Furthermore, given our position, we could hinder certain events that are necessary to the general order. However, when such communication may impel us to facilitate the realization of something, God then allows its revelation, within the limits designated by his wisdom.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

January 1861

Spontaneous teaching of the spirits
Dissertations obtained or read at the Society by several mediums

The voice of the guardian angel

Medium, Ms. Huet

Every person is a medium; everyone that is prepared to hear has a spirit that guides them to good. It does not matter that some people may communicate with them through some specific type of mediumship and that others may only hear them through their inner voices in their hearts and minds. It does not matter; it is still the familiar spirit that gives them advice. Call it spirit, reason, or intelligence, it is always a voice that responds to your soul and gives you good advice. You don't always understand it though. It is not this reason that drags and crawls as to never moving forward; not this reason that loses itself amidst material interests and bad behavior, but this reason that raises man above himself, transporting him to unknown regions; a sacred passion that inspires artists, poets, the divine thoughts that raises the momentum of the philosopher; and leads individuals and groups, a reason that the common crude man cannot understand, but it approaches a man of divinity more than any other creature; an understanding that he knows how to steer from the known to the unknown, and makes him perform the most sublime acts. Thus, listen to that inner voice, that good spirit who unceasingly speaks to you, then you will progressively begin to hear your guardian angel that reaches out to you from heaven.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

January 1861

Spontaneous teaching of the spirits

Dissertations obtained or read at the Society by several mediums

Flirtatiousness

Medium Mrs. Costel

Today we will occupy our time discussing female flirtatiousness which is the enemy of love: she kills it or weakens it, which is worse. A flirtatious woman is like a caged bird that through its songs attracts others to it. It attracts men who break their hearts against their protective shields. Pity her more than them. Held captive by her narrow ideas and the callousness of her heart, she tramples in the darkness of her conscience, incapable of enjoying the sunshine of love that only irradiates upon generous and dedicated souls. It is harder to feel love than to inspire it and all, however, are worried and search the desired heart without first examining if what they now possess is the coveted treasure.

No, love which is the sensuality of egoism is no more love than flirtatiousness is seduction to an elevated soul. There is reason enough to reproach and obstruct these fragile relationships, shameful exchanges of vanity and miseries of all kinds.

Love remains external to those things; more than the ray of light, it is not contaminated by the reprobate who will become enlightened. Foolish are the women that don't understand that their beauty, their virtue, is love in its abandonment, in its neglect of personal interests, and in its transmigration of the soul itself, entirely to be loved.

God blesses the woman who has worn the yoke of love, rejecting those who make a precious sentiment into a trophy of vanity, a distraction to her idleness, or a sensual flame that consumes the body leaving the heart empty.

Georges

Allan Kardec⁶

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

February 1861

Bulletin of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

Summary of the minutes

Friday, December 21st, 1860

(Private session)

Admission of two new members.

Several communications:

1st – Multiple communications obtained outside the session were read.

2nd – Mr. Allan Kardec reads a letter from Bordeaux with a proposal to evoke Ms. H... who died a short time ago. The Society accepted the proposal.

6 Paris, Typography Carion, Rue de Bonaparte, 64

Works carried out during the session:

1st – Spontaneous dissertation signed by Lazarus, obtained by Ms. Costel; another signed by Gerard de Nerval, obtained by Mr. A. Didier. The spirit develops the thesis based on the communication about the Three Characters: Hamlet, Don Juan and Tartuffe, on December 14th. The spirit elaborates about Hamlet's character. He is requested to provide his opinion about La Fontaine. Another dissertation signed by Torquato Tasso, received by Ms. H... The spirit also gives his opinion about La Fontaine.

2nd – Evocation of Lady Esther Stanhope, who spent most of her life in the mountains of Lebanon, amidst Arabic peoples who had named her *The Queen of Palmyra*.

Friday, December 28th, 1860

General session

Multiple communications:

1st – Several communications obtained outside the Society were read, among them a tale signed by Hoffmann, received by Mrs. Costel, and the evocation of an African American person in New Orleans, carried out by Mrs. B... This is remarkable by the ingenuity of the ideas and the reproduction of the language typically employed by that particular group.

2nd – Letter received from Mrs. T. D..., from Krakow attesting the progress of Spiritism in Poland and Ukraine. This lady has been a medium for seven years. She adds another four communications clearly indicating the superiority of the spirit who gave them and also requests to take part in the Society.

3rd – Mr. Allan Kardec addresses the spirits with the speech below, thanking them for their contribution during the year that is about to end:

“We don't want to finish the year without giving our thanks to the good spirits who have kindly enlightened us. We thank particularly St. Louis, our spiritual leader, whose protection of the Society he has taken under his support is so evident, and hopefully, that he will kindly continue to do so, praying that he continues to inspire in all of us the sentiments which can make us dignified. We equally thank those who came spontaneously to give their advice and instructions in our sessions, as well as in the private communications given to our mediums, later transmitted to us. Among them, we cannot forget Lamennais who dictated pages of great eloquence to Mr. Didier; Channing, Georges, whose communications have been admired by all readers of the Review; Mrs. Delphine de Girardin, Charles Nodier, Gérard de Nerval, Lazarus, Tasso, Alfred de Musset, Rousseau and others. The year 1860 was eminently prosperous to the spiritist ideas. We hope that

with the support of the good spirits the New Year that is about to begin will not be different. As for the spirits in suffering that came to us, spontaneously or evoked, we will continue to pray for them, asking for God's mercy and for His protection to those who are in the path of repentance and clarification to those still in the dark avenue of evilness."

Works carried out during the session:

1st – Spontaneous dissertation about the year 1860 signed by J. J. Rousseau, through Mrs. Costel. Another signed by Necker, received by Ms. H... and another one about 1861 signed by St. Louis.

2nd – Evocation of Lady Stanhope, Hoffmann and the African American from New Orleans.

3rd – Several questions raised: - About the memory of previous existences in Jupiter and about the multiple apparitions to Mr. Pr... mother-in-law, present at the meeting

Friday, January 4th, 1861

Private session

Admission of Mr. W..., painter, as a member.

Several communications:

1st – Letter from Mr. Kond..., doctor in Medicine, from Vaucluse, complaining that the minutes of the Society are not entirely published in the Review. "The followers of Spiritism, he says, "that cannot attend the sessions feel awkward with respect to the issues that are studied and solved in such scientific assembly. Every month we eagerly expect the arrival of the Review. When we receive it we waste no time to read it all. We read and read again and then we discover a number of problems that will always remain without an answer." He asks if there wouldn't be a way of solving such an issue. Mrs. Costel informs us that she has also received letters with the same issue.

Mr. Allan Kardec says that this alone demonstrates something that must give us great satisfaction: the value attributed to the works of the Society and the credit given by the true spiritists. The publication of the summary of the minutes show those who don't belong to the Society that it only deals with important things and serious studies. The reputation that the Society has conquered outside is due to its moderation and its cautious movement on this new path, the order and seriousness that presides over our meetings, as well as to the essentially moral and scientific character of its works. It is then an encouragement to the Society to remain within the guidelines that grant it consideration and respect, taking the example of people that write asking to take part in the Society, from abroad and even from Poland. Responding to Mr. K... a very special complaint that has flattered all of us for starters, for the complete publication of everything that is dealt with by the Society would require multiple volumes. Among the evocations that are carried

out, there are many that don't correspond to the expectation or don't offer enough interest to be published. These are maintained in the archives so that they can be consulted and just mentioned in the Bulletin. The same applies to the spontaneous communications: only the educating ones are published. Mr. K... is mistaken if he thinks that the external spiritists are deprived from the multiple questions and moral problems that sometimes are of general interest. He is led to believe so by the fact that the abundance of subjects and the need to consolidate them rarely allows the publication of all issues in the number of the Reviews mentioned in the Bulletin. Sooner or later they will have their place. Besides, that material is one of the fundamental elements of the books about Spiritism: they were used in *The Spirits' Book* and in *The Mediums' Book* where they were classified according to the subjects and none of the essential ones were omitted. Thus, Mr. K... and the other spiritists may rest assured. If they cannot attend the sessions of the Society remotely and would not like to miss a single word that is said during the meetings they must understand that nothing considered important is hidden behind the curtains. Nonetheless, the Review will strive to correspond to the wishes expressed by the worthy corresponding member.

2nd – Following the report given by a New York businessman attending the session, Mr. Allan Kardec points out the progress achieved by the spiritists principles contained in *The Spirits' Book* in the United States of America. Several fragments of the book were translated into English and the doctrine of reincarnation now counts many supporters there.

3rd – An elegant and charming communication in a medieval style and received by Ms. S... was read. Another one about the immateriality of the spirits, received by Mrs. Costel.

Works carried out during the session:

1st – Critical analysis of the dissertation given by the spirit of Necker in our last session. The spirit of Madam Staël manifests spontaneously, explaining the meaning of the message and justifying her father's words.

2nd – Evocation of Leo X who had spontaneously manifested in the session of December 14th. He responds to several questions and explains the comparative analysis he did about the character of the Americans, French and English; about the way each of those peoples see Spiritism; about the unavoidable advances of that doctrine, etc.

3rd – Spontaneous conversation between Monsignor Sibour and his murderer.

4th – Questions addressed to St. Louis about the African American evoked on December 28th, his character and his origin.

5th – Evocation of Ms. J.B. carried out by her mother who was at the meeting. The communication of an essentially private interest offers a touching image of the affection that certain spirits devout to their loved ones on Earth.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

February 1861

Mr. Squire

Several newspapers, as usual, mocked this new medium who is a fellow country man to Mr. Home, under whose influence multiple phenomena of up to a certain degree of exceptional nature have also been produced. A particular characteristic is that they only occur in absolute darkness, a circumstance duly observed by the skeptical. As we all know Mr. Home produced a variety of phenomena, among which the most remarkable was that of the tangible apparitions. We described them in detail in our February, March and April 1858 issues of this Review. Mr. Squire produced only two, or even better, only one type with certain variations, but not less worthy of our attention. Since darkness is an essential condition to obtain the phenomenon it goes without saying that every precaution is taken in order to ensure the authenticity of the events. Here is what happens:

Mr. Squire positions himself across from a 35-40 kg table, similar to a reinforced kitchen table. His legs are strongly tied up together, to avoid their use. In such a condition his muscular strength is considerably diminished in case he needed it. Another person, any person and even the most skeptical, holds one of his

hands, the other remains free. He then uses that free hand to gently touch the edge of the table top. Next the lights are turned off, immediately followed by a movement of the table that lifts it off above his head, landing upside down behind his back onto a couch or a set of previously positioned pillows to protect the table. Once the phenomenon is produced the lights are turned on immediately. It all happens in a few seconds. The experiment may be repeated at will how many times if one wishes in the same session.

A variant of the phenomenon: a person is placed side by side with Mr. Squire; once the table has been lifted and turned as above, instead of falling backwards, it lands horizontally on the other person's head, and that person only feels a slight pressure. As soon as the light is turned back on, the table recovers its full weight and it would then fall unless two other people are prepared nearby to sustain the weight, holding the table from the sides.

That is substantially the report, in its simplest form, without emphasis or reluctance, extracted from *La Patrie* from December 23rd, 1860 and from a large number of witnesses, here confessing that we have not seen the phenomenon directly. However, the honesty of the people who told us the story gives no room for any doubt regarding its occurrence. We have another perhaps even more powerful reason to admit it. It is the fact that the theory demonstrates its possibility. Now, there is nothing better to reinforce a conviction than the verification. Nothing provokes doubt more than saying: *I saw it but I did not understand it*. Let us try then to understand it. Let us start by raising some preliminary objections. The first one that easily comes to mind is the fact that Mr. Squire may use some very secretive means or, in other words, he is a skillful con artist; or even that he is a charlatan, as crudely said by those who don't bother to be called rude. One word only is enough to respond to such a hypothesis: Mr. Squire came to Paris as a visitor only and takes no advantage of his strange faculty. Well then, since there is no uninterested charlatan to us that is the most important guarantee of honesty. If Mr. Squire had charged a fee per person, or if he were moved by any interest whatsoever, than the suspicions of foul play would be perfectly legitimate.

We don't have the honor of knowing him in person but we know that he is a very respectable person, with a kind and benevolent character, and we have learned that through other trustworthy individuals. He is a renowned writer, working for several journals in the USA.

The critic rarely takes into account the person's character and the driving force behind their actions. That is a big mistake since such appreciation is of the essence. There are cases in which the accusation of fraud is not only offensive but illogical.

Having said that and leaving aside any presumption of fraud, one needs to know if the phenomenon could be produced with muscular force. Tests were carried out with the support of very strong men and everyone agreed that it was absolutely impossible to lift that table with one hand and even more so to make it spin in the air. We must add that the physical structure of Mr. Squire is not exactly that of Hercules.

Since the use of physical force is impossible, given the circumstances, and that a thorough exam prevents the use of any mechanical means of support, it is then necessary to admit that there is a superhuman action at play. Every effect has a cause; if the cause is not in humanity it is absolutely necessary that it is outside; in other words, in the intervention of invisible beings that surround us, knowingly the spirits.

The phenomenon produced by Mr. Squire is nothing new to spiritists, with the exception of the way that it is produced; bottom line is that it belongs to the category of all other phenomena of transport and dislocation of objects, with or without contact, of suspension of heavy bodies in the air. Its principle is in

the elemental phenomena of the turning tables, whose complete theory can be found in "*The Mediums' Book*".

Any person that may have given some thought to that theory can easily find the explanation about the effects produced by Mr. Squire. Undoubtedly the fact that a table may lift up, move on the floor, rise and stay in the air without support, without any physical contact, is even more extraordinary. If we can understand these phenomena then we can even more so the phenomenon described above.

One may still ask where the proof of the intervention of the spirits is in all that. If the effects were purely mechanical it is true that there would not be any proof of intervention and in such case the acknowledgment of an electric fluid or similar would be enough. However, since there is proof of an intelligent phenomenon there must be an intelligent cause behind it. Well then, it was through the signs of intelligence of these effects that it was possible to recognize that the phenomena were not purely material. We speak of the spiritist phenomena as a whole since there are some whose intelligent effect is almost null, as in Mr. Squire's case. He could then be supposed to have a natural electrical potential, like many other people seem to have. However, as far as we know, light has never been an obstacle to the action of electricity or the magnetic fluid. On the other hand, the detailed analysis of the circumstances of the phenomenon rule out such hypothesis, while there is an evident analogy with the other phenomena that can only be produced by the intervention of occult intelligences. It is then more rational to classify it among the latter ones. We still need to know how the spirit is able to act upon matter.

When a table moves it is not the spirit that grabs it and raises it with their hands, for the simple fact that although they do have a body like ours, it is fluidic and cannot exert a muscular action properly speaking. The spirit saturates the table with its own fluid, combined with the *animalized fluid* of the medium. Thus, the table becomes momentarily animated by a kind of fictitious life. The table then obeys the will of the spirit, like a living creature would do. It expresses happiness, rage and several feelings of the spirit through its movements, serving the spirit. It is not the table that thinks, that becomes happy or angry; and it is not the spirit that incorporates in the table because the spirit does not metamorphoses into a table. The table is just a docile, obedient instrument serving the spirit's will, like a baton agitated by a person, and with which the person can make threats or express other feelings. In this case, the baton is sustained by the muscles but the table, since it cannot be displaced by the muscles of the spirit, is then agitated by their fluids that replace the muscular force. This is the fundamental principle of all similar motions.

One question that seems more difficult at first sight is this: how could a heavy body be moved from the ground and be maintained in the air, contrary to the law of gravity? In order to understand this we need to remember what happens daily before our eyes. It is a well-known fact that there is a distinction between the mass and the weight of a solid body. The mass of a given body is always the same, depending on the sum of all molecules; the weight varies depending on the density of the medium where it is located. That is why a body weighs less in water than in air and even less in mercury. Suppose a heavy table is placed on the floor of a room that is suddenly flooded with water. The table will lift up on its own, or at least a man or even a child would be able to lift it, almost effortlessly. Here is another comparison: let us make a vacuum underneath a pneumatic bell, where there will be no air left inside the chamber to balance the external air; the bell would then become so heavy that even the strongest man cannot move it. However, the mass of the table or the bell has not changed by a single atom, but its relative weight has either increased or diminished due to the density of the surrounding fluid (buoyancy).

Now, do we know every fluid of nature or even all properties of the fluids that are known? It would be presumptuous to admit that. The examples above serve as comparison, but we don't say similarity. We just want to show that the spiritist phenomena that appear strange to us are not stranger than those mentioned above and can thus be explained, if not by the same causes at least by analogous ones.

In fact, there we have a table that evidently loses its apparent weight at a given moment and that, in different circumstances, becomes overloaded, and such fact cannot be explained by the known laws. Since it is repeated, it then demonstrates that it is submitted to a law that cannot be considered inexistent just because it is unknown. What is that law? The spirits tell us that. However, instead of their explanation we can deduce from analogy, without the need of resorting to miraculous or supernatural causes. The universal fluid, as the spirits call it, is the vehicle and agent of every spiritist manifestation. It is said that the spirits may modify its properties, according to the circumstances; that this fluid is the element that constitutes the perispirit or the semi-material wrapping of the spirit; that it can become visible and even tangible. Is it then irrational to admit that a spirit may at some point in time involve a solid body in a fluidic atmosphere whose modified properties produce on that solid body the effect of being in a denser or thinner surroundings? Under this assumption the motion of the heavy table by Mr. Squire is very naturally explained, as every other similar phenomenon.

The need for darkness is more embarrassing. Why would such an effect stop in the presence of the tiniest ray of light? Would the luminous fluid have any mechanical influence here? It is not likely since similar facts do perfectly occur in daylight. Such specificity can only be associated to the special nature of the spirits that manifest through that medium. Why this medium and not others? This is a mystery only penetrated by those who identify themselves with the multiple types of sometimes bizarre phenomena of the invisible world. They are the only ones who can understand the sympathies between the dead and those alive.

What is the category of such spirits? Are they good or bad? We know that we have offended egotistic earthlings by depreciating the value of the spirits who produce physical manifestations; we have been harshly criticized because we classify them as the acrobatics of the invisible world. We apologize and say that this expression is not ours but from the spirits.

We ask for their forgiveness but we could never accept the idea that superior spirits would come to us to have fun, and do stunts and other things like that, in the same way that we cannot be convinced that clowns, circus strongmen, tightrope walkers and jugglers are members of the prestigious *Institute (Academy of Sciences of Paris –LC)*. Those who are aware of the hierarchy of the spirits know that there are spirits of all levels of intelligence and morality, and that is not surprising since the spirits are nothing more than the souls of those who lived here on Earth. Now then, until proven otherwise allow us to doubt that spirits like Pascal, Bossuet and others less elevated may come to serve us and make tables turn, to amuse a group of curious people. We ask those who think otherwise if they believe that they would play such a role after their deaths. Those that operate with Mr. Squire have servility incompatible with the least intellectual superiority, from which we can conclude that they must belong to inferior orders, but this does not mean that they are bad. One can be honest and good and still incapable of reading and writing.

The bad spirits are typically unruly, angry and like to do evil things. Now, we are not aware of any bad behavior carried out by those spirits that manifest through Mr. Squire. They obey peacefully, submissively; a fact that excludes any suspicion of malevolence, but that does not make them capable of giving us philosophical teachings. We are sure that Mr. Squire has enough common sense to preclude himself from being offended by our appreciation. The subordination showed by the spirits that assist him led one of our comrades to say that those spirits knew him from a previous existence, in which Mr. Squire

might have had great authority upon them, that being the main reason why they still show a passive obedience now. Besides, one must not confuse the spirits properly given to physical effects, commonly designated by the name “rapping spirits” with those who communicate through knocks. This latter means of communication is an actual language and may be employed by spirits of any order.

We have noted that we met a large number of people who witnessed the experiences of Mr. Squire, but among those who were not initiated in the Spiritist Science many have remained unconvinced, demonstrating that the simple vision of the most extraordinary effects is not good enough to lead them to conviction. They changed their opinion after having heard our explanations. We certainly don't present this theory as the last word and definitive solution. However, since the facts cannot be explained by known laws, one must agree that the system that we admit is not destitute of likelihood. Let us admit it, if you like, as a hypothesis, and when a better solution is presented we will be the first to accept it.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

February 1861

Lack of mediums

Although it was only recently that it was published, *The Mediums' Book* has already given rise to the formation of private spiritist groups in several places, as we advised. They tell us, however, that they have to stop given the lack of mediums. That is why we see it as our responsibility to give them some advice on how to face that issue.

A medium, particularly a good medium, is incontestably one of the essential elements of any meeting that deals with Spiritism; but it would be a mistake to think that in their absence there wouldn't be anything

else to do and that we should sit back and cross our arms or adjourn the session. We don't absolutely share the opinion of a person that compares a spiritist session without mediums to a concert without musicians. We believe that there is a much more appropriate comparison – it is that of the Institute of all scientific societies that know how to use their time without the need to have before their eyes the elements of experimentation.

One goes to a concert to hear music. It is then evident that if the musicians are not there than the objective will have failed. However, we go to a spiritist meeting – or at least we should – to learn, to get instructed. The question now is if we can do that without the medium. For someone who attends such gatherings with the sole objective of seeing effects, the medium would be as indispensable as the musicians in the concert; however, those who seek enlightenment, who want to gain in-depth understanding of the several parts of the science, those will have more than one way of achieving that even in the absence of an instrument of experimentation. That is what we will try to explain.

For starters we say that if mediums are common, good mediums in the true meaning of the word are rare. Experience constantly demonstrates that it is not enough to have the mediumistic faculty in order to receive good communications. It is then better to lack an instrument than to have a defective one.

It is certain that those who seek more the fact than the quality in the communication; that take part more for distraction than clarification, the choice of a medium is indifferent, and the one who produces the greater amount of effects will then be the most interesting one. But we speak of those who have a more serious objective and see farther; it is to them that we are addressing, since we are sure to be understood. On the other hand the best mediums are subjected to more or less lengthy intermittences, during which there is partial or total suspension of the mediumistic faculty, not to mention the high number of accidental causes that may momentarily deprive them from their participation. Let us still add to the fact that the perfectly flexible mediums, those malleable to all sorts of manifestations, are even rarer. They usually have special skills from which they should not be diverted from. You see then, if we don't have enough spare supply of mediums, we can suddenly be unprepared when least expected, and it would be unfortunate to have our work interrupted on such occasions.

The fundamental teaching that is sought in serious gatherings is, no doubt, the one given by the spirits. However, what would be the benefit taken by a pupil from if a more skillful teacher was by his side and he did not have to work himself? If he did not give any thought to the lessons? What would be the advancement of his intelligence if the teacher were permanently by his side, spoon-feeding him each task and sparing him from the effort of thinking?

The spirits play two roles in the spiritist meetings: some are the teachers who develop the principles of the science, clarifying all doubtful points, particularly teaching the laws of true morality; others operate as material of observation and study, and serving as examples of application. Once the lesson has been given, their task ends and ours begins, that is, to work on what we were taught, so that we can better understand its meaning and scope. This is to allow us time to do our duties (if we may make this classical comparison) that spirits sometimes suspend their communications. They get tired of endlessly and uselessly repeating the same thing. They warn us, if we do not listen they will leave so that we take time for reflection.

In the absence of mediums, a meeting whose objective goes beyond the sight of a moving pencil has a thousand and one means of employing the time in a useful way. We scantily indicate a few below:

1st – Re-read and comment previous communications whose careful study will better express its true value. If anyone said that this can be tedious and boring we would say that we are never tired

of listening to good music or poetry; that after having heard an eloquent sermon we would like to read it again with a fresh mind; that certain books are read twenty times because every time we discover something new. Someone that is only impressed by words gets bored when the same thing is only repeated twice, even if it is something sublime; such person always feels the need for something new to attract their attention, or better saying, in order to distract them. The person that gives thought to the subject has an additional sense: such a person is more in touch by the ideas than the words. That is why they like to hear numerous times something that speaks to their soul, not stopping at their ears.

2nd – Recount knowledgeable facts, discuss them, analyze them, explain them by the laws of the spiritist science; examine their possibility or impossibility; find what there is of probable or exaggerated cause; distinguish imagination from superstition, etc.

3rd – Read, comment and develop each article of *The Spirits' Book* and *The Mediums' Book*, as well as all other publications about Spiritism. We hope to be forgiven here for citing our own publications, which is very natural since that is why they were written. As a matter of fact, this is only an indication and not an intentional recommendation. Those who do not agree are perfectly free to set them aside. It is far from us to be pretentious and to believe that others cannot do it as well as or even better than we did. Our only point here is that we do believe that through these books the Spiritist Science is faced in a more comprehensive way than in many other publications, and that they encompass a larger number of questions and objections. That is why we recommend them; for their intrinsic merit, the future will be the great judge of that. One day we will provide a rational catalog of the books that directly or indirectly deal with the Spiritist Science, in the former and modern times, in France and abroad, among the holy and profane writers, as soon as we have gathered the necessary elements. It is naturally a very extensive work and we appreciate very much those who want to facilitate the task by providing us with documents and references.

4th – Discuss the several systems of interpretation of the spiritist phenomena.

Regarding this subject we recommend Mr. de Mirville and Mr. Louis Figuier's books which are the most important. The first one is rich with facts of the highest interest, collected from legitimate sources. It is only the conclusion that is questionable since he sees demons everywhere. It is true that his taste was well served by chance, bringing before his eyes what could help him best, whereas a large number of facts seen by religion as the acts of angels and saints were hidden from him.

L'histoire du merveilleux dans les temps modernes (translated here as *The History of the Marvelous*) by Mr. Figuier, is interesting from another point of view. It is not very clear why some facts are described in details in the book but it is interesting to know them. As for the so called spiritist phenomena, these occupy the smallest part of the four volumes. While Mr. Mirville explains everything by the devil when others explain them by angels, Mr. Figuier who doesn't believe in the devil, or in angels, or in the spirits, good or bad, explains everything, or believes to do so, as the result of the human body. Mr. Figuier is a scientist. He is serious and is supported by some scientists. One can then consider his books as the last official word of the science about Spiritism, and that word is the negation of *any intelligent principle* outside matter. It is a shame that science may serve such a sad cause. However, since it is science that incessantly unveils the wonders of creation that writes the name of God on each leaf of the plants, on each wing of the insects, that science is not to blame. The culprits are those who struggle to persuade others, in the name of science, that there is no hope after death.

The spiritists will then see in that book what becomes of the terrible stroke of lightening that should supposedly annihilate their belief. Those who could have been shaken, afraid of the shock, will become stronger when they see the weakness of the opposed arguments; the many contradictions resulting from the ignorance and a lack of real observation of the facts. The reading of this work can be useful with that respect, and also to allow the spiritists to talk about it with better knowledge than the author does with Spiritism, having denied it without having studied it, for the sole reason of simply denying the existence of any extraordinary human power. One must not fear the infection of similar ideas. They offer the antidote themselves: man's instinctive aversion to the nothingness. The prohibition of a book is a demonstration of fear. We do recommend Mr. Figuiet's book.

If the flimsiness of the arguments against Spiritism is manifested in the serious works, their total worthlessness is only in their bitter attacks and defamatory articles where the powerless rage is betrayed by rudeness, insults and slander. It would give them too much importance had we read them in our serious gatherings. There is nothing to refute on them, nothing to discuss, and consequently nothing to learn. They just need to be neglected. As one can then see, outside the instructions of the spirits there is ample material for useful work. We would even add that we can collect abundant material from their study to submit to the spirits through our questions.

However, if we can provide for the momentary absence of mediums, it would not be logical to sustain their indefinite deficiency. All efforts must be employed with the objective of finding them. The best thing to do for a spiritist gathering is to find mediums inside the group, here referring the reader to our last publication, pages 306 and 307 (*The Mediums' Book, Chap. XVII*), where one can see that the task is easier than originally thought.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

February 1861

Letter about incredulity

Conclusion (see January 1861)

There are spirits since the day man began to exist on Earth. Therefore, the spirits have been manifesting to man since those days. History and tradition are full of evidence on this subject, whether it was because some did not understand the phenomena of such manifestations; while others were discouraged to talk about them out of fear of imprisonment or burning at the stake; or because such events would be considered superstitious or coming from charlatans by very prejudiced people or from those who were not interested in the enlightenment of others; or finally because the phenomena were attributed to the devil, by another kind of interest, the fact of the matter is that even up until recently the phenomena had not been explained in a satisfactory way, or at least the true theory had not yet become of public domain, probably due to the fact that humanity was not sufficiently mature for that as for many other wonderful things that take place in our days. It was reserved for our time to see the emergence of the steam engine, electricity, animal magnetism from the point of view of applied sciences, as well as Spiritism, being the most remarkable of them all not only for the material proof of our immaterial existence and immortality, but also for the establishment of a somehow material and permanent communication between the invisible world and us.

What incalculable consequences should not be born of such a miraculous event! However, speaking only about something that touches everybody in general, as death for example, we see it reduced to its actual role of a natural accident, necessary and even happy I would say, thus losing its painful and terrible stigma, since it is the awakening of those who die. Can we still be in touch with those who are dear to us the day after their death? Nothing has changed beyond our physical relationships! We don't see them anymore, we don't touch them or hear their voices but we continue to exchange our thoughts with them, as we did when alive, and often to us in a more advantageous way. What can remain so painful after that? If we add to the preceding the certainty about the fact that our separation will not last more than a few years, a few months, a few days maybe, wouldn't it all be just the transformation of what used to be terrifying before into a simple event, something that was certainly the permanent torment of so many people? I am moving away from the main subject, though!

Before I explain to you the very simple practice of communications, I would like to try to give you an idea about a physiological theory that I built for myself. I am not saying that it is correct since I have not seen it explained by science yet, but at least it seems to me that it is something similar to this. The more adequate the matter is to receive the influence of the spirit the easier it is for the spirit to act. Hence it does not act directly upon all kinds of matter, although it could act indirectly as long as there it finds between the spirit and that matter certain substances of a flexible association, capable of establishing the contact between the two extremes, that is to say, the raw matter and spirit. That is how the spirit of a living person can move blocks of stone, can manipulate and aggregate it thus forming what we call houses, columns, churches, palaces, etc. Was it all done by a human body? Who would dare say? Yes, it was all made by man as it is my hand that writes this letter. Let us return to the subject though because I am moving away again.

How does the spirit act upon the heavy block of stone it wants to move? Through the graduated matter between the spirit and the block; the lever establishes the connection with the hand; the hand establishes the connection with the muscles; the muscles with the nerves; the nerves with the brain and the brain with the spirit, unless there is a more delicate matter, a fluid that allows the relationship between the brain and the spirit. Whatever is the case, the existence of an intermediary would not hurt the theory. If the spirit acts as a first or second hand in touch with the brain, it always acts very close so that when the contact is considered reversed, or in its natural order, there you have the spirit acting upon a very subtle matter, organized by the Creator's wisdom so that it may receive directly or almost directly the action of his will. That matter, the brain, acts through its ramifications, the so called nerves, upon a less delicate matter

called muscles, still capable of responding to its commands. The muscles impinge movement onto the solid parts of the body, limbs and bones, while the remaining structure serves as support to the action. When the bones are not strong enough or long enough to carry out the action, its force is then multiplied by the use of tools such as the lever, and the heavy and inert block moves, obedient to the will of the spirit that would not be capable of such an action but through the intermediary hierarchy below.

That is more or less how the minor actions of the spirit are explained, as well as the execution of things like drying a lake, moving a hill, etc. The body almost disappears amidst a multitude of necessary instruments in which it only plays the role as the first layer of contact.

Suppose I want to write a letter. What should I do? Establish a connection between my spirit and a piece of paper, as I did before with the stone. I replace the lever by the pen and that is it. The piece of paper reflects my spirit's thoughts, like the movement of the block also manifested by the will of the spirit earlier on.

If my spirit wants to transmit the thought more directly, more promptly to you, and as long as there is no barrier such as distance or an interfering body between us, again, by means of the brain and nerves, it acts upon the organ of voice hitting the air in a number of ways, producing a variety of conventional sounds that reflect the thoughts, then affecting your hearing organ that in turn transmits my thoughts to your spirit again through the nerves and brain. It is always the thought, manifested and transmitted by a series of graded physical agents, interposed between the principle and the objective.

If the theory above is true then there is nothing easier than the explanation of the phenomena of spiritist manifestations, particularly the writing mediumship that is our focus now. Since the psychic substance is identical to all spirits, their means of action upon matter must be the same. Only the strength may vary. Also, the matter of the nerves is organized in such a way that it may receive the action of a given spirit, there is no reason why it could not receive the influence of another spirit, whose nature is the same as the former and since the substance of all spirits are the same, then all spirits are capable of exerting, I would not say the same action but the same mode of action upon the substance, every time they have the necessary conditions to do so. Well then, this is what happens in the evocations.

What is evocation? It is the act through which a given spirit, owner of a body, requests another spirit, or put simply, allows another spirit to use his own body, its instruments, in order to manifest their thoughts or will. And that does not mean that the owner leaves the body behind. They can temporarily minimize their own action upon the organs of transmission, leaving them to serve the other spirit but only during the period of time allowed by the owner, given the axiom of natural law, that each person is the master of their own home. However, it is necessary to say, it also happens in Spiritism what happens in other human societies, that such right to ownership is not always scrupulously respected by the spirits and that many mediums have been surprised for having given shelter to uninvited and even less desired guests. Nevertheless, this is one among the thousands of meaningless troubles of life that we must learn to endure, because they also have their useful side, not to mention the fact that we are tested while they are the manifest demonstration of the spirits' action upon our body, leading us to write things that we were not even dreaming of or that we were not willing to hear about. Yet, this only happens to mediums in their infancy. Once the medium is experienced it will probably happen more, but they do not allow their body to be taken over.

Is everybody capable of being a medium? It should naturally be so, although to varying degrees, as with all others skills. This is Mr. Kardec's opinion. There are writing mediums, clairvoyants, hearing mediums and intuitive mediums. The mediums who write, these are the most numerous and most useful. There are

medium who see the spirits; others who hear and talk to them as they do with the living, although rare; others who receive the thought of the evoked spirit in their minds, then orally transmit it.

It is very rare when the medium bears several of these faculties at the same time. There is still another kind of medium, whose presence in a given place allows the spirits to communicate through rapping knocks or by the motion of objects, like the movement of a small table, the levitation of a chair, a large table or any other object. That is how the spirits started to manifest, revealing their existence. You heard about the turning and dancing tables. You laughed as I did too; oh well! It was the first means employed by the spirits to attract our attention. That is how their presence was acknowledged, after which, with observation and study we discovered unknown faculties up until then were ignored, through which we can enter into direct communication with the spirits.

Isn't all that wonderful? Nonetheless, it is all natural, only that – I repeat – it was reserved for our time, the great discovery and application of this science, like many other marvelous secrets of nature.

Now, to get in touch with the spirits, or at least to see if you are able of doing so through writing, we take a piece of paper and a sharpened pencil and move into position to write. It is always good to start by saying a prayer to God, then evoking a spirit, meaning that one would kindly invite them to come to communicate with us, helping us to write. Then, patiently wait in the same position.

There are some people that have a more developed mediumistic faculty that they start writing right away. Others, on the contrary, only see their faculties developing with time and perseverance. In that case the session is repeated every day, for about fifteen minutes. It is useless to go beyond that interval but it must be repeated daily since perseverance is one of the first conditions of success. It is also necessary to say a prayer and evocation from your heart, and even repeating it during the exercise; have a strong will, a strong desire to succeed, and particularly do not get distracted. After writing there are some final precautions to be taken. When the person is about to write there is generally a slight shake of the hand, sometimes preceded by a light numbness of the hand and arm, and on other occasions some minor pain in the muscles of the arm and hand. These are the precursor signs and almost always evident that the moment of success is not far off; sometimes followed by immediate success, in other cases it may arrive in a few days, but it will come. The only difference is that to get to such a condition one needs more or less time, varying from an instant to six months, but I insist that only fifteen minutes a day are necessary.

Regarding the spirits that can be evoked for such exercises, it is preferable to address the familiar spirit that is always around, while other spirits may be present only momentarily and not be present at the time of evocation, or incapable of attending our invitation for any given reason, as this does happen sometimes.

The familiar spirit that is somehow similar to the Catholic guardian angel, is not exactly what is presented by the religious dogma. It is just the spirit of a mortal that has lived like us but who is much more advanced than us, hence infinitely superior in intelligence and benevolence; that executes a mission here that is commendable to them and useful to us, following us in this world as in the other one, until they are called to another reincarnation or until the time that we ourselves are called to realize a similar mission with a mortal that is less developed than we are, once we have achieved a certain degree of evolution.

All that, my dear friend, so marvelously present in our ideas of universal solidarity, as you see. All that, by showing us such solidarity that has occurred at all times and always working between us and the invisible world, demonstrates that evidently this is not an utopian human design but one of the laws of nature; that the first thinkers who preached it were not inventing it, but only discovered it; and finally that since such solidarity is part of nature it will fatally be incorporated by human societies, despite the

resistance and obstacles still opposed by blind adversaries.⁷ I still have to talk about the mode of evocation. It is the simplest thing.

There is no mystical or compulsory formula for that. You address the spirit in the terms that suit you; that's all. I will tell you what I do just to help you understand how simple it is. "*Almighty God! Allow my guardian angel (or the spirit of ..., if you prefer to evoke another spirit) to communicate with me, and make me write.*" Or even this one: "*In the name of Almighty God I ask you my guardian angel (or the spirit of ...) to communicate with me.*"

Now, would you like to see the result of my own experience? Here it is.

After six unfruitful weeks of exercise I one day felt my hand tremble, agitate and suddenly drew some shapeless characters on the paper. During the following exercises the characters became more regular, although still incomprehensible. I wrote lines and pages at the speed of my regular writing, always unintelligible. On other occasions I wrote different paragraphs, small, large, sometimes even using the whole page. Then it was just straight lines, from top to bottom, or horizontal lines across the paper; then circles, small and large, repeated so many times that the whole paper became darkened by the pencil. Then, after one month of the most varied kinds of exercise, but also most insignificant, I started to become upset with that and asked my familiar spirit to at least draw some letters, in case he could not write words. I then received all letters of the alphabet but it stopped there. Meanwhile my wife who always had the feeling that she was not a medium decided to try and after only fifteen days she started writing correctly and with agility. More fortunate than I was, she wrote correctly and intelligibly. One of our friends was able to start scribbling, as I did, from his second exercise but it did not go further than that. We did not give up, convinced that it is a trial and that sooner or later we would write. One needs patience. It is not difficult. In another letter I will tell you about the communications that we received through my wife and that, quite unique within themselves; are without a doubt convincing enough in respect to the existence of the spirits. That is enough for the day. I wanted to give you a presentation, although it is a short summary, however, so you could embrace the totality of the spiritist theory. I hope this is enough to excite your curiosity and particularly catch your attention. Your study of the specialized books will do the rest. Pending the book which will have the practical instructions that I mentioned to you, I will shortly send the philosophical book entitled *The Spirits' Book*. Read, study, read again, try, work and above all, don't give up. It is worth it. Still: don't give importance to those who laugh; many of them are no longer laughing, although they still have the organs that served them formerly.

To you and see you soon,

Canu

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

February 1861

⁷ Everyone knows the level of mockery and the audacity of exploitation of natural facts which are not yet explained, however little they are considered marvelous.

Family conversations from beyond the grave

The suicide of an atheist

Mr. J.B.D... was an educated man saturated to the highest degree of materialistic ideas, believing in neither his soul nor God. He deliberately drowned two years ago. He was evoked following the request of one of his relatives.

1. Evocation – A. I suffer. I am condemned.
2. We were asked to call you by one of your relatives who wanted to know about your fate. Could you tell us if the evocation is pleasing or painful to you? – A. It is painful.
3. Was your death voluntary? – A. Yes.

Observation: The spirit shows extreme difficulty to write. The writing is large, irregular, convulsive and almost unintelligible. He showed rage in the beginning, tore the paper off and broke the pencil.

4. Calm down. We will pray for you. – A. I am forced to believe in God.
5. What has led you to destroy your life? – A. Boredom with a hopeless life.

Observation: Suicide is understandable if life is hopeless. One wants to escape unhappiness at any price. With Spiritism, however, the future unfolds and hope is warranted. Suicide then makes no sense; we say even more, one recognizes that it is not possible to escape any tribulation through this path only to find another one hundred times worse. That is why Spiritism has already saved so many victims from a voluntary death. Are those who look for a moral and philosophical objective in Spiritism wrong, are they dreamers? Guiltier are those who strive to promote the desperate idea that everything ends with this life, the idea that is a source of so many crimes and evils, and that it is conveyed through the use of scientific fallacies and supposedly in the name of reason. They will be responsible not only for their own errors, but for all the evils which they have been the cause.

6. You wanted to escape the tribulations of life. Were you successful? Are you better now? – A. Why does the nothingness not exist!
7. Could you kindly describe your actual situation, the best you can? – A. I suffer for being forced to believe in everything that I denied. My soul is like a raging fire; it is horribly tormented.
8. Where did you take your materialistic ideas from when alive? – A. I was bad in another existence and my spirit was condemned to suffer the torments of doubt during my life. Hence, I killed myself.

Observation: There is a whole order of ideas here. We often wonder how there can be anyone so materialistic having passed through the spiritual world already we should have better intuition. Well then, it is precisely such intuition that is denied to certain spirits, as a punishment, proud spirits who have retained their pride and did not repent. We must not forget that the Earth is a place of atonement. That is why there are so many bad spirits incarnated here.

9. When you were drowning, what did you think would happen to you? What were your thoughts at that point? – A. None. It was nothing to me. Later I saw that I would still suffer a lot, since my penalties were not over yet.
10. Now are you convinced about the existence of God, about the soul and a future life? – A. Oh! I am terribly tormented by that!
11. Have you met your wife and brother again? – A. Oh! No!
12. Why not? – A. Why should we be together again in our torments? We are exiled in misfortune; we should be united in happiness. Pity on me!
13. Would you like to see your brother again? We could call him to be with you. – A. No, no. I am in such a bad shape.
14. Why don't you want us to call him? – A. He is not happy either.
15. You are afraid of his presence. However, wouldn't he make you feel better? – A. No. Later.
16. Your relative asks if you were present at your funerals and if you were happy with what he did on that occasion. – A. Yes.
17. Would you like to say something to him? – A. That you can pray a little for me.
18. It seems that in the social circles that you had once attended, some people shared the same opinion you had in your lifetime; do you have something to say about this? – A. Ah! The misery! May they believe in another life! It is all I can wish them for their happiness. If they could understand my sad situation they would give serious thoughts to that.

Evocation of his brother who professed the same ideas but did not commit suicide. Although unhappy, he is calmer. His writing is clear and intelligible.

19. Evocation. – A. I hope the picture of our suffering may be useful to you, persuading you that there is another life in which we atone for our faults and disbeliefs!
20. Do you and your brother who we have just evoked see one another? – A. No. He runs away from me.
21. You are more composed than he is. Could you give us a more accurate description of your sufferings? – A. Doesn't your self-esteem, your pride suffer on Earth when you are forced to acknowledge your own mistakes? Doesn't it cause revolt to your spirit when you have to humiliate yourself before someone that demonstrates that you are wrong? Then! What do you think happens to a spirit that spent his whole life persuaded that there is nothing beyond his ideas and that he is right against everyone else? When such a spirit is suddenly faced by the shining truth he feels annihilated, humiliated. Then the feelings of remorse occur for having denied for such a long time the existence of such a good and indulgent God. It is an unbearable condition; there is no peace, no rest; there will only be tranquility when the sacred grace of God will finally touch him, because pride immensely grasps our poor spirit entirely wrapping around it, and it will take a long time to unwrap this fatal garment. It is only by the prayers of our brothers that can help us to get rid of it.
22. Do you mean your living brothers or the spirits? – A. One and the other.
23. While we talked with your brother one of the persons present here prayed for him. Was that prayer useful to him? – A. It will not be lost. He may refuse it now but it will come back to him when he is in a better state to receive this panacea.

The result of these two evocations was passed on to the person who requested them. We then received the following answer:

"You cannot imagine, Sir, the good produced by the evocation of my father-in-law and my uncle. We recognized them perfectly well. The writing of the first one, in particular, was very similar to the one he used when alive, it was even better than the last few months he spent

with us; his writing was shaky and illegible. We find the same writing of the letters, in particular d, f, o, p, q and t. As for the words, expressions and style, these are even more remarkable. The analogy is perfect to us except with respect to his better understanding of God, the soul and eternity that he formerly denied so vehemently. We are then perfectly convinced of the identity. God shall be even more glorified by our belief in Spiritism, and our brothers, spirits and living ones, will become better. The identity of his brother is no less evident. We acknowledge a huge difference between the atheist and the believer, and the marks of character, style and expressions. One word in particular has shocked us: panacea. He used that word all the time, with everybody.

I showed both communications to several people who were shocked by their veracity. However, the incredulous, those who share the opinion that my two relatives had, wanted more categorical answers, like: that Mr. D... for example, precisely describe the place where he was buried, the place where he drowned, how it happened, etc. In order to satisfy and convince them could you address the following questions to them: Where and how the suicide took place? For how long had his body been under water? Where was his body found? Where was it buried? What was the civil or religious procedure during the funerals, etc.?

I kindly ask you Sir to request more categorical answers to these essential points to those who still have doubt. I am convinced about the immense benefit that this will have. I made the arrangements necessary to have this letter delivered to you tomorrow, Friday, so that you can evoke the spirit in the session that takes place that day at the Society, etc.”

We reproduced this letter for the aspect of identity that it establishes. We add our response below for the instruction of persons who are not familiarized with the communications from beyond the grave.

“...The questions that you would like to have sent to the spirit of your father-in-law are certainly praiseworthy whose intention is to convince the incredulous, but to you there doesn't seem to be any mixed feelings of doubt and curiosity. However, a more profound knowledge of Spiritism would have led you to understand that those questions are unnecessary.

To begin with, by asking your father-in-law to give more categorical answers you certainly ignore the fact that we don't control the spirits according to our wishes. They answer when they want and how they want to, and often, how they can respond. Their freedom of action is even greater than when alive and they are better equipped to respond to any moral pressure that we might try to put on them. The best proof of identity are given spontaneously, following their wishes or derived from the circumstances, and in the majority of the cases it is a waste of time to provoke them. Your relative has unequivocally demonstrated his identity, according to your opinion. It is then likely that he will consider unnecessary, and rightfully so, questions destined to satisfy the curiosity of persons who are indifferent to him. He could then answer, as other spirits have done in similar cases, asking back: - what is the interest in asking me these things that you know the answer? – I will add still that the state of perturbation and suffering of the spirit must turn such investigation into a painstaking process, in the same way that someone would try to force a patient that can hardly think and speak to give us details of their lives. It would certainly be a lack of respect for their condition.

Regarding your expected result, it would be certainly inexistent. The proof of identity that was given has an even greater value for the very reason of having been spontaneous and that there wasn't anything pointing to a particular direction. If the disbelievers are not satisfied by that, they would not be either by questions that could give rise to suspicion of complicity. There are people who would not be convinced by anything. They would see you father-in-law with their own eyes, saying that you would be victimized by some sort of hallucination. The best one can do is to leave them in peace and do not waste time with useless words. We can only feel sorry for them since sooner or later they will learn on their own the cost of having denied the light sent by God. It is particularly against those that God's severity is manifested.

Two more words Sir, regarding your request to have the evocation done on the same day that we received your letter. Evocations are not done merely by waving a wand; the spirits don't always respond to our appeal. They must be willing and available to do so. Furthermore, it is also necessary to have a convenient medium with the required skills; that the medium is available at the moment; that the spirit feels a friendly environment, etc. These are all conditions that cannot always be met and that are necessary to attend to in order to carry out serious work."

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

February 1861

Multiple questions and issues

1. Does the incarnate spirit keep the memory of previous existences as well as in the errant state while in a superior world like Jupiter or any other? – A. No. The moment the spirit takes on a material body it no longer has the memory of previous existences.

However, the physical envelope on Jupiter has very little material and for that reason, isn't the spirit freer? – A. Yes, but it is dense enough to remove the memory of the past from the spirit.

Thus, the spirits from Jupiter that communicated with us were they in a state of resting? – A. Certainly. Since the spirit is much more advanced in this world, it understands God and the universe very well but their past is erased, otherwise their intelligence would be obscured; he would not take the time to comprehend more about himself; instead he would be the man from Africa, Europe or America; or from Earth, Mars or Venus?

Observation: If it is necessary to forget the past in a much more advanced world like Jupiter then there is even more reason for that in our material world. It is obvious that the memory of our preceding existences would cast a painful confusion in our ideas, not speaking of all the other inconveniences already mentioned about it. Every act done by God imprints his wisdom and benevolence. It is not up to us to criticize him, especially because we don't understand the objective.

2. Ms. Eugenie, one of the mediums of the Society, shows a remarkable particularity, exceptional in a way, with her prodigious facility to write and the incredible promptness with which every spirit communicates through her. There are only a few mediums with such outstanding flexibility. Why would that be? – A. One owes more to the medium than to the spirit. The spirit would write less quickly through another medium due to the fact that the nature of the instrument would not be the same. Thus, there are drawing mediums, others who are better skilled for Medicine, etc. The spirit acts according to the mediumship. This is a physical rather than a moral cause. The faster the combination between the fluids of the spirit and the medium's, the easier the communication, better serving the speed of thought, and the spirit takes advantage of this the same as you make use of a faster vehicle when you are in a hurry. That liveliness of the medium is purely physical. The spirit of the medium has no influence on that.
3. Wouldn't there be any influence from the moral qualities of the medium? – A. They have great influence on the sympathies of the spirits since you need to know that some have a greater

antipathy towards certain mediums that they can only communicate through them after overcoming great reluctance.

St. Louis

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

February 1861

Teachings of the spirits

Spontaneous dissertations received or read by several mediums at the Society

Year 1860

Medium, Mrs. Costel

I will speak of the philosophical need that the spirits have of making frequent memory regressions on themselves; of giving to the condition of their minds the same care given to their own bodies. Here we are at year end; what progress has it brought to the intellectual world? It has brought a lot, with serious results particularly to the scientific field. The less fortunate literature only received some fragments, although some charming details. However, like the mutilated statue that is found buried underground and that one admires, while regretting the lost integrity of its beauty, literature does not offer any serious piece of work.

In France it ordinarily moves ahead of the other arts. This year it was overtaken by paintings that gloriously flourished over rival schools. Why such a slow pace from our young writers? The explanation is easy. They lack the breath of fresh air generally inspired by their struggles. Indifference has fallen upon them. They are browsed over, criticized but not discussed with passion as in my time, when the literary disputes dominated all other concerns. Besides, one cannot improvise a writer and there is some improvisation in each and every one of them. Long and profound studies are necessary to write. Your generation absolutely lacks that, impatiently seeking the quick and easy success. I finish by admiring the ascending progress of the sciences and arts, regretting the absence of generous impulses inside the spirits and hearts.

J. J. Rousseau

OBSERVATION: This spontaneously given communication proves that the spirits who have left Earth are still concerned with what happens here with respect to their interests, following the movement of moral and intellectual progress. It is not from the infinite depths of space that they could do this; it requires that they are amongst us, in our midst and an invisible witness to what is going on. The above communication and the one following were given in our December 28th session, in which we had discussed the end of the year and the new year that was about to begin. It was then by consequence, appropriately a good fit.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

February 1861

Teachings of the spirits

Spontaneous dissertations received or read by several mediums at the Society

Year 1861

Medium, Mrs. Costel

The year that ends has seen a substantial progress in the belief in Spiritism. It is a reason for great happiness to mankind since it moves humanity away from the border of the abyss that threatens to drag the human spirit. The New Year will be even better as it will see serious material changes and a revolution of ideas, and Spiritism will not be forgotten, believe me; on the contrary, people will cling to it as a stone of salvation. I will pray that God may bless your work and make it advance.

St. Louis

OBSERVATION: In an intimate session another medium spontaneously received the following communication about the same subject:

The year will begin and it contains folds of the greatest things. Head first; the reaction will fall into its own tender trap. Why do you think Earth is covered by railroads and the seas are open to electricity if it was not for the spread of the good news? The truth, the good and the beautiful will finally be understood by all. So, do not get weary, true spiritists, for your task is marked in the work of regeneration. Happy will be those capable of accomplishing it!

Leon J... (Medium's brother)

About the same subject (through another medium)

Change is absolutely necessary. Progress is the divine law and it seems that it has advanced more in recent years than before. The year 1861 will be magnificent when compared to 1860, but still uninspiring when compared to 1862, because you want to get going, dear brothers, and once the divine breath makes the locomotive move, no derailment is possible.

Leo X

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

February 1861

Teachings of the spirits

Comments about the dissertation published under the title: Awakening of a spirit

In a communication dictated by the spirit Georges to Mrs. Costel, published in the October 1860 issue of the Review, under the title “The awakening of a spirit”, it was said that *there is no friendly relationship among errant spirits; that even those who loved one another don't exchange signs of affection*. This theory caused a painful impression to many people, particularly due to the fact that the readers of the Review consider the spirit who wrote it to be an elevated spirit, admiring most of his communications. If this theory were absolute it would be in contradiction with what has been said so many times, that the friendly spirits come to welcome the newly arrived at the time of death; help them to free them from the earthly links and, to a certain degree, initiate them into their new life. On another hand, if the inferior spirits did not communicate with the more advanced ones they could not advance. We tried to refute those objections by an article in the November 1860 issue of the Review under the title: *Loving relationships of the spirits*, but here are the comments from George himself, responding to our request: “*When someone is surprised by death, in the materialistic habits of a life in which there was no time for God; when the person gets to the world of the spirits still shaken by anguish and the earthly fears, it is like a traveler that ignores the language and habits of the visited land. Drowned by the confusion, the person is incapable of communicating and to even understand their own feelings or the feelings of others, for that matter; they are in an errant state, surrounded by silence. The person then slowly feels the germination, the development of new thoughts, and a new soul flourishes from the inside. At that point the enslaved soul feels the untying shackles and like a freed bird, throws oneself into God's arms, with a cry of joy and love. Then, the spirits of their relatives swarm around them, the purified friends who silently welcome their return. It is only a small number of spirits that can communicate with their friends, just after the separation of the body. Merit is required and only those who have gloriously accomplished their tasks are dematerialized enough to enjoy such a favor from God, who allows it as a reward. I presented one of the phases of the spiritual life. I did not mean to generalize, and as it can be seen, I only spoke of the first instants that follow death, that can be more or less prolonged, according to the nature of the spirit. It is up to everyone to abbreviate it, breaking the earthly links already in the corporeal life, since it is only the attachment to material things that preclude the spirit from enjoying the happiness of the spiritual life.*”

Georges”

OBSERVATION: There is nothing more moral than this doctrine since it shows that there is no enjoyment of future promises without merit; that the very joy of meeting loved ones again and communicating with them may be postponed. In short, that the situation in the spiritual life is totally dependent on what we have done in this corporeal life.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

February 1861

Teachings of the spirits

The three characters

(Continuation)

NOTE: In the three following dissertations the spirit develops each of the three characters outlined in his first communication (see the January 1861 issue)

I

“Here in this inferior world of yours self-serving interest, selfishness and pride stifle generosity, charity and simplicity. Self-serving interest and egotism are the two bad characteristics of the investor and the new-rich; pride is the vice of those who have knowledge and is especially true for those who have power. When a heart that truly thinks examines these three horrible vices, it suffers; rest assured that anyone who gives serious thoughts to the nothingness and the evilness in this world is generally someone endowed by kind and charitable instincts. And as you very well know, the kind ones are unhappy, as *La Fontaine* said and that I forgot to place side by side with Molière. The gentle ones are unhappy because they feel. Hamlet is the personification of that unfortunate part of humanity, that is always crying and suffering, avenging God and the moral. Hamlet had to punish shameful sins in his family: pride and lust that is egotism. That subtle, melancholic and truth seeking soul was clouded by the world’s breath, like a mirror that can no longer reflect what is good and fair. And that pure soul shed his mother’s blood, avenging his honor. Hamlet is the powerless intelligence, a profound thought fighting the stupid pride and maternal perversion. A thoughtful man that avenges a sin on Earth, whatever it may be, is guilty before men’s laws but he is frequently not before God. You must not think that I want to fantasize despair! I have been punished a lot, but there is a lot of fog before the eyes of the world!”

Note: The spirit was then asked to give his opinion about *La Fontaine*, who he had just mentioned, then responding:

“La Fontaine is not more renowned than Corneille and Racine. You don’t know much about your scholars while the Germans know both Shakespeare and Goethe. Returning to the subject, *La Fontaine* is the Frenchman by excellence who hides his originality and sensibility under the name Aesop, a happy thinker. But make no mistake; *La Fontaine* was a kind person as I said before. Once he noticed that he was not understood, he introduced that simplicity that you say is false. In your days he would be enlisted among the pseudo-modest. True intelligence is not false, but we often have to howl with the wolves and that is exactly what had lost *La Fontaine* in the opinion of a large number of people. I don’t speak about his genius: it is equal, if not superior to Molière’s.

II

Returning to our very familiar little course of literature, Don Juan is, as I already had the honor of telling you, the best representation of a kind, corrupted and blasphemous man. Molière elevated him to a dramatic event because in reality his punishment should not be of a human kind, but divine. It is through the unexpected strikes of the celestial vengeance that knocks down heads of pride. The more unexpected it is, the more dramatic the effect becomes.

I said that Don Juan was a character but in reality a rare character because there are a few men only of that kind, since almost all of them are cowards. I refer to the class of indifferent and corrupt. Many say blasphemy but I assure you that only a few dare to do so without fear. Their conscience is an echo that reflects their blasphemies and they listen shivering with fear, but laughing before the world. These are the ones you call the braggers of vice these days. This kind of libertine person counts in large numbers today but they are far from being the children of Voltaire. And back to the subject, Molière as a wiser and more profound observer not only condemned the vices that attack humanity but also those who dared to address God.

III

We have seen two characters so far: one generous and unhappy, another one happy to the world but miserable before God. We still miss the uglier, more ignoble, more repulsive one. I refer to Tartuffe.

The mask of virtue was already hideous in antiquity because paganism, not yet purified by Christian morality, also had their wise men and virtues. However, that mask is even uglier before the altar of Christ, since it is plentiful of selfishness and hypocrisy. Paganism may perhaps have had less Tartuffe’s than Christianity. Exploiting the heart of a wise and good man; praising all of their actions; deceiving trustful people through an apparent piety; carrying profanation until the Eucharist is received with pride and blasphemy in their hearts, that is what Tartuffe does, what he did and will always do.

Oh! You, imperfect and mundane men who condemn a divine principle and a super human moral, because you want to abuse it! You are blind when you confuse men with that God like principle with humanity. Tartuffe is horrible and disgusting because he hides his wickedness under a sacred cloak. Curse on him because he cursed when he was forgiven and plotted treason while preaching charity.”

Gérard de Nerval

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

February 1861

Teachings of the spirits

Harmony

(Medium Mr. Alfred Didier)

You have seen many times in certain regions, especially in Provence, the ruins of great castles; sometimes a turret rises amidst the immense solitude and its sad and quiet remains remind us of a time when faith was perhaps ignorant, but when Art and Poetry were raised by that same pure and innocent faith. Notice that this is The Middle Ages. You often don't think that around those dismantled walls the elegant whim of the lady of the castle vibrated the harmonious strings of the once called Aeolian harps. Well then! The turrets, the ladies of the castle and the harmonies disappeared with the speed of the wind that played them! The Aeolus harps soothed the thoughts of the minstrels and the ladies. They were heard with a religious devotion.

Everything ends on your Earth; poetry rarely reaches the heavens and immediately dissipates; on the contrary, in other worlds, harmony is eternal, and regardless of what human imagination can create here it cannot be compared to that constant poetry that is not only in the heart of pure spirits but also in all of nature.

Réné de Provence

Allan Kardec⁸

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

March 1861

The little man is still alive

Regarding the article published in the *Journal des Débats*, by Mr. Deschanel

Mr. Emile Deschanel, whose name was unknown to me, wanted to dedicate twenty four columns of the *Journal des Débats* to us, in the numbers 15 and 29 of last November. We thank him for that or at least for the intention. In fact after the articles “*Bibliographie catholique*” and the “*Gazette de Lyon*”, which regurgitated strong detestations and sharp insults from the mouth in a manner reminiscent of the fifteenth century, we don’t know anything more malicious, less scientific and particularly long-winded than Mr. Deschanel. Such a violent attack must have led him to believe that Spiritism would be dead and buried forever, since it was wounded by his spear and sword. Now, due to the fact that we did not respond to him; because we have not summoned him or have not initiated any controversy, he might be mistaken about the reasons for our silence: we will now explain our motives.

The first reason is that in our opinion there was nothing urgent to be dealt with and we were very comfortable with the wait in order to assess the effect of such an attack, and then respond accordingly. Now that we are perfectly aware of the issue we will say a few words. The second reason is a direct consequence of the first. In order to refute the whole article it would be necessary to reproduce it in its entirety to show the attack and the defense, and that alone would have taken a full issue of our Review. The refutation would take at least two issues. We would then have used up three issues of the Review to object to what? Reasons? No, just mockeries by Mr. Deschanel. Frankly, it was not worth it and our readers do prefer something else. Those willing to get to know his logic will be satisfied by reading the referred texts. Furthermore, our response would have definitely been a repetition of what we have been saying, responding to the *Univers*, to Mr. Oscar Comettant, to the *Gazette de Lyon*, to Mr. Louis Figuier and to the *Bibliographie Catholique*⁹ since all those attacks are nothing more than variations of the same

9 To *Univers*, May and July 1859; to Mr. Comettant, December 1859; to the *Gazette of Lyon*, October 1860; to Mr. Figuier, September and December 1860; to *Bibliographie Catholique*, January 1861

theme. It would then be necessary to repeat the same thing in different terms to avoid being boring and we do not have time for that. What we would have to say would be useless to the followers and not good enough to convince the disbelievers; so, it will be a waste of time. We prefer to reference our works to those who really want to learn. They then can balance the arguments in favor and against. Their own reason will do the rest. As a matter of fact, why should we respond to Mr. Deschanel? To convince him? But we have no interest absolutely in doing that. Some people might say that it would be one follower more. However, what is the actual importance of Mr. Deschanel as a person? Which weight does he bring to the scale when membership reaches in the thousands, starting from the top of the social echelon? But he is a reporter and if instead of attacks he had praised the Doctrine, wouldn't it have been much better? This is a more serious issue. Let us then discuss it.

To begin with, is it certain that Mr. Deschanel, supposedly a new convert, would have dedicated twenty four columns of his paper in favor of Spiritism, as he did against it? We don't believe that for two reasons: first because he would have been afraid of being ridiculed by his comrades; second, because the editor of the newspaper would likely have refused to do so for being afraid of scaring his readers away, who are less worried about the devil than the spirits. We know a good number of scholars and reporters who are this way but are not less sincere and good spiritists because of that. It is a known fact that Mrs. Emile de Girardin who was considered to be a scholarly person, was not only a devout believer but also a good medium who obtained several communications, always reserved and in an intimate circle of friends who shared her convictions. She did not talk about it to other people. Thus, a reporter who dared to speak against but who would not dare to speak in favor, in case of a conversion, is just a simple individual. When we see a mother devastated by the loss of her dear child finding ineffable consolation in the Doctrine, her adhesion to our principles is worth a hundred times more than the adhesion of any celebrity if that celebrity dares not say anything about the Doctrine. Besides, there are plenty of people of good will. These are so numerous and so many come to us that we can hardly serve them. Hence, we don't see the point in wasting our time with those who are indifferent, running after those who don't seek us.

Just one word is enough to reveal if Mr. Deschanel is serious. Here is the beginning of his second article, dated November 29th:

"The Spiritist Doctrine refutes itself. It is enough to expose it. It is not wrong for being called simply spiritist, after all, because it is neither spiritual nor spiritualist. On the contrary, it is based on the grossest materialism, and it would be funny if it were not ridiculous."

Saying that Spiritism is based on gross materialism when it fights materialism relentlessly; when it would be nothing without the soul, its immortality, the future penalties and rewards, of which it is a clear example of, is a stretch of ignorance about the subject that is being dealt with. If it is not ignorance, it is bad faith and slander.

When we see that accusation and when we see him citing the biblical texts, the prophets, Moses' law that prohibits to interrogate the dead – a proof that they can be interrogated since one does not forbid something that is just impossible – we could attribute him with a frenzied orthodoxy but by reading the fallacy of the following texts the readers would be embarrassed to discuss his opinion:

"How can the spirits excite your senses? How can they be seen, heard and touched? And how can they write themselves and give us their autograph from the other world? Oh! These spirits are not spirits as you think: spirits, purely spirits. The spirit, you have heard, is not an abstract, undefined being, only conceived in our minds; it is a real, circumscribed being, in certain cases noticeable through sight, hearing and touch."

"Will these spirits then have a body? Not exactly."

"Well...?"

“Man has three things:

1st – the body or the material being, analogous to the animals, moved by the same vital principle;

2nd – the soul or the immaterial being, the spirit that is incarnate in the body;

3rd – the link between the soul and the body, the intermediary principle between matter and spirit.”

“Intermediary? What the hell are you talking about? It is either matter or not.”

“That depends.”

“What do you mean by – depends?”

“It is like that: the link or perispirit, that bonds the spirit to the body, is a kind of semi-material covering...”

“Semi... semi...!”

“Death is the destruction of the denser covering; the spirit keeps the second that is like an ethereal body, invisible to us in the normal state, but that can become accidentally visible and even tangible, as that which happens in the phenomena of apparitions.”

“However ethereal you like, a body is always a body. That means two bodies. And matter is matter. You can make it as subtle as you wish that there will never be anything semi there. Electricity itself is nothing more than matter and not semi-matter. And regarding your... how do you call it?”

“Perispirit?”

“Yes, your perispirit... I believe that it explains nothing and it does need an explanation on its own.”

“The perispirit operates as the first covering of the spirit, bonding the soul to the body. That is similar to the perisperm and the skin of a fruit or a germ... the perispirit is taken from the environment, from the universal fluid; it simultaneously takes part in the electricity and the magnetic fluid, and to a certain extent into the inert matter... Do you understand?”

“Not really.”

“One could say that it is the quintessence of matter.”

“You have very well quintessence, you cannot pull it away from the spirit or the semi-spirit. Your perispirit is pure matter.”

“It is the principle of organic life but not the intellectual life.”

“In the end it can be whatever you like. Your perispirit is so many things that I don’t know for sure what it is; it can well be nothing.”

The word perispirit, as it seems, offends you. Had you lived at the time when the term perisperm was created you would perhaps have found it ridiculous too. Why not criticize the words that are created every day to express new ideas? It is not the word that I criticize, you will say, it is the thing itself.

Be that you have never seen the perispirit; do you also deny the soul, considering that you have not seen it either? Do you deny God for the same reason? Well! If the soul or the spirit that are the same thing cannot be seen, the perispirit that is their fluidic envelope can be seen, when free, as one can see the soul's material covering when incarnate.

Mr. Deschanel strives to demonstrate that the perispirit must be material. But that is what we have said in all our letters. Would that be the reason that led him to say that Spiritism is a materialistic doctrine? But he is betrayed by the very citation that he makes because we say so using our own terms, but without the witty mockery, that the perispirit is only an independent envelope of the spirit. Where has he heard us saying it is the perispirit that thinks? Being that he does not want a perispirit either; but then he has to tell us how he can explain the action of the spirits upon matter without an intermediary.

Let us not talk about the contemporary apparitions in which he certainly doesn't believe. However, since he is so versed in the Bible, since he so fervently defends it, if it is that he believes in the bible and what it says, can he then explain the apparitions of angels that are mentioned at every instantaneous moment? According to the theological doctrine, the angels are pure spirits; but when they become visible will Mr. Deschanel say that it is the spirit that is made visible? This would be the same as materializing the spirit since only matter can affect our senses. We say that the spirit has an envelope that can make it visible and even tangible at will. It is only the envelope that is material, although very much ethereal, and that does not diminish the actual qualities of the spirit in anyway. We thus explain a fact hitherto inexplicable and we are certainly less materialistic than those who pretend that it is the spirit that transforms into matter in order to act and to be seen.

Those who didn't believe in the apparition of angels in the Bible may believe now, if they believed in the existence of angels but were reluctant due to previous reasoning; they may for that reason understand the possibility of current manifestations, visible, tangible or otherwise, considering that the soul or the spirit has a fluidic envelope or body, and if indeed they believe in the existence of the soul.

Besides, Mr. Deschanel forgot something: to give his own theory of the soul or spirit. As a judicious man he should have said: You are wrong for this or that reason; things are not as you say; here is how they are. It would only be then that we would have something to discuss. However, it is noticeable that this is not done by any contradictor of Spiritism. They deny, mock and slander. We don't know any other logic from them and that does not disturb us or cause much worry. We remain absolutely firm since they propose nothing or seem to have nothing better to offer. It is only the openly materialistic person that has an established system: the void after death. We wish them a lot of happiness if that satisfies them. Unfortunately those who admit the existence of the soul are incapable of solving the most vital questions only according to their theory and hence have no other option but to turn to a blind faith, not a very conclusive reasoning for those who like reason, and these count in large numbers in this period of intellectual enlightenment. Well, since the spiritualists explain nothing in a satisfactory way to the thinkers, they conclude that there is nothing and that the materialists may be right. That is what leads so many people to disbelief whereas those same difficulties are a simple and natural solution in the spiritist theory.

Materialism says: There is nothing beyond matter. Spiritualism says: There is something, but provides no proof. Spiritism says: There is something and demonstrates it, and supported by its foundation it explains what was so far was inexplicable. That is what makes Spiritism bring so many disbelievers back to spiritualism. There is only one thing that we would like to ask Mr. Deschanel: that he may provide his theory and clearly respond to the several questions that we addressed to Mr. Figuiet.

To summarize, Mr. Deschanel's objections are trivial. If he were a serious man; had he criticized with knowledge of the facts; had he not exposed himself by making the huge mistake of defining Spiritism as a materialistic doctrine, he would have tried to study it in-depth; he would have come to meet us, as many others have done, to seek clarifications that we would have gladly provided. However, he preferred to speak

according to his own ideas, and that he certainly considers to be the supreme regulator, like the metric unit to measure human reason.

Well, since his personal opinion is irrelevant to us, we have no intention to make him change. We did not move a single step in the direction of doing so; we did not invite him to any meeting, to any demonstration. If he wanted to know he would have come to us. Considering that he did not come it is because he did not want to and we are not more interested than he is.

This is another point to discuss: Can such a vicious and lengthy criticism, founded or not founded, in such an important vehicle like the *Débats*, can it harm the propagation of new ideas? Let us see.

To begin with it is necessary to observe that one cannot treat a philosophical doctrine as a commodity. If a newspaper claimed, based on evidence, that merchant sells damaged or tainted food then nobody would feel like trying it to see if that was true. However, every metaphysical theory is an opinion that even if coming from God would find contradictors. Haven't we seen the best things, the most incontestable truths today, ridiculed in their origin, by the most respectable men? Has it prevented them from being true and spreading? Everybody knows this; that's why the opinion of a reporter on such issues is always only a personal opinion. That makes us think that if so many wise men were mistaken about objective things, Mr. Deschanel can well be mistaken about something abstract. However little he may know about Spiritism, even a vague idea, his accusation that it is materialistic was his rightful condemnation. This results in people preferring to see and judge for themselves and that is all we ask. Mr. Deschanel has unwillingly done a great service to our cause with that respect; and we thank him since that spares us from the cost of publicity, since we do not have enough money to pay for advertising in a publication of 24 columns. However widespread it may be, Spiritism has not yet penetrated everywhere. There are still many who have not heard about it. An article of this size attracts attention. It penetrates even into the enemy's camps where it provokes desertions, because nobody would so strongly attack something that is unworthy. In fact, we should not amuse ourselves by raising formidable regiments towards a battlefield that may be taken by rifles. The resistance is judged by the deployment of the attacking forces strength, and this is what calls the attention to things which might have otherwise gone unnoticed.

All of that is only reasoning. Let us see if the facts come to contradict him. The credibility of a newspaper is assessed by the sympathies found within public opinion, by the number of readers. The same must apply to Spiritism, represented by a few special books; we only speak about ours because we know the exact numbers. Well! The *Spirits' Book* which has become the most complete presentation of the Doctrine was initially published in 1857; the second edition in April 1860; the third edition in August 1860, that is four months later, and in February 1861 the fourth edition was out. Hence, three editions in less than a year demonstrate that not everybody is like Mr. Deschanel. Our new book, *The Mediums' Book*, was issued on January 15th, 1861 and we are already thinking about the second edition. We have requests from Russia, Germany, Italy, England, Spain, USA, Mexico, Brazil, etc.

The articles of the *Journal des Débats* was published last November. If they had exerted the minimal influence upon public opinion it would have been felt by the Spiritist Review that is published monthly. Well, on the date of renewal of subscriptions on January 1st, 1861 there was an increase of thirty three percent with respect to the same period of last year, and the Review receives daily requests for new subscriptions with the remarkable request for the full collections of previous years, a fact that has forced us to reprint them.

This shows that the Review does not seem so ridiculous to them. From all sides, in Paris, in the countryside, abroad, there are spiritist gatherings. We know of more than a hundred of them in different regions, and we are far from knowing all of them and not to mention those individuals who study at home in groups or alone. What would Mr. Deschanel, Mr. Figuier and others of the same kind say about it? That the number of deranged people increases? Yes, it increases at such a rate that soon the number of mad people will surpass the sensible ones.

But what those gentlemen so much full of solicitude must deplore is the fact that everything that they have done to stop this movement has actually produced an opposite result. Do they want to know the cause? It is very simple. They pretend to speak in the name of reason and offer nothing better; some give the void as perspective; others the eternal flames; two alternatives that don't please many people. Between the two choose the one that is more reassuring. After that, does it come as a surprise the fact that people throw themselves into the arms of Spiritism? Those gentlemen believed to have killed it, and we had to demonstrate to them that *the little guy is still alive*, and will still live for a long time.

Since experience demonstrated that Mr. Deschanel's article, far from harming the cause of Spiritism has served it, exciting the desire to get to know it in those who had not heard about it yet, we then find it useless to discuss his assertions one by one. All weapons have been used against this doctrine: it has been attacked in the name of religion, religion that Spiritism serves instead of causing harm; in the name of science, in the name of materialism. Attacks, threats, slanders have multiplied against the doctrine that resisted them all, even ridicule. Under the cloud of darts thrown against it, the doctrine peacefully traveled around the world and creates roots everywhere, before the eyes of its most bloodthirsty enemies. Isn't that a subject for serious thought and isn't that proof that it resonates in man's heart, at the same time that it is safeguarded by a force against which all human efforts prove useless? It is remarkable that when the articles appeared in the *Journal des Débats*, spontaneous communications were given in several places, in Paris and in other regions. They all expressed the same thought. The following was given at the Society on November 30th last:

"Don't be disturbed by what the world may write against Spiritism. It is not you that the disbelievers attack but God himself. However, God is more powerful. This is a new era, you must understand that well, a new era that opens up before you and those who try to oppose the designs of Providence will be knocked down soon. As it was correctly said, instead of harming Spiritism, skepticism hurts its own hands and it will kill itself. Let skepticism speak while the world wishes to make death omnipotent by the nothingness; only oppose indifference to their bitter pretentiousness. For you death will no longer be that terrible goddess dreamt by the poets. Death shall become Homer's dawn of rosy fingers.¹⁰"

André Chénier

St. Louis had already said this about the same issue:

"Similar articles don't cause harm but to those who write them; they don't do any harm to Spiritism, but help its propagation, even among its enemies."

Another spirit responded to a doctor from Nîmes, who asked his opinion about the subject:

"You must be happy with that. If your enemies dedicate so much time to you it is for recognizing that you have some value and for fear of you. Then, let them do as they wish. The more they speak the more they will make you known. The time is not far when they shall be forced to silence. Their rage proves their weakness. Only the true force knows how to control itself, for it is patient and has confidence. The weakness tries to stun by making a lot of noise."

Do you now want an example of how certain wise men employ science for the benefit of humanity?

10 Reference to Homer's *Odissey*, '*l'Aurore aux doigts de rose*' translated into French, word by word. Fenelon did not hesitate to use it: ...tomorrow when the dawn with its rosy fingers open the golden doors to the East... Aristotle wanting to demonstrate that all metaphors are based on the most beautiful and pleasant things to our senses cites this as a reference but says: it would have been much better if someone had said: the dawn of purple fingers.

One of our colleagues from the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, Mr. Indermuhle from Berne, writes the following:

“Mr. Schiff, professor of Anatomy (I don’t know if this is the same that so ingeniously discovered the cracking muscle that Mr. Jobert de Lamballe took on as the chief editor)¹¹ gave a public course here about digestion. The course was certainly interesting. However, after having spoken at length about culinary and Chemistry he demonstrated that no matter can be annihilated; that it can be divided and transformed but that it is found in the composition of air, water, organic tissues, arriving at the following conclusion: *thus, he says, the soul as vulgarly understood, is exactly in this sense that which we call the soul dissolves as a material body after death; it decomposes to become part of the matter in the air or in other bodies. That is the only way that the word immortality can be justified. Otherwise it cannot.*” That is how in 1861 the scholars assigned with the task of instructing and clarifying mankind gave them stone instead of bread.

One must say praising humanity that the majority of the attendees were not very impressed or happy with such a conclusion made so suddenly and many were outraged. As for myself I felt sorry for this man. Had he criticized the government, he would have been stopped and punished. How can one tolerate the public teaching of materialism, which dissolves society? We would add to the sound thoughts of our colleague that a materialistic society that certain people strive to transform our current society into today, is more dangerous in any kind of government since there is no moral restraint. Materialism has perhaps never been professed with such cynicism, and those who refrain by having some modesty indemnify themselves by dragging in the mud whatever can be destroyed. However, do as they will, these are the convulsions of their agony. Whatever Mr. Deschanel may say it is Spiritism that will give him the final blow. We just sent Mr. Deschanel the following letter:

“Sir,

You published two articles in the *Journal des Débats* last November 15th and 29th, in which you appreciate Spiritism from your point of view. The ridicule that you cast upon this doctrine and consequently upon me in turn and all those who profess it, gives me the right of response that I would then ask of you to publish as well. I had not done so yet because regardless of the extension of my answer, it would still be insufficient to those unfamiliar to this science and useless to those who know it. Belief can only be acquired after serious studies, carried out without prevention, without preconceived ideas, and through a large number of observations, done with patience and perseverance by someone who is really willing to know and learn. I would need to give a real course to your readers and that would surpass the limits of a single article. However, since I believe you are a man of honor I am sure you would not attack without giving the opportunity of defense, thus limiting myself to this simple letter that I request you kindly to have published in your paper, containing the same words that your readers will find in *The Spirits’ Book* and in *The Mediums’ Book* that I have just published through Mr. Didier & Co., an answer that is sufficient in my opinion. I will allow your readers to make a parallel between your arguments and mine. Those who would like to form a prior and low cost concise idea may read the little book entitled “*What is Spiritism?*” that costs only 60 cents, as well as the *Letter of a Catholic about Spiritism*, from Mr. Grand, former Vice-Council of France. They will also find some thoughts about your article that we published in this March issue of the Spiritist Review. Nevertheless, there is one point that I cannot let go quietly: it is the passage in your article where you say that Spiritism is founded on the grossest materialism. I set aside your offenses and uncivil expressions, things to which I usually don’t give importance, and stick to the point that contains a mistake that I would not call gross because such term would be discourteous but is of capital importance and that needs to be pointed out for the benefit of the reader. In fact, the essential foundation of Spiritism and without which there would be no reason for its occurrence, is the belief in God, in the existence and immortality of the soul, in the future penalties and rewards. Well, these points are the most absolute negation of materialism that admits none of them. The Spiritist Doctrine is not

11 See the Spiritist Review, June 1859

satisfied with their affirmation; it does not admit them as a preconceived idea, but is a clear demonstration. That is why Spiritism has already brought back a large number of disbelievers who had rejected any religious sentiments. It may not be spiritual but there is no doubt that it is essentially spiritualist, that is, contrary to materialism since one would not be able to understand a doctrine of the immortal soul founded on the inexistence of the soul. This leads so many people to an absolute disbelief in the way by which the soul and its future are presented to them. Daily I see people who say to me: *“If since my childhood I had been taught these things as you teach them, I would never have become a non-believer, because now I understand what I did not before.”* Thus, on a daily basis I am presented with sufficient proof that it is enough to expose this doctrine that has won over numerous supporters.

Yours sincerely, etc.”

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

March 1861

Garibaldi's head

The *Siècle* edition of February 4th contains a letter from Dr. Riboli who went to Caprera to examine Garibaldi's head, from a phrenological perspective. Our intention is not to assess the doctor's opinion and even less the politician. Nevertheless, by reading the letter we were led to some reflections that are naturally in order here. Dr. Riboli believes that Garibaldi's cranial structure corresponds perfectly well to his distinguishing intellectual and moral faculties, adding:

“You may laugh at my fanaticism but I can assure you that the time I spent examining that remarkable head was the happiest of my life. I saw, my dear friend, I saw that great man and he gave me everything that he was asked. I held that head that is the size of the whole world in my own hands, and for more than twenty minutes, feeling the inequalities and contrasts of his genius sticking out under my fingers everywhere. Garibaldi is 5'4” ft. tall. I measured all proportions: the width of the shoulders, the length of the arms and legs, the body circumference. In short, he is a well-proportioned man, strong body and of an uneasy temperament. The volume of his head is remarkable. The main aspect is the height of the skull, measured from the ear to the top of the head, yielding 20 cm (approx. 8 in). Such particular dominance of the whole upper part of the head indicates, at first sight and without a more thorough examination, an exceptional structure. The development of the skull on the top, the seat of feelings, indicates a balance of all the noble faculties against basic instincts. After examination, the craniology of Garibaldi immediately shows an extremely rare structure and I can even say that it is unprecedented. The harmony of all organs is perfect and the mathematical resultant of the whole thing shows: abnegation before anything else; prudence and cold blood; austerity; almost continual meditation; serious and precise eloquence; prevalent loyalty; an incredible deference to his friends to the point of suffering with it; his perceptibility in regard to everyone around him was especially dominant. To summarize, my dear friend, and without boring you with every comparison, causality, habitability, constructivism and destructivity¹², it is a wonderful, organic, flawless head that science will use as a model, etc.”

12 There we go with neologisms that are not more barbaric than *Spiritism* and *perispirit*.

The whole letter is written with such an enthusiasm that clearly indicates the most profound and sincere admiration for the Italian hero. However, we would like to believe that the author's observations were not influenced by any preconceived idea. But that is not the point. We accept his phrenological data as accurate but even if they were not, Garibaldi would not be more or less than he actually is. Everyone knows that the disciples of Gall form two schools: the materialists and the spiritualists. The first ones attribute the faculties to the organs. For them the organs are the cause, the faculties the product, and hence there is no faculty unless there is an organ, or put differently, when a person dies everything else is dead. The second group admits the independence of the faculties. The faculties are the cause; the development of the organs is the effect, and hence the annihilation of the organs does not imply the destruction of the faculties. We don't know anything about the author's affiliation to either school since he does not reveal it in his words.

Nonetheless, let us admit for a moment that the observations above were made by a materialist Phrenologist. We then ask what his reaction would be to the idea that this head encompasses a whole world, that it owes its genius to chance or to the caprice of nature that would have given him more cerebral mass on a given point of the brain than on another. Well, since chance is blind and has no previous design, it could also have enlarged a given part of the brain thus and unwilling yielding a completely different result to his personality. Such logic necessarily applies to any transcendent person, regardless of how it may be defined. Where would any merit reside if it were due to the displacement of a little piece of cerebral substance? If a simple caprice of nature could produce a common rather than a great man? Instead of a righteous man, an outcast?

That is not all. Taking into account such a great mind, isn't that horrible to think that there will perhaps be nothing left of him tomorrow, absolutely nothing but the inert matter to be devoured by the worms? Not to speak of the dismal consequences of such a system in case it was accepted, with a multitude of inexplicable contradictions, daily demonstrated by the facts. Instead, everything is explained by the spiritualist system: the faculties are not a product of the organs, but attributes of the soul whose organs are nothing more than instruments to serve their manifestation. Since the faculty is independent, its activity excites the development of the organ, like exercise stimulates the growth of a muscle. The being that thinks is the main thing, and the body is nothing more than an accessory. Thus, talent is a real merit because it results from work and not from a more or less abundant matter. In the materialistic system, work that supports the acquisition of talent is totally lost with death which often does not allow enough time to enjoy that talent. With the soul, work has a meaning since everything that has been acquired is useful to its development; one works for an immortal creature and not for a body that only has some hours of existence.

People will say that the genius is not acquired, but it is innate. That is true. However, why then are two men that are born in the same conditions so very different from an intellectual point of view? Why would God have favored one more than the other? Why would one have been given the means of advancing while the other had that denied? Which philosophical system has solved this issue? It is only the doctrine of preexistence of the soul that can explain it: the genius has lived before, he has pre-acquired knowledge and experience and thus he deserves our respect more than if the superiority were an unjustified favor of Providence or a whim of nature. We want to believe that Dr. Riboli might have seen on the head of that man that he barely touched, out of respect, something more worthy of his veneration than a simple mass of flesh, not reducing it to the role of an organized mechanism. We recall that philosophical ragman that saw a dead dog by the side of the road and said to himself: *That is what expects us!* Well, then! All of you who deny a future life that is what you make of the greatest geniuses! For more details about Phrenology and Physiognomy, we recommend the article in the Spiritist Review, July 1860.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

March 1861

The assassination of Mr. Poinso

The mystery that still surrounds this deplorable event led many people to think that the evocation of the spirit of the victim could establish the truth. We received a large number of letters about it and since the subject involves a serious principle we found it useful to let all readers know our answer. We never thought of evoking Mr. Poinso since for us Spiritism has never been an object of curiosity. Nevertheless, following an adamant request from one of our corresponding members that supposedly had a communication from him and wanted to know if that communication was authentic, we tried to carry out the evocation a few days ago. As usual, we asked our spiritual guide if such evocation was possible and if he was the one who communicated with our correspondent. Here are the answers:

- *“Mr. Poinso cannot answer your appeal. He has not communicated with anybody yet. God does not allow him at this point in time.”*
- 1. Can you tell us why? – A. Yes. Because revelations of such kind would influence the conscience of the judges who must act with total freedom.
- 2. Yet, by clarifying the judges these revelations could avoid regrettable and even irreparable mistakes. – A. That is not how they should be clarified. God wants them to have the entire responsibility of their sentences, as each person has the responsibility of their acts; also the research work and the merit for that must not be overlooked.
- 3. However, in the absence of sufficient information, can the culprit escape justice? – A. Would you believe that one can escape God’s justice? If one must be reached by the justice of man God will find ways for that to happen.
- 4. That is fine with respect to the guilty; however, if an innocent person is condemned wouldn’t that be bad? – A. God judges in the supreme instance and someone that is unjustly condemned by men will have their rehabilitation. As a matter of fact, that condemnation may be a useful trial for their advancement. But it may sometimes be the fair punishment of a crime from which one may have escaped in a previous existence. Keep in mind that the spirits are assigned with the mission of enlightening you in the path of good and not to smooth things out on the earthly terrain, leaving that to your own intelligence. When you distance yourself from the providential objective of

Spiritism you become exposed to being deceived by the swarm of lying spirits that constantly move around you.

After the first answer the attendees discussed the reasons for the interdiction and as if willing to justify a principle one spirit led a medium to write the following: *"I will bring him... here he is!"* Soon after he wrote: "How kind of you wanting to talk to me! I am very pleased since I have a lot to tell you." The language seemed suspicious to us having come from a man like Mr. Poinsoot, and particularly considering the answer that we had just received, thus someone asked him to attest his identity in the name of God. The spirit then wrote: "My God, I cannot lie. However, I would be very happy to talk to your likable Society but you don't want to. Good bye." That was when our spiritual guide added: *"I told you that spirit cannot respond tonight. God forbids his manifestation. If you insist you will be deceived."*

Observation: It is obvious that if the spirits could spare men from doing research the latter would not bother doing anything to discover the truth since it would always be revealed. Thus, the laziest person could find that out, as much as the hardest working researcher and that would not be fair. This is a general principle. When applied to Mr. Poinsoot, it is not less evident that if the spirit indicated that a given individual were innocent or guilty and the judges could not find sufficient proof of one or the other, they could then become confused and public opinion biased by unfair preventions. Since man is imperfect we must conclude that God knows better what must be revealed or hidden. If a given revelation must be made through superhuman means, God knows how to make it look authentic as to eliminate any doubt, as demonstrated by the event below:

A farm had been set on fire near a mining region in Mexico. In a meeting dealing with spirit manifestations (there are several in this country where Mr. Deschanel's articles may not have arrived yet hence they are so backwards there); a spirit communicated through raps. The spirit says that the person to blame is among the attendees of the meeting. First it was doubted, believed to be a hoax. The spirit insists, pointing to a person that was present, stunning everybody. The person puts on a good face, but the spirit seems to insist and so convincingly, that the man is arrested and after being pressed with questions he ends up confessing to the crime.

The criminals, as seen, must not trust the discretion of the spirits that are sometimes the instruments used by God to punish them. How would Mr. Figuier explain that? Is it intuition, hypnotism, biology, overexcitement of the brain, the concentration of thoughts, hallucination, which he admits but not believing in the independence of the spirit from matter? Conciliate all that if you can. His own solution is a problem and he should provide the solution to his solution. Nevertheless, why a spirit would not reveal the assassin of Mr. Poinsoot, as he had done for this arsonist? You must ask God to respond for his actions. Ask Mr. Figuier who seems to know better than Him.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

March 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Mrs. Bertrand (Haute Saône)

Deceased on February 7th, 1881 and evoked at the Society on the 15th of the same month

Note: Mrs. Bertrand was a serious student of Spiritism, acknowledged the doctrine and understood all its philosophical implications.

1. Evocation. – A. I am here.
2. Having learned to admire you from your correspondence and knowing your sympathy towards the Society, we thought you may not mind, if we evoked you at such an early date. – A. As you see, I am here.
3. There is another personal reason that leads me to do so. I intend to write to your daughter regarding the event that has just hurt her and I am sure that she would feel very happy to know about this conversation. – A. She certainly expects that since I had promised her to communicate as soon as I was evoked.
4. Enlightened as you were about Spiritism and impregnated by the principles of this Doctrine, your answers will have double the educational effect. To begin with, will you tell us if it took you long to recognize yourself and if you have already recovered the plenitude of your faculties? – A. The plenitude of my old faculties, yes; the plenitude of my new ones, no.
5. It is usual to ask people how they are doing. However, we ask the spirits if they are happy. We ask that question with a profound feeling of sympathy. – A. Thank you my friends. I am not happy yet in the spiritualist meaning of the word. However, I am happy for the renovation of my spirit, overwhelmed by the ecstasy; by the sight of things that are revealed to us, but that we still don't understand completely, however good medium or spiritist we may be.

6. You had an idea about the spiritual world from the study of the Doctrine. Could you tell us if you found things as you had imagined them? – A. More or less, as when we see things in the vagueness of twilight. However, how different they become when revealed by the brightness of daylight!
7. Thus, the image that we are given about the spiritual life has no exaggeration, no illusion! – A. It is diminished by your spirit that you cannot understand divine things but only when tweaked and veiled. We behave towards you as you do with children to whom you only show part of what is available for them to learn.
8. Have you witnessed the time of death of your body? – A. Worn out after a long suffering period my body did not have to go through a difficult struggle. My soul detached from the body like the ripe fruit that falls from the tree. The complete annihilation of my being precluded me from feeling the last agony of the torment.
9. Could you describe your sensations at the first moments of your waking? – A. There is no waking, or I should say, it seemed like a continuation to me. Like when you get back home after a short absence, it seemed as if it was just a few minutes after I left it all behind. Wandering around my bed, I saw myself stretched out lying there, transfigured, incapable of moving away, at least as it seemed to be and attached by the last link to that corporeal wrapping that had made me suffer so much.
10. Were you immediately aware of other spirits around you? – A. They soon came to welcome me. I then veered my thoughts off my *earthly self*, and my transported *spiritual self* was overwhelmed by the exquisite pleasure of new things and known things that I met again.
11. Were you around your family members during your funeral? – A. I saw my body taken away but I left soon after. Spiritism dematerializes in anticipation and makes the transition from the terrestrial to the spiritual world more subtle. I had not brought any useless sorrow or vain curiosity from my passage on Earth.
12. Would you like to say anything in particular to your daughter, who shared your beliefs and wrote to me several times in your name? – A. I recommend her to take her studies more seriously; to transform her sterile pain into a compassionate and productive memory; to not forget that life moves on uninterruptedly and that the world's frivolous interests fade away before the great word *eternity*! As a matter of fact, my kind and intimate memory will be transmitted to her soon.
13. In January I sent you a picture-card. Since you had never seen me, can you tell me if you recognize me? – A. No, I don't recognize you. I see you.
- You did not receive that card? – A. I don't remember.
14. I would still have several important questions to ask you about extraordinary events that took place in your house and that you told us about. I believe that you could give us interesting explanations about them. However, the late hour and the fatigue of the medium advise me to adjourn. I will limit myself to just a few questions before stopping. Although your death is recent have you had the chance to travel open spaces and visit other worlds? – A. The word visit doesn't correspond to the very fast movement that allows us to discover other sites with the speed of thought. Distance is only a word, like time for us is only a moment.
15. When we prepare the questions to be addressed to a spirit we generally have an anticipated evocation. Thus, could you tell us if you were forewarned of our intention and if you were by

- my side yesterday when I formulated the questions? – A. Yes, I knew everything that you would say today and will easily answer those questions which are reserved.
16. You would have made us very happy if you were among us in life but since it was not possible we are equally happy for having you in spirit, and we thank you for the consideration in responding to our questions. – A. My friends, I followed your studies with interest and now that I can live with you as a spirit I advise you to give more importance to the “spirit than to the letter”. Good bye.

The letter below was sent to us regarding this evocation.

“Dear Sir,

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I want to thank you on behalf of my father and me, for anticipating our desire to receive news from the one that we cry for through your intermediary.

The multiple moral and physical trials that my dear mother had to endure during her life, her patience to bear with them, her devotion, her complete abnegation of herself, gave me the hopes that she was happy. However, the assurance that you have just given us, Sir, is a great consolation to those who loved her so much and who wish her happiness more than our own.

My mother was the soul of the house, Sir. Needless to tell you the emptiness that she left; we suffer for no longer seeing her, more than I could express and yet we feel some sort of quietness since we no longer see her suffering the atrocious pains. My poor mother was a martyr. She must have found a great reward for the patience and kindness with which she supported all the anguishes. Her life was nothing more than a long torture of spirit and body. Her elevated feelings and faith in another existence sustained her. She had a kind of presentiment and a hidden memory of the spiritual world; I saw her often looking at the worldly things with compassion, saying: nothing down here can suffice me; I feel the nostalgia of another world.

We recognize my dear and adorable mother in the answers that she gave you, Sir, her way of thinking and expressing herself. She liked to employ images. I am just surprised that she could not remember your picture-card that had given her so much pleasure. I should have thanked you on her behalf. My busy days during the last days of my venerable mother did not allow me to. I believe that she will remember later. Right now she is overwhelmed by the splendors of the new life. The life that has just finished for her seems to be just a bad dream, already far away from her. We also hope my father and I that she may come to bring us a few affectionate words, which we badly need. Would it be an indiscretion, Sir, to ask you to please let us know when she will speak to you again? It was so good that you brought us news about her and that she is no longer suffering! Thank you once again, Sir! I pray to God that you may be recompensed for that, from the bottom of my heart and my soul.

By leaving me, my mother deprives me from the best of all mothers, the kindest friend. I need the assurance of knowing that she is happy and also need my belief in Spiritism to gain some strength. God sustained her. My courage was greater than I thought.

Yours sincerely, etc.

Observation: May the disbelievers laugh as much as they wish at Spiritism. May the more or less interested adversaries ridicule it! May they even say vulgarities, but none of that will remove its consoling power that brings happiness to the unfortunate, making them triumph over the ill-faith of the indifferent, despite their effort to abate it. Men are thirsty for happiness; when it is not found on Earth, isn't that a great relief to have the certainty of finding it in the next life, once they did what is needed to deserve it? What is it that offers more relief to the evils of Earth? Is it materialism, with the horrible perspective of the nothingness? Is it the expectation of the eternal flames, to which not one in a million can escape? Make no mistake. Such a perspective is even more terrible than the emptiness, and that is why those whose reason refuses to believe are led to materialism. When the future is presented to man in a rational way, there will no longer be materialists. Don't be surprised by seeing the spiritist ideas welcomed with so much enthusiasm by the crowds, because these ideas give more courage instead of diminishing them. The example of happiness is contagious. When everyone sees happy people around them because of Spiritism they will throw themselves into its arms as a salvation since they would rather have a doctrine that smiles and speaks to reason than those that terrify them.

The example that we have just mentioned is not one of a kind; they are offered to thousands and the great joy that God has reserved to us here is to testify the benefits and progresses of a belief that we help to propagate with our efforts. The people of goodwill, those that come here to draw the consolations are so numerous that we could not take our time from them, dealing with those who are indifferent and have no desire to be convinced. Those who come to us are sufficient to absorb all of our time and that is why we don't seek anybody else. That is also why we don't spend that time sowing on sterile land. Their time will come when God decides to remove the veil that blinds their eyes, and that time will come sooner than thought, for the glory of some and shame of others.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

March 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Henry Murger

NOTE: In a private session at the house of one of our colleagues from the Society, the medium spontaneously wrote the following, on February 6th, 1861:

“The skies are ampler, the atmosphere larger, the flowers more beautiful, the fruits sweeter and the aspirations go even beyond imagination. Greetings, new homeland! Greetings, new dwelling! Greetings love, greetings happiness! How pale is the brief passage on Earth, and how happy is the one who sighed of relief for having left Tartarus and gone to the heavens! Greetings, true bohemia! Greetings, true separation! Greetings, dreams that have come true! I was glad when I fell asleep because I knew that the awakening would be happy. Ah! Thank you my friends for your kind remembrance!

M. Murger

The following Q&A were carried out at the Society on February 8th:

1. You spontaneously came last Wednesday to communicate at the house of one of our colleagues, and there you wrote a nice message. However, there wasn't anybody there who knew you. Can you please tell us what has prompted you to give us the honor of your visit? –
A. I came to demonstrate that I was alive so that I could be evoked today.

2. Were you sympathetic to the spiritist ideas? – A. Two things: First, I suspected then I was easily driven by my own inspirations.
3. It seems that your confusion did not last long considering that you express yourself so easily and so clearly! – A. I died with a perfect awareness of myself, hence I only had to open the eyes of the spirit as soon as the eyes of the flesh were shut.
4. That communication may be considered as a report of your first impressions about the world where you are now. Could you describe with more accuracy what happened to you since the moment when the soul left the body? – A. I was overwhelmed with joy; I saw dear faces again, faces that I supposed were lost forever. I have just been dematerialized and my sensations are still almost earthly sensations.
5. Could you give us your impressions about your main book: ‘*La vie de bohème*’, from your current stand point? – A. Stunned as I am by the unknown splendors of resurrection, how do you want me to go back to that poor book, a pale reflex of a painful youth?
6. One of your friends, Mr. Théodore Pelloquet, published a bibliographic article about you in the *Le Siècle* on the 6th of this month. Could you address him with a few words as well as other writers who are friends and comrades of yours, some of whom may not exactly be believers in a future life? – A. I will tell them that the worldly success is like gold transformed into dry leaves. What we all believe in, what we all expect is success, always success, we the hungry harvesters of the Parisian soil, never looking up and above, to the skies, never thinking of the one who always judges us based on our deeds. Will my words change them? No. Dragged through the scorching life that blemishes belief and youth, they will hear lightheartedly, they will forget and move on.
7. Do you see *Gérard de Nerval* here, the one that has just spoke of you? – A. I see him, and Musset and the lovely and great Delphine. I see them all. They help me; they give me encouragement and teach me to communicate.

Observation: This last question was triggered by the following communication spontaneously received by a medium at the Society, at the beginning of the session:

“A brother has arrived to our world, he is happy and doing well. He thanks heaven for his somewhat late liberation, as you heard him saying a short while ago. Goodbye to sadness, tears and the bitter smile, because we now know that the smile among you is never honest. Something really regrettable and painful on Earth is the need to smile; forced smile or smile at nothing, particularly in France when someone is prepared to dream in solitude. Disenchantment is terrible to a long waiting heart, disillusion a terrible skeleton whose contour one tries to unsuccessfully touch. The uneasy and trembling hand can only find bones. What a horror! For someone who believed in love, religion, family, friendship; those who can face that horrible and petrifying mask, and go unpunished. Ah! Those living, although petrified, but those who sing like bohemians those die very quickly. They turn Medusa’s head. My brother was one of those. As you see my friends from now on we no longer live only in our books, and we will promptly attend your calls. Far from being proud of this happy environment that surrounds us, we shall come to you as if we were still on Earth, and Murger will still sing.”

Gérard de Nerval

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

March 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

The spirit and the roses

(Sent by Mrs. B... from New Orleans)

Emma D... was a 7 year old beautiful girl who died after having suffered for six months, hardly eating anything during the last six weeks before her death.

1. Evocation – A. I am here Ma'am, what is it that you want?
2. I want to know where you are; if you are happy and why has God inflicted such a heavy burden of losing you onto your mother and your sisters. – A. I am among good spirits that love me and instruct me; I am happy, very happy. My passage with you was the remains of a physical trial. I suffered but that suffering was nothing; it purified my soul while it destroyed my poor body. I now learn about the life of the soul. I am incarnate but now as a conservative spirit. I live in a world where none of us stays longer than necessary to learn the teachings of the great spirits. Beyond that I travel, preventing disgraces, sending temptations away. I am frequently here. There are so many poor African Americans! I always complained but now I love them. Yes, I do love them, poor souls! Many of them are good, better than their masters, and we must feel sorry even for the lazy ones. Many times I visited my dear mother. Whenever she feels her heart invigorating that is me casting the divine balm on her. She does need to suffer, though! Later it will all be forgotten. And Lucia, my beloved Lucia, shall be with me before long. But the others will come. It is nothing more than dying to be this way: we change bodies, and that is all. I no longer suffer the illness that upset others. I am happier now and at night I lean over my mom and kiss her. She

feels nothing but she dreams of me and sees me like I was before the terrible disease. Do understand Ma'am that I am happy. I wish I could have some roses at the corner of the garden where I used to sleep in the past. You could suggest that to Lucia to have some roses there. I loved roses and I still go there so often! I have roses there but Lucia sleeps every day in my little place and I am also by her side every day. I love her so much!

3. My dear little girl, could I see you? – A. No. You still cannot see me, but look at the beam of sun light on the table. I will cross it. Thank you for having evoked me. Be indulgent towards my sisters. Good bye. The spirit disappeared, for a moment shadowing the light beam that was still there. As soon as the flowers were placed on her dear spot at the garden the medium wrote the word thanks three days later, with the signature of the child. She then wrote: “Start your letter over again; I don't mind. I am so happy to have a medium. I will come back. Thank you for the roses. Good bye!”

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

March 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Moses and Jesus' laws

(Received by Mr. R..., from Mulhouse)

One of our subscribers from Mulhouse sent us a letter with the following communication:

“I take this opportunity to send you a communication that I received as a medium from my guardian spirit and that seems interesting and educational from all aspects. If you agree with my judgment I authorize you to use it in any way that you may consider useful. Here is how it started. I am Jewish by religion and thus I am naturally guided by the principles that I was taught. I had noticed that in every communication received from the spirits the only moral that was mentioned was that of Jesus, and Moses was never mentioned. Nevertheless I used to say to myself that God's commandments, revealed by Moses, seemed to be the foundation of the Christian moral; that Jesus might have broadened the horizon and elaborated about the consequences but the germ was present in the law given at the Sinai. Then I asked myself if the reason wouldn't be the fact that most communications we received were from spirits who had belonged to the dominant religion and if that would not be a memory of their earthly life. Absorbed in those thoughts I evoked my guardian spirit who was one of my close relatives by the name Mardoqueu R... Below you will find the questions that I addressed to him and his answers, etc.”

1. In every communication given at the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies Jesus is considered to be the one who taught the most beautiful moral. How should I see that? – A. Yes. Christ

was the initiator of the purest moral, the most sublime: the Christian Evangelical moral that must renovate the world, bringing every men together like brothers; the moral that will make charity and love to the neighbor stream out of everybody's hearts; that must create a common solidarity among mankind; and finally the moral that must transfigure Earth, creating the conditions for the dwelling of spirits who are superior to those who live here now. That is the natural law of progress in action; and Spiritism is one of the living forces used by God to facilitate the advancement of humanity on the path of moral progress. The time has come in which the moral ideas will develop in order to realize the progress that is in God's designs. They must follow the same route taken by the ideas of freedom that were their precursors. However, one must not expect such a development without a fight. No. They need to be shaken and tested to achieve maturity and to attract the attention of the masses; then the beauty and sacred nature of that moral will touch the spirits who will devote themselves to the science that gives them the key to the future, opening up the doors of eternal happiness. God is unique and Moses is the spirit sent by God in order to become known not only by the Hebrews but also by the Pagan people. The Hebrew people were the instrument that God used for his revelation through Moses and the prophets, and the vicissitudes of that remarkable people were the means of tearing off the veil that used to hide God from men.

2. In which points is Moses' moral inferior to that of Jesus? – A. Moses' moral was adequate to the degree of advancement of the people that were destined to be regenerated by that. Those people, were sort of semi-savage regarding the progress of the souls, would not have understood that it was possible to worship God by means other than burnt offerings or that it was necessary to forgive the enemy. Their intelligence was remarkable from a material point of view, and even from the arts and sciences, but that intelligence was well behind in morality and would not have converted under the domain of an entirely spiritual religion. They needed a semi material representation, like the one given by the Hebraic religion. That is how the burnt offerings spoke to their senses while the idea of God spoke to their souls. God's commandments received by Moses are the seeds of a broader Christian moral, but the comments found in the Bible narrowed its meaning since if it were practiced in its whole purity it would not have been understood. Nonetheless, God's *Ten Commandments* are still a brilliant frontispiece, like the lighthouse that must illuminate the path that must be walked by humanity. Moses led the way; Jesus continued the work; Spiritism will finish it.
3. Is Saturday a holy day? – A. Yes. Saturday is a day dedicated to resting and praying. It is the symbol of eternal happiness, aspired by all spirits who will get there after having perfected through their work and after thoroughly eliminating the impurities from their hearts through the incarnations.
4. Then, what was the reason that led each sect to consecrate a different day? – A. It is true that each sect has consecrated a different day but that is not a reason for surprise. God accepts the prayers and the formats of every religion as long as the teachings are followed by actions. Prayer always pleases God however it is said and as long as with pure intention.
5. Should we expect the establishment of a universal religion? – A. No. Not on our planet or at least while it has not made the progress that not even thousands of generations will see.

Mardoqueu R...

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

March 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Family lessons of moral

(Sent by the medium Mrs. Countess F... from Warsaw, translated from the Polish)

I

My dear children, the way you see God's will is wrong since you consider everything that happens as an expression of his will. God certainly knows everything that has been, that is and that will be; since his sacred will is the actual expression of his divine love, it always carries his grace and blessings; now, when someone stays away from that unique path that person attracts sufferings that are simple warnings. Blindfolded by the spirit of pride or drowned in the swamp of passions, people of our times unfortunately do not wish to understand those warnings. Now, know this my children, the time has come when God's will shall triumph on Earth. Anyone who dares to disgracefully deny that will be broken like the bamboo, while those who have settled on the right path will discover the treasures of the infinite mercy. Behold that if God's will is the expression of his love, hence immutable and eternal, every rebellious attitude against that will, although supported by an incomprehensible logic, is just temporary as a demonstration of God's mercy and not as an expression of his will.

II

I am glad to see, my children, that your faith is unyielding, despite the attacks of disbelief. Had everyone accepted with the same enthusiasm, the same perseverance, and especially the same good faith that some did accept that extraordinary manifestation of the divine benevolence, a new door would open to their own advancement, and that would have been evident proof that the world is not so bad or pitiless as it seems and that God's hand had unfairly hit humanity, something obviously inadmissible. Thus, don't be surprised by the opposition brought upon Spiritism in this world. Spiritism is naturally exposed to the persecution of selfishness and fanaticism, this always derived from the former, because Spiritism is destined to win the combat against egotism, for the triumph of charity. Remember what has been said centuries ago: "*For many are called but few are chosen.*" Nevertheless, the good that comes from God will always triumph over the bad that comes from people.

III

God brought faith and charity to Earth to help mankind to shake the double tyranny of wickedness and whim and there is no doubt that with those divine engines they would have long ago reached the most comprehensive happiness possible to people on Earth and given the condition of your planet, if man had not allowed faith to languish and hearts to dry out. For a moment they believed that they could let the faith go and be saved by charity only. Then they saw the surge of a large number of social systems, good in their intentions but impractical and faulty in their application. You may ask: Why are they impractical? Aren't they based on everyone's altruism? Yes, no doubt, but to be based on altruism it is necessary that altruism exists! Well, it is not enough to decree; it is necessary to inspire altruism. Since there is no faith that ensures the future life and rewards, altruism is then a mistake to the eyes of the selfish. That is why systems that are only founded on material interests are unstable. It is certain that man would not be able to construct anything harmonious and long lasting without faith, faith that endows man with a moral force superior to all other physical forces and that also opens up the door to the assistance of the spiritual world, thus allowing mankind to drink directly from the fountain of the divine omnipotence.

IV

"Even after you have accomplished all that was commanded, see yourself as a useless servant." These words from Christ teach you humility as the first foundation of faith and one of the first conditions to charity. The faithful does not forget that God is aware of all imperfections; hence, one does not pretend to show to others what one does not have. The humble always faces criticism with kindness regardless of how unfair those may be, since, you must know this well, injustice never irritates the just but pressing the finger onto some soft and poisoned spot of your soul makes you blush with the heat of shame, a sure indication of a barely disguised pride. Pride, my dear, is the greatest obstacle to your betterment, because

it does not allow you to take advantage of the received teachings. Thus, the best way to work towards your own improvement is by battling it at all times, in all quarters.

V

If you look at the world around you will see that everything is in harmony. Beauty is the harmony of the material world. However, it is still the less noble part of creation. The harmony of the spiritual world is love, a divine emanation that fulfills the spaces and leads men to their creator. You must strive, my dear, to fill your own hearts with that love. Any greatness of yours outside this law would not be taken into account. It is only when love has triumphed on Earth that the kingdom of God promised by the apostles shall come to you.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

March 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

The missionaries

(Sent by Mr. Sabò, from Bordeaux)

I will say a few words to help you understand the objective proposed by the missionaries, leaving behind homelands and families to go and evangelize ferocious and ignorant tribes, although brothers, inclined to evil and oblivious of good; or to preach mortification, trust in God, prayer, faith, resignation in suffering, charity, hope of a better life after repentance. You will ask: isn't that Spiritism? Yes, noble souls that always served God and faithfully observed his laws; who love and help their fellow human beings, you are spiritists. But you don't understand and you are afraid of this new word.

Well, since you are afraid, we shall not repeat it until you come to us and ask about this word that summarizes the existence of the spirits and their manifestations: Spiritism. Beloved brothers, what are the missionaries together with nations in their infancy? Spirits with a mission, sent by God, our father, to clarify the poor and more ignorant spirits; to teach patience and hope, to help people to know and love

Him, to be good husbands and wives, good parents, good to their peers; to give them the idea of good and beauty as much as possible given their current condition.

But you who are so proud of your own intelligence, know this, that you came from as low as they are now and that you still have a lot to do to reach the highest degree. I ask you this, my friends: Without the missions and the missionaries, what would become of those poor people left to their own passions and savage nature? But tell me this: Are you the ones to go and preach the Gospel to those rude people, like the devoted brothers? No, you are not. You have family, friends, a position that you cannot abandon. No, not you who loves the warmth of a home; no, not you who enjoys wealth, honor, all the happiness for the satisfaction of your vanity and selfishness; no, it will not be you. It must be someone who gladly leaves behind their paternal homes and their homeland; people who don't care much about life because they know it is sometimes crossed by the sword and the fire; people who are convinced that whenever they work in the land of the Lord, watering it with their own blood it is because they know that the reward for so much sacrifice will come later, in heaven.

Now, tell me if the disbelievers would be capable of such devotion, since they expect nothing after this life? Believe me, those are spirits sent by God. You must no longer laugh at what you call foolishness because they are enlightened, and by exposing their own lives to clarify their ignorant brothers they deserve your respect and sympathy. Yes, they are incarnate spirits with the dangerous mission of stimulating those rough intelligences, like other more advanced spirits that have the mission of helping you to progress. Spiritism is our mission, my friends. Don't be afraid of that word. In particular, don't laugh, because that word is the symbol of the universal law that rules all beings of creation.

Adolph, bishop of Alge

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

March 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

France

(Sent by Mr. Sabò from Bordeaux)

You too, of the French crowned lands, you were deep into barbarism and your savage courts carried desolation and amazement to the heart of the civilized nations. You offered mountains of human sacrifice to Toutatis and trembled before the Druids' voice when choosing their victims. The tombs that served you as altars lie in barren moors! The shepherd that drives his meager herds over there looks in amazement at those blocks of granite, and wonders, what was the object of those memories of former times! However, your brave children dominated the nations and triumphantly returned to their homeland, holding the trophies of victory in their hands, dragging the conquered behind in shameful slavery! God however wanted you to take your place among the nations, sending you good spirits, apostles of a new religion, who came to preach love, forgiveness and charity to your savage children. When Clovis invoked the help of that Almighty God before his army, his call was heard and victory was granted, and the appreciative child embraced Christianity! The apostle of Christ inspired by the spirit of God gave him the sacred anointment, commanding him to adore what he had burnt and to burn what he had adored.

A long battle was then initiated among your children, who could not face the rage of their gods and their priests; your land had to see the bloodshed of its martyrs so that the new ideas would flourish and you could gradually detach from the cult of your forefathers, following your kings. They were brave and courageous and fought the hordes of barbarians from the North. They returned in peace to their palaces, then dedicating to progress and civilization of their people. They slowly work that progress for centuries and finally place you at the top. You have been found guilty so many times and God's hand was raised and you were about to be terminated. However, if the French soil is a focus of skepticism and atheism, it is also of noble movements, of charity and sublime devotion. The virtues preached in the Gospels prosper before impiety. Those virtues disarmed the hand that was so many times about to hurt you, casting upon your people the eyes of clemency, choosing you to become the messenger of His will; the seeds of the Spiritist Doctrine must come from your heart, transmitted by the good spirits, and its healing arms must gradually disseminate over the heart of all nations, and the people, consoled by the principles of love, charity and forgiveness, will tread gigantic steps towards their moral reformation that must regenerate humanity! Your fate is in your hands. If you neglected the celestial voice that calls you to this glorious destiny; if your indifference made you repel the light that you must shed, God would renounce you, as it was once done to the Hebrew people, since they should carry out his designs. Thus, hurry up for the time has come! May the people learn from you the path of true happiness! May your example show them the consoling fruits to be harvested and they shall join the choir of the good spirits: "God protects and blesses France!"

Charlemagne

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

March 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Ingratitude

(Sent by a medium from Sens)

It is always necessary to support the weak and those who wish to do good, knowing beforehand that we shall not be compensated by those helped by us, because the one that refuses to be thankful for your help is not as ungrateful as you think. That person often acts following God's designs but frequently His designs are not and cannot be appreciated by you. It is enough to know that it is necessary to do good as a duty and for the love of God, as Jesus said: *"When you give to the poor, don't blow a loud horn. That's what show-offs do in the meeting places and on the street corners, because they are always looking for praise. I can assure you that they already have their reward."*

Socrates

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

April 1861

Another word about Mr. Deschanel

From the *Journal des Débats*

In the previous issue of the Spiritist Review the readers could see our personal letter to Mr. Deschanel with our thoughts about his article. The very short letter was aimed at the rectification of a serious error by Mr. Deschanel and we sought his agreement to have our response inserted in that periodical. He presented the Spiritist Doctrine as if based on the grossest materialism that was a total travesty of its true nature since the Doctrine tends, on the contrary, to destroy the foundations of materialism. His article had many other mistakes that could be pointed out but the latter was too important to let go without an answer; it was really serious because it did a disservice to the so many followers of Spiritism. Mr. Deschanel decided not to accept our request and below is his answer to us:

“Dear Sir,

I had the honor of receiving your letter dated February 25th. Your editor, Mr. Didier, was kind enough to assign me with the task of explaining to you that I had given in to his reiterated requests to give a review about your *Spirits' Book*, allowing me to criticize it as much as I wanted. That was the agreement. I thank

you for your understanding that the use of your right of replica would be strictly legal but certainly not as kind as the abstention with which you agreed, according to what I was informed this morning by Mr. Didier.

Yours...etc.

E. Deschanel”

The letter above is inaccurate in several points. It is true that Mr. Didier sent a volume of *The Spirits' Book* to Mr. Deschanel, as done from an editor to a journalist but it is inaccurate to say that Mr. Didier agreed not to let us know about his *reiterated requests* to have the work appreciated and if Mr. Deschanel decided to dedicate 24 columns of the newspaper with mockery he must allow us to suppose that he did so neither out of tolerance nor respect towards Mr. Didier. In fact, as we said, that is not why we are sorry for the fact. He is in his own right to criticize and since he does not share our point of view he had the freedom of assessing our work from his standpoint, as it usually happens all the time. Some have it in the highest regard, others show total disbelief but none goes without an appeal. The ultimate judge is the public, particularly the future public that is away from the current passions and intrigues. The exaggerated praise from little groups does not prevent us from burying from good what is really bad and what is really good survives, despite the diatribes originated from jealousy and envy.

- This striking proof two fables now shall prove;
- Matter enough is here your faith to move

La Fontaine would have said; we will not quote two fables but two facts. When Racine's *Phèdre* appeared it had the opposition of the Court and the people of Paris and was ridiculed. The bashing was such that at the age of only 38 years old, he completely gave up writing for the theater. . Pradon's *Phèdre*, on the contrary, was praised to the extreme. What is today the situation of both works? A more modern book, *Paul et Virginie*, was declared dead at birth by the renowned Buffon that found it boring and insipid; however, it is a fact that no book has ever been so popular. Our objective with these two examples is to demonstrate that the opinion of a critic, whatever their merit, is always a personal opinion, not always ratified by posterity. Let us move back from Buffon to Mr. Deschanel, without comparison since Buffon was totally mistaken while Mr. Deschanel believed, no doubt, that the same will not happen to him. In his letter he acknowledges the fact that our right to contest would be strictly legal but he finds it more polite that we don't exercise that right. He is also bluntly wrong when he says that we agreed with the abstention, leading to believe that we agreed with a request and even that Mr. Didier was in charge of informing him about that. Nothing further from the truth. We don't believe that we must demand the publication of our counter argument. He has the freedom of finding our Doctrine bad, disgusting, absurd, of shouting it out loud from the roof tops, but we expected his loyalty with the publication of our letter whose intent was the rectification of a false allegation that could damage our reputation, when he accuses us of professing and propagating the very doctrines that we fight against, since we see them as subversive of the social order and public moral. We did not ask for a disclaimer that would be refused by his ego, but only the publication of our protest, convinced that we were not abusing our own right of response, particularly considering that we were offering 30 or 40 lines against his 24 columns in the publication. Our readers will understand the extent of his denial. If he wanted to see kindness in our procedure we cannot say the same about his attitude.

When Father Chesnel published his article about Spiritism in the *Univers* in 1858, he also gave a false idea about the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, presenting it as a religious sect with cults and priests. Such allegations completely denatured its objectives and its true foundations and could deceive public opinion. It was completely mistaken given the fact that the Society's bylaws preclude it from dealing with religious matters. As a matter of fact, a religious Society that could not deal with religious matters is unthinkable. We then protest against such statement and not by means of a few lines but through a whole article that the periodical *Univers* acknowledged our right to publish as a result of a simple request from our side. We are sorry that Mr. Deschanel from the *Journal des Débats* believes to be less morally obliged to reestablish the truth than those gentlemen from the *Univers*. If it were not a question of legal right it will always be of loyalty. Pretending to have the right of attacking without providing an opportunity for defense is an easy way of convincing his readers that he is right.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

April 1861

Mr. Louis Jourdan and *The Spirits' Book*

Since we are talking about journalists with respect to Spiritism let us not stop on the way. We are not generally spoiled by those gentlemen and considering that we don't hide their criticism they must allow us to present our counterpoint and arguments against the opinion of Mr. Deschanel and others like a writer whose celebrity and influence are unquestionable, and without being accused of self-serving interest. The praises in fact are not directed to us, personally; at least we don't take them personally and always address them to our spiritual guides that kindly supervise our work. Therefore we could not benefit from any merit that might be found in our work; we accept the praise not as a confirmation of our personal worth but as a recognition to the endeavor that with the help of God we hope to take on successfully for we have not finished yet and the most difficult part is yet to come. From that point of view, Mr. Louis Jourdan's opinion has some weight because everyone knows that he does not speak lightheartedly just to fill out the columns of a newspaper with empty words. He can certainly be wrong, like anyone else, but his opinion is always conscientious.

It would be premature to uphold that Mr. Jourdan is a confessed follower of Spiritism. He himself declares that he has not seen any manifestation and that he is not in touch with any medium. He analyzes from his own personal thoughts and since he does not base his opinion on the denial of the soul or any other extra-human power, he sees in the Spiritist Doctrine a new phase of moral life and a means of explaining what was inexplicable up until now. Behold, by admitting the foundations his reason does not absolutely refuse to admit their consequences while Mr. Figuier cannot admit such consequences since he repels the fundamental principle.

He did not study everything nor had he investigated everything of this vast science, hence it is not surprising that his ideas are not well established about all points and for that reason certain questions may seem hypothetical. As a sensible man, however, he does not say: "I don't understand, hence it cannot be." He, on the contrary, says: "I don't know because I did not learn that but I don't deny it." As a serious man he does not ridicule an issue that addresses the most serious interests of humanity and as a wise man he remains silent about things that he ignores, afraid of having his denials belied by the facts, as it has happened to so many others who then hear the irresistible argument: "You speak of something that you don't know."

He then releases matters of detail, confessing his incompetence, limiting himself to the appreciation of the principle, admitting its possibility is only led by reason as commonly happens every day. Mr. Jourdan first published an article about *The Spirits Book* in the #8 issue of the '*Le Causeur Magazine*', in 1860. It is now over a year since that publication and we had not yet mentioned the fact in our Review, a demonstration that we don't hastily prevail from the praises during a time when we textually cited or indicated the bitterest criticisms, also a demonstration that we are not afraid of their influence. That article was reproduced as a full chapter in his new book '*Un Philosophe au coin du feu*'¹⁴. We extracted the following passages from that article:

**

"I formally promised to return to a subject about which I only mentioned a few words and that deserves a very special attention. It is about The Spirits' Book that contains the principles of the spiritist doctrine and philosophy. The word may sound barbarian to us but what can one do? New things do need new names. The turning tables led to Spiritism and today we have a complete doctrine, entirely revealed by the spirits since The Spirits' Book was not produced by any man. Mr. Allan Kardec's function was limited to the collection and organization of the answers given by the spirits to the many questions addressed to them, brief responses that do not always satisfy the curiosity of the interrogator, but when considered as a whole they actually form a doctrine, a moral and even perhaps a religion."

"You must appreciate it yourself. The spirits provided clear explanations about the primary causes, about God and the infinite, about the attributes of God. They gave us the general elements of the universe, knowledge about the principle of everything, the properties of matter. They discussed the mysteries of creation, the formation of the worlds and the living beings, and also the causes of diversities in the human races. From there to the vital principle it is just a step, and they also told us what the vital principle is, the meaning of life and death, intelligence and instinct."

"Then, they unveiled the spiritual world, that is, the world of the spirits, and told us about its origin and nature; how the spirits incarnate and the objective of such incarnation; the process of returning

from the corporeal to the spiritual life. Wandering (errant) spirits, transient worlds, perceptions, sensations and sufferings of the spirits, relationships beyond the grave, sympathetic and antipathetic relationships among the spirits, return to the corporeal life, emancipation of the soul, intervention of the spirits on the physical world, occupations and missions of the spirits, hiding nothing from us.”

“I said that the spirits were not only founding a doctrine and a philosophy, but also a religion. They have in fact established the code of moral life in which there are laws that seem of great wisdom to me, not even missing the future penalties and rewards that could be understood from words like heaven, purgatory and hell. As seen from the above, it is a complete system and I have no problem in admitting the fact that if it does not show the powerful cohesion of a philosophical work, if there are contradictions here and there, it is at least of remarkable originality given its elevated moral reach and for the unforeseen solutions given to the complex issues that have concerned the human spirit at all times.”

“I am a total stranger to the spiritist school; I don’t know its leader or its followers; I have never seen any little table dancing or turning; I don’t have any contact with any medium; I have not witnessed any of those supernatural or miraculous events that are reported to me by the spiritist publications. I don’t absolutely confirm or deny the communications with the spirits; in principle I believe that such communications are possible and it does not shock my reason at all. In order to believe in them I don’t need the explanations given to me by a scholar, friend of mine, Mr. Louis Figuier, about facts that he attributes to the magnetic influence of the mediums.”

“I don’t think that it is impossible to establish communication between the invisible world and us. Don’t ask me how and why; I know nothing about it. That is more a question of feeling than mathematical demonstration. Hence, I am expressing my feeling, but it is a far from a vague feeling, a feeling that leaves a well-defined impression in my heart and in my spirit.”

“If we can capture the vital fluids from the infinite space around us, through the movement of our lungs, it is evident that we are constantly interacting with the invisible world. Is such a world populated by wandering spirits, like lost souls, always ready to respond to our calls? That is more difficult to admit but also premature to deny absolutely.”

“Undoubtedly it is not difficult to believe that God’s creatures are not all like us, the sad inhabitants of our planet. We are very imperfect, submitted to unrefined material needs, thus it is not difficult to imagine that there are superior beings who are not subjected to any corporeal penalty; bright and luminous creatures, spirit and matter like us but a more subtle, pure matter, less dense and not so heavy; fluid messengers uniting the universes, sustaining the multiple races and planets for the accomplishment of their missions.”

“Through breathing we are in contact with a myriad of creatures whose existence we cannot understand and whose shapes we cannot reproduce. Thus, it is not absolutely impossible that some of those beings may accidentally get in touch with us but what does seem trivial is the need for a material support of a table, a basket or a medium so that those relationships may be established.”

“Those communications are either useful or pointless. If useful then the spirits must not need to be mysteriously evoked and questioned in order to teach men what men need to know. If pointless, why resort to using them?”

“I have no problem with the idea of accepting these influences, inspirations, revelations if you will. What I do absolutely deny is when people say: God said so, so you must obey. And that under t pretext it is a revelation. God spoke through Moses, Christ, Mohamed thus you will be Jewish, Christian or Muslim otherwise you shall endure the eternal penalties and while we wait we will damn you here on Earth.”

“No, no. I don’t accept similar revelations at any price. There is a supreme law above all revelations, all inspirations and all prophets, past and future: the law of freedom. I can accept anything that you like as long as that law is in its foundation. Remove that law and it is only violence and darkness. I want to have the freedom of believing or not believing and admitting that out loud. It is my own right and I want to use it. It is my freedom and I want to preserve that. If you tell me that I will lose my soul if I don’t believe what you teach me; it is possible. I want to stretch my freedom to that limit; I want to be able to lose my own soul if I desire to do so. Who will then be the judge of my salvation or my loss? Who will be able to say: That one was saved, this one here is lost for good? Shouldn’t the mercy of God be infinite? Will anyone be able to assess the abyss of the conscience?”

“The same principle is found in the curious book by Mr. Allan Kardec and that is why I am reconciled with the spirits that were questioned by him. The briefness of the answers is a proof that the spirits have no time to waste; what surprises me is the fact that they still waste some in order to complacently address the call of so many people who waste theirs in the evocations.”

“Everything more or less clearly stated by the spirits, and whose answers Mr. Allan Kardec compiled, was developed and exposed with remarkable clarity by Michel who is certainly to me the most complete and most advanced of all contemporary mystics. His revelation is at the same time a doctrine and a poem, a healthy and energizing doctrine, bright poetry. The only advantage that I find in the questions and answers published by Mr. Allan Kardec is the fact that they are given in a much more accessible format to the general mass of readers, and in particular to the female readers, the main ideas about which is important to have their attention. Michel’s books are not of an easy reading; they continually require a very attentive reader. The book that we mentioned above, on the contrary, may be considered a kind of vade mecum (handbook); if we take it and serendipitously open it in any page the questions will call our attention, raising our curiosity. The questions addressed to the spirits are typically those that concern all of us. The answers are sometimes very weak; on other occasions they encompass the most complex issues in a few words and always offer vivid interest and healthy indications. I am not aware of a more attractive, more consoling, and more fascinating course of moral. There one finds confirmation of the greatest principles on which modern civilizations are founded, particularly the principle of all principles: freedom! Heart and spirit are smoothed and strengthened by that book. The chapters about the plurality of the systems and the law of individual and collective progress have a special appeal and exert a powerful attraction. As for me, Mr. Allan Kardec’s spirits have not taught anything about that. I believe since long ago that there is a progressive development of life through the worlds; that death is the portal to a new life whose trials are in proportion to the achievements of a previous existence. This is in fact the old Gallic faith, the druidic doctrine and the spirits invented nothing here but they did add a series of deductions and

excellent practical rules to guide one's life. That book may have great utility, regardless of the interest and curiosity generated by its origin, particularly to the indecisive minds, to the insecure souls that navigate the turbulent waters of doubt. Doubt is the worst evil! It is the most horrific prison from which one needs to escape at any price. This strange book will help men and women in the consolidation of their lives, breaking the shackles of their prisons, precisely because it is presented in a simple and elemental way, like a popular catechism that everybody can understand."

**

After the citation of a few questions about marriage and divorce that he finds trivial and not handled according to his personal taste, Mr. Jourdan finishes his article as below:

"I must say, however, that the spirits' answers about this subject are not superficial. The whole book is remarkable; the general subject is marked by a certain magnificence and a lively originality. May it stem out or not from a wonderful source, the work is exciting in several aspects and just because it has made me largely interested I am led to believe that many people may also be interested."

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

April 1861

Response¹⁵

Mr. Jourdan asks a question, or even better, makes an objection motivated by his limited knowledge about the subject as below:

"...Thus, it is not absolutely impossible that some of those beings may accidentally get in touch with us but what does seem trivial is the need for a material support of a table, a basket or a medium so that those relationships may be established."

15 Refer to previous article (N.T.)

“Those communications are either useful or pointless. If useful then the spirits must not need to be mysteriously evoked and questioned in order to teach men what men need to know. If useless, why resort to using them?” In his book *A Philosopher by the fire*, he adds: *“That is a dilemma that the spiritist school will hardly solve.”*

No. There is no difficulty for the spiritist school to solve it since it was proposed and solved long ago and if according to Mr. Jourdan that is not the case it is because his knowledge is limited with that respect. We believe that had Mr. Jourdan read *The Mediums' Book* that deals with the practical and experimental part of Spiritism and he would have a different idea about the subject.

Yes, there is no doubt that it would be trivial, and this word used by Mr. Jourdan would be weak; we say that it would be ridiculous, absurd and unacceptable, that in order to establish such serious relationships like those between the visible and the invisible worlds the spirits would need to resource to such common utensils like a table, a basket or a planchette to transmit their teachings to us, because the natural consequence of that, would be that once those utensils were not available we would also be deprived of their lessons. No. That is not the case. The spirits are just the souls of men, without the dense covering, and the spirits exist since there have been men in the universe (we don't say on Earth). These spirits form the invisible world that populates the space that surrounds us; space in which we live unsuspectingly, as we do amidst the microscopic world. The spirits have exerted influence upon the visible world at all times; those who are good helped the men of genius with their inspiration, while the others provide us with guidance in our day to day lives. But those inspirations that occur by the transmission of thoughts are invisible and leave no material trace.

If the spirit wants to communicate outwardly he needs to act upon matter; if he wants to give his lessons with accuracy and stability rather than with fuzziness and uncertainty then material signs are necessary and for that – allow us the expression – the spirit uses everything at hand as long as under the conditions that are appropriate to his nature. When willing to write the spirit utilizes a pen or a pencil; willing to rap the spirit will use any object like a table or a saucepan and he will not feel humiliated for having used that. Is there anything more common than a goose feather? Isn't that what the greatest geniuses use to create the masterpieces that remain for posterity? What can they do if they are denied of any means of writing? They think but their thoughts are lost if not collected. Suppose a handicapped writer, how would he write? An assistant may capture the message. Well then, since the spirits cannot hold the pen without an intermediary they do so through someone that is called a medium, inspired and guided by the spirits. That type of medium, sometimes acts as aware of what is going on; in that case it is a medium in the true meaning of the term. Others act without knowledge of what is happening behind the action; that is the case of the inspired mediums that are unknowingly mediums. Thus, the subject of tables and planchettes is totally secondary and not of substance as people who are not well informed may think. Those objects were the prelude of the great and powerful means of communication like the alphabet was the prelude of reading.

The second part of the dilemma is not less easy to resolve. Mr. Jourdan says: *“If the communications are useful then there is no need to evoke the spirits mysteriously, etc.”*

Let us say for starters that it is not up to us to regulate what happens in the spiritual world. We cannot say: - things should be this or that way since it would be the same as trying to conduct God's business. It is true that the spirits want to initiate us into their world because that will perhaps be ours tomorrow. We must accept it as is and if it is not convenient to us it will not change here or there because God will not accommodate our caprices.

Having said that let us promptly state that there is never a mysterious or kabbalistic evocation. It is all done openly and with simplicity and without any compulsory formula. Those who believe that these things are necessary totally ignore the fundamentals of the Spiritist Science.

Next, if the spiritist communications only existed as a consequence of evocations it would then follow that those communications would be a privilege of those who can be evoked, and that the great majority of those who have never even heard about it would be deprived. This is in contradiction with what we have just mentioned above about the occult and spontaneous communications. These communications happen to everyone, from the little to the big one, from the rich to the poor, from the ignorant to the scholar. The spirits that protect us, and our lost relatives, they don't need to be called. They are around us and although invisible they surround us with their solicitude; we only need a thought to attract them, demonstrating our affection, because if we don't think of them it is very natural that they don't think of us. People may then ask: what is the objective of the evocation? Let us see.

Suppose you are out in the street, surrounded by a dense crowd that speaks and hums in your ears; far away in the crowd you see someone that you know and to whom you would like to speak to in private. What do you do if you cannot reach that person? You call and the person comes to you. That is what happens with the spirits. Besides those that we love and they may not always be around, there is the swarm of indifferent ones. If you want to speak to a given spirit and since you cannot go to him for you are tied to the corporeal links, you call him, and that is the whole mystery of the evocation whose only objective is to provide you with the ability of addressing anyone that you like, instead of listening to the first one that shows up. In the occult and spontaneous communications that we mentioned earlier the spirits that assist us are unknown to us; they do so in spite of us. They reveal their presence in an objective way through the material manifestations, written or otherwise, and they may even provide their identity if it is their wish to do so. It is a means of knowing those around us with whom we are synchronized and if we have friends or foes around us. There is no lack of adversaries in the spiritual world as in our world. There as here, the most dangerous ones are the ones that we don't know. Practical Spiritism provides us with the means of getting to know them. In short, anybody that only knows Spiritism through the phenomenon of the turning tables has such a limited and trivial idea about it as someone else that only knows Physics from children's toys. Nevertheless, the more one advances, the more the horizon broadens, and it is only then that its true reach is understood because it reveals one of the most powerful forces of nature, a force that acts simultaneously upon the physical as well as the moral world. Nobody denies the influence exerted upon us by the material world, be it visible or invisible. If we are part of a crowd we suffer its moral and physical influence.

With death our souls go somewhere in space. Where to? Since there is no restricted or limited space Spiritism says and demonstrates that such a place is space as a whole, forming around us a countless population. Now, how can we admit that the intelligent space has less action than the unintelligent space? That is the key to a large number of misunderstood facts, that men interpret according to their own prejudices and exploit them to the taste of their passions. When these things are understood by everyone the prejudice will disappear and the progress will steadily follow its march.

Spiritism is a light that illuminates the darkest recesses of society; it is then natural that those who fear light try to extinguish it. However, when that light has penetrated everywhere, it will be necessary that those who seek darkness will have to decide to accept the light of day. We will then see their masks fall. Every person that truly wishes progress cannot remain indifferent to one of its most powerful contributors, a contributor that prepares one of the greatest moral revolutions up until now experienced by humanity. As it can be seen, we are far away from the turning tables. The

distance between that modest beginning and its consequences is the same that one day had existed between Newton's apple and the law of universal gravitation.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

April 1861

Assessment of Mr. Louis Figuier's book *History of the Marvelous*

By Mr. Escande, editor of the *La Mode Nouvelle*

In the articles that we published about this work we tried to identify, before anything else, the standpoint of the author, a not so difficult endeavor once we demonstrate that it is based on

materialistic ideas quoting his own words. Since the basis is false, at least from the point of view of the large majority of mankind, he arrived at wrong consequences from facts that he classifies as marvelous, hence his conclusions are full of mistakes. That fact did not preclude some of his comrades of the press from praising his merit, the depth and acumen of his work. Not everybody shares that opinion though. We found an article in the *La Mode Nouvelle*¹⁶, a newspaper that is more serious than its title, as remarkable for its style as fair in its analysis. Its extension prevents us from reproducing the whole text. Besides, the author also promises to publish more since he only deals with the first volume here. The readers can appreciate the fragments below.

I

“This book is unjustifiably pretentious. It was supposed to be considered erudite, touching sciences, showing an apparent abundance of research, but its erudition is superficial, its science incomplete, its research premature and badly coordinated. Mr. Figuiet’s specialty was to collect, one by one, thousands of minor events that are daily reported in the academy, like the long rows of mushrooms that sprout overnight on cryptogamic fernlike layers, followed by the writing of books about them that compete with others like the Bourgeois Kitchen or treatise of Poor Richard’s Almanac. He is very used to these kind of easy compositions – inferior to the compilation carried out by the good father Trublet, wittily mocked by Voltaire – that forcibly gives him pleasure, he said to himself that it would not be more difficult to exploit people’s passion for the marvelous, which excites imaginations now more than never before, than utilizing the almost idle second class conversations of the Institute¹⁷. He is used to writing scientific Reviews about someone else’s work, containing his summary reports with theses and memories that he discusses; he then compiles the summaries of the summaries and writes his own books. Loyal to his past tradition, he hastily gathers every book about the subject that he can find, break them into pieces and mixes them up as he wishes, then composing a new book in his own style; we have no doubt that he must have exclaimed, like Horace: Exegi monumentum – I also erected a monument that will last longer than bronze.”

“He would be rightly proud of his creation if the quality of the work was measured by quantity. In fact that History of the Marvelous is made up of four volumes and it contains modern history only from 1630 to our present days; those two centuries only give an indication that it would contain more than twice as much volumes of the thickest encyclopedia had he decided to include in the history of the marvelous at all times and from all populations!”

“Thus, when we think that such a vast publication has taken him but a few months’ work we are led to believe that such a grand and hastily delivery is more marvelous than the marvels it contains. However, such amazing productiveness is no longer a prodigy when his process of composition is better scrutinized and one realizes that such process is so common to him that one could not expect anything else from him. Instead of consolidating the facts, summarizing them, leaving aside useless details and concentrating on the facts of the most significant events, and then discussing them in the sequence, he just wrote a feuilleton even more extensive than those which he weekly writes in the La Presse.”

“Scissors in hand he cut from preceding works anything that favored the prejudiced ideas that he wanted to promote, keeping away others that could oppose the prior opinion he had formed about this important subject, particularly anything that could counter the natural explanation that he wanted to provide about the manifestations qualified as wonderful and that the free-thinkers

16 Office at Rue Sainte-Anne, 63 – February 22nd, 1861 Edition – price 1 franc

17 Parisian Institute of Sciences (N.T.)

unanimously call public credulity because that is one of the ambitious goals of his book – although this one is not better justified than the others – to provide a new physical or medical solution found by him, a triumphant solution, unimpeachable, from now on immune to any objection raised by anyone, sufficiently simple to believe that God is more powerful than our scholars. He repeats that over again in hundreds of passages of his book so that nobody may ignore it, with the hopes that sooner or later people will believe, although he just repeats what was said before by every physicists and medical doctors, philosophers and chemists who are more horrified by the idea of the wonderful than Pascal was by the vacuum.”

“The result is that this history of the marvelous lacks both authority and proportion. From a dogmatic point of view it does not go beyond the denial of previous denials; it does not add a single new argument to the previous ones and we don’t understand the utility of his echo regarding this point and all others. There is more: tormented by the desire to be better than Calmeil, Esquiros, Montègre, Hecquet and so many others that preceded him and will always be his masters, Mr. Louis Figuier sometimes gets lost in the confusing maze of demonstrations that he borrows from them, pretending to have their ownership and sometimes arguing with Mr. Babinet and his logic. As for the facts he accumulated a large number of them although somewhat by chance, truncating some, discarding others, only interested in those that could offer some attraction to the reading. This demonstrates that his major concern was the easy success rather than fighting the contemporary romance writers and we are even led to question how come he did not convince his editor to include his work to be sold at the booksellers at the train stations, to have direct access to the crowds that only read for distraction rather than instruction.”

“We cannot deny the fact that his book is amusing, if all that is required to deserve such an adjective is to resemble a collection of little picturesque tales, without much compromise of the truth, something that does not preclude him from uselessly and non-stop boasting around others about his impartiality, his truthfulness – one more pretention to be added to the so many others mentioned above, one that he pretends as strongly as he dissimulates when he does not have it. As it is the best comparison we can provide, is with those popular restaurants that carry plenty of very seductive dishes, as far as their appearance goes, but that serve their customers without any real concern for the quality of what they provide. More superficial than profound, anything important is sacrificed before the futile, the principal before the accessory, and the dogma before the eventful.”

*“In fact, the blanks are so abundant as the useless things and there is no lack of contradictions, sustaining here what is denied further down, so much so that we are tempted to believe that Mr. Louis Figuier assigned himself with the task of teaching others what he himself did not know, differently from the renowned Giovanni Pico della Mirandola that was capable of writing the *De Omni re scibili*¹⁸.”*

II

“We could stop our analysis of the ‘History of the marvelous’ here if we were not supposed to justify these tough but fair assessments. For starters, do we have to add that the writer does not believe in the possibility of the supernatural? We doubt it. His supernumerary academic position – a title that is likely to outlive him considering the power that he is conferred as a scientific writer in that periodical – would not allow him to sustain any other thesis without being exposed to an army of skeptics in

18 About every knowable thing, by the Italian Renaissance Philosopher, Pico della Mirandola, 1643 - 1495

which he is supposedly enlisted. He is also a non-believer and his denial is beyond suspicion. He belongs to the group of 'those wise minds, witnesses of the unforeseen boundless growth of the contemporary marvelous, who cannot understand such a mistake right now in the XIX century, enriched by an advanced Philosophy and amidst a magnificent scientific movement that leads everything to the positive and useful' - We acknowledge that it must be painful to those 'wise minds' that the public mind refuses to reject its prejudices thus persisting on beliefs that differ from the philosophical positivism and are nonetheless typically animal. As a matter of fact such disgust dates from other times too. Mr. Louis Figuier spitefully confesses so when he asks using confusing terms how can it be that the marvelous had resisted the XVIII century, 'the century of Voltaire and the Encyclopedia, when all eyes were opening to enlightenment and rational common sense'."

"What can one do then? That lively belief in the marvelous has been so much present in all religions, at all times and with all peoples, at all latitudes and in all continents, that the free-thinkers should be glad to see it agitating on its own and they would do great from now on by just abstaining from a proselytism whose success they know is inevitable."

"Mr. Louis Figuier, however, is not one of those feeble hearts frightened by the uselessness of his own efforts. Full of himself and believing in his strength he boasts about having achieved what Voltaire, Diderot, Lamétrie, Dupuis, Volney, Dulaure, Pigault-Lebrun had not done; or what Dulaurens with his Le Compere Mathieu, the chemists with their alembics, the physicists with their electrical batteries, the astronomers with their compasses, the pantheists with their sophisms or the malevolent mockers with their bad taste were all incapable of achieving."

"He proposed to triumphantly demonstrate that 'the marvelous does not exist and had never existed' and as a consequence that 'the prodigies of ancient times as well as those of modern times can all be attributed to a natural cause'. A difficult task; so far the most intrepid ones have succumbed before such a task. However, he continues, the 'conclusion that would necessarily deny any wonderful agent, would be a victory of science over superstition, to the great benefit of human reason and dignity.' And his ambition was satisfied by such a victory – an easier victory than we might think if Mr. Figuier is not wrong when he says in his introduction that 'our century is not much interested in matters of theology and religious disputes.'"

"Why then to start a war against a belief that does not exist? Why attacking the opinions of a theology that has no followers? Why giving attention to superstitions that are no longer our concern? – 'Victory without danger is triumph without glory' the poet says, and it is not very convenient to sound the fighting trumpet if all that there is to fight is windmills."

"What else do you want? When writing this Mr. Figuier forgot what he wrote above when he shamefully confessed that our century, deaf to the lessons of the encyclopedia and those of the lay press, had all of a sudden been taken over by the love for the marvelous, and even more than their predecessors, this century now believes in the marvelous, an incomprehensible aberration that he intended to cure. Such contradiction, however, is so small that it might not be worth pointing out. We shall see many others and will be forced to neglect several!"

"Mr. Figuier thus denies that supernatural manifestations do occur in our days and that they might have occurred at any other time. With respect to miracles, they can only be made by Science. God's power has nothing to do with that. Even when we say that God does not have such power we experience some sort of scruples for the incomplete translation of his thoughts. Does he acknowledge

another god besides the god of nature, a god that is as remarkable in his blind intelligence and that unsuspectingly realizes wonders, a dear god to the wise men, complacent enough to allow them to steal a slice of his sovereignty? We prefer to stay away from this issue.”

“Marvelously mediocre, the ‘history of the marvelous’ begins by an introduction that Mr. Louis Figuier calls a quick glance at the supernatural in Ancient times and in the Middle Ages that we will not discuss since there is too much to say. His work alters the most important manifestations, under the pretext of summarizing them, and it would understandably require a long time to reconstitute the true meaning of thousands of events that he only mentioned in-passing.”

“The edifice is worthy of the open colonnade. That history of the marvelous during the last two centuries begins with a report of the subject matter related to Urbain Grandier and the religious ladies of Loudun; then comes the magic divining rod the tremblers of Cevennes, the convulsionary Jansenists, Cagliostro, magnetism and the turning tables. However, not a single word about the possession of Louviers, the Illuminati, the Martinists, the Swedenborgism, the stigmatized of Tirol, the remarkable manifestation of children in Sweden less than fifty years ago. He only says a word about the exorcism of father Gassner and less than an insignificant page is dedicated to the clairvoyant of Prevorst.”

“Mr. Figuier would have done better if he had given the following title to his book: Episodes of the History of the Marvelous in Modern Times. Even the episodes that he chose may give rise to serious objections. Nobody has ever attributed any supernatural meaning to the magic tricks of Cagliostro. He was a skillful sorcerer with curious tricks that he used very well to fascinate those who were exploited by him, and he had several accomplices. If anything, Cagliostro should have a place among the revolutionary precursors rather than amidst the witches.”

“Equally strange, is the placement of animal magnetism together with marvelous events, particularly from the point of view used by Mr. Figuier. Magnetism stands out from the Academy of Medicine and Sciences by whom it was greatly stigmatized; however, it must not be of any interest to the marvelous unless perhaps for certain manifestations neglected by Mr. Figuier, using the opportunity to speak about Mesmer’s life, the experiences of the Marquis de Puységur, and the incident related to the famous report of Mr. Husson. We discussed that important issue two years ago and will not repeat it here. We will also let go of the turning tables that were examined on the same occasion. However, there would be a lot to be said about Mr. Figuier’s pretentious physical and natural explanations about those dancing tables and the manifestations that follow. In any case it is necessary to impose limits to our discussion.”

“We will then let him fight the Spiritualist Magazine and the Spiritist Review, two periodicals published in Paris by followers of spiritist manifestations who accuse him of having written his repository without a previous consultation with witnesses nor key players in the process. One and the other sustain that he had never attended a single spiritualist session and that he clearly stated that his opinion was already formed and that in no circumstance would he change it.”

“Is that so? We don’t know. All we can say is that, after having correctly denied Mr. Babinet’s solution through the unconscious and primitive movements, he ended up by adopting that theory himself given the dimension of the inconsistency of his thoughts and writings. Here is the proof when he writes: ‘During those sessions where individuals were permanently connected for twenty minutes to half an hour, hands open and resting on the table, forming an uninterrupted chain, without the freedom of any distraction during that concentrated operation, the large majority of people do not experience any particular effect. It is a rare case if even at least one person will not fall into a

hypnotic state – to Mr. Figuiet, hypnotism gives the answer to everything as we will see later – Not more than a second in such a state is necessary so that the expected phenomenon may take place. The link of that human chain, thus fallen into some sort of nervous sleep and no longer aware of his own actions, produces the motion of the object.’ – Why doesn’t Mr. Figuiet mock himself here, since he used to mock Mr. Balbinet? That would have been logical, particularly after having announced that he would elucidate the mystery and considering that all he did was to use that ridiculous little light in his lantern, previously used by the wise scholar. But logic and Mr. Louis Figuiet are divorced in that history of the marvelous. Ah! The echoes hopelessly pretend to speak but all they can do is to repeat what they hear.”

“As for the long chapters dedicated to the magic divining rod and in particular to Jacques Aymar, our first observation to him is that he is mistaken if he thinks that the problem was sufficiently studied by Mr. Chevreul. It is an illusion, that he can attribute it to that wise man. However, outside the Academy of Sciences he will find nobody who will admit that the theory of the exploring pendulum will respond to every one of his objections. The statement attributed to Galileo ‘...Nevertheless, it (Earth) turns!’ has also some application to the magic divining rod. It turned and continues to turn, in spite of the skeptics that deny the movement because they don’t want to see it. The thousands of examples that we can refer to – mentioned by Mr. Figuiet himself – attest the reality of the phenomenon. Does it turn following a diabolic or spiritual impulse, as people say today, or it does so under the influence of some unknown fluid? In good faith we reject any marvelous influence, although it may be admitted in certain cases. The inexistence of unknown fluids does not seem to have been demonstrated to us. Among others, the magnetic fluid counts on many followers whose declarations deserve as much authority as the denials of the adversaries. At any rate, the magic divining rod has made marvels that may prove not to be supernatural but that science is still incapable of explaining, science that still explains so little of the many wonders that we see around us, as for example the life of the tiniest leaf. It would do him good to acquire some modesty, a virtue that he lacks so much.”

“Among so many marvels, those carried out by Jacques Aymar already mentioned so many times deserved a detailed report. One day he was called to Lyon, following a horrific crime committed in that town. With his divining rod he explored the basement where the crime was staged, declaring that there were three murderers; he then began to follow their trails, leading to a gardener whose house was located at the Rhône river bank, stating that the three had returned to that house and had a bottle of wine there. The gardener denied this but his young sons confessed after being questioned that three men had come to their place and in the absence of their father they sold wine to the men. Aymar then continues to follow the trail, always guided by the rod. He discovers where they boarded a boat at the Rhône; he takes a canoe and navigates to every place where they had been and goes to the fields of Sablon, between Vienne and Saint Vallier, indicating that they had stopped there for a few days. He continues his chase from point to point and arrives at Beaucaire, at the time when there was a town fair; he walks around the busy streets and stops at the town jail; he goes inside and points towards a little hunchback man, saying that he was one of the murderers. His indications were that the two other assassins had fled towards Nimes but the law enforcement did not want to follow his leads. The hunchback was taken to Lyon where he confessed the crime and was sentenced to death. That was Jacques Aymar’s prowess and there are many other cases like that in his life. Mr. Figuiet admits that in the details. As a matter of fact, he could not say otherwise since these are attested by hundreds of trustworthy witnesses – ‘from three reports and so many agreeing letters, written by eyewitnesses and by equally honored judges, impossible to expect in our days any foul play among them.”

“Mr. Figuiet transforms Jacques Aymar into a police detective, of a much greater perspicacity than Mr. Sartines, regardless of his celebrity. Compared to him our police authorities from Sûreté would be like schoolchildren. He then supposes that the divining rod handler, after spending three or four

hours in Lyon had time enough to learn more about the event than local law enforcement. So, he drove the investigation to the gardener's house because it was evident that the murderer(s) had boarded a boat at the Rhône to get away more swiftly; he guessed about the wine drinking at the gardener's house since they must have been thirsty; they stopped at the various places along the river as confirmed later because those well-known ports had to be familiar to them; they went to the fields of Sablon because they evidently wanted to see the spectacle of the assembly of the troops; later he went to Beaucaire due to the obvious and uncontrollable desire that the murderers would have there; he then stopped at the local jail because one of the murders was unlucky enough to have been arrested already. 'That is why your daughter is deaf!' Says Sganarelle; and Mr. Louis Figuiet does not do better, or different. He believes that he is right particularly for the fact that when Jacques Aymar was called to Paris, given the rumors of his celebrity, he saw his perspicacity facing real failures there together with some real triumphs. However, due to those mistakes that resulted in some bitterness against Jacques Aymar, Mr. Figuiet, of all others, couldn't criticize him; he couldn't have used this to declare Jacques Aymar an imposter, and he knows that better than everybody else; he knows, regarding magnetism, that certain types of experiments are more unpredictable than others, yielding good results one day, failing the other. He adds a less forgiving inconsequence to that one. Not satisfied by accusing Jacques Aymar of charlatanism he generalizes the same accusation against every divining rod handler, stating: 'Among the practical followers only a small number was formed by ill-faith people; but even those did not always act in bad faith; the great majority of them acted in good faith. The divining rod positively turned in their hands, independent from any artifice and the phenomenon and the facts were actually real.' Well then, there we have the truth. But how and why did it turn? It is impossible to avoid that question, responded by Mr. Figuiet: 'The motion of the divining rod happened following their unconscious mind control, completely oblivious to their own will.' – Always that unconsciousness that is more marvelous than the marvelous that they deny. Believe it or not."

Escande

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

April 1861

The sea

By Mr. Michelet

Mr. Michelet must be on guard since all the maritime gods of Antiquity are about to cause harm to him. That is what we learn from Mr. Taxile Delord in his witty article published in the *Siècle* last February 4th. His language is worthy of the Orpheus in the Underworlds of the Parisian operettas and here is a sample: *“Neptune suddenly appears at the door of Amphitrite’s home and says: You sent for me, here I am Neptune. You did not expect me now, dear Amphitrite. It is time for my nap but I cannot close my eyes since the arrival of that devilish book entitled ‘The sea’. I wanted to browse it but it is full of nonsense. I don’t know which seas he wants to talk about. As for me, I cannot recognize myself. Everybody knows very well that the sea ends at the Pillars of Hercules. What else can be beyond that... ?”*

It goes without saying, that Mr. Michelet is a winner from all points of view. Well, after his adversaries disappeared Mr. Taxile Delord tells him: *“You would perhaps be glad to know what became of the maritime gods after they were expelled by the sea from its empire. Neptune is a large scale fish breeder; Glaucus is a swimming teacher at the Ouanier’s baths; Amphitrite works as a receptionist in one of the Mediterranean baths in Marseille; Nereus has accepted the position of cook on one of the transatlantic liners; several Tritons died and others are exposed in fairs.”*

We cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided by Mr. Delord about the current situation of former Olympian heroes, but in principle and unwillingly he said something more serious than intended. The word god in former times had a very elastic meaning. It was a generic qualification applied to every being that seemed to rise above human level. That is why their great men were deified. We would not find them so ridiculous if we had not used the same word to designate the unique being, the sovereign Lord of the universe. The spirits that existed in those days as they do today also manifested and those mysterious creatures must have belonged to the same class of gods, according to the ideas of that time and with more reason than today. Ignorant people worshiped them, looking at them as superior creatures. They were sung to by the poets and their stories flooded with profound philosophical truths, hidden by the veil of ingenious allegories, whose scope formed the pagan mythology. The masses that generally only see the surface of things took it as a rule, not investigating the bottom line of those thoughts, absolutely as people in our time only see in *La Fontaine’s* fables as nothing more than animal talk.

That is in essence the principle of mythology. The gods were nothing more than the spirits or souls of the mortals, as in our days. However, the common passions of pagan religion do not provide a good impression of their elevation in the spiritist hierarchy, starting with their leader, Jupiter, something that did not preclude them from enjoying the incense that was burnt at their altars.

Christianity swept their prestige away and Spiritism now reduces it to their true value. Their own inferiority allowed them to endure several incarnations on Earth. It is then possible to find some, among our contemporaries, who have received the honors of deity, something that does not make them any more advanced. Mr. Taxile Delord, who undoubtedly does not believe in these things, just wanted to make a joke. In spite of that he still said something that is perhaps more truthful than he thought or at least it is not physically impossible, as a principle. That is how, imitating Mr. Jourdain, many people do Spiritism without knowing it.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

April 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

The suicide of Mr. Leroy

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, March 8th, 1861

The *Siècle* from March 2nd, 1861 reports the following:

“In a vacant lot on the corner of a road called The Arcade which leads to Conflans and Charenton, yesterday in the morning the body of a man who had committed suicide was found by workers, hanging from a very tall pine tree. Once informed, the Charenton Police Chief went to the scene, followed by Dr. Josias, carrying out the full examination. The Droit says that the man was apparently around fifty years of age, of distinct looks, well dressed. A handwritten note was taken from one of his pockets and it read: ‘It is 11:45pm; I ascend to end my torture. May God forgive my errors.’ In the same pocket a letter was found without signature or addressee, containing the following: ‘Yes, I fought to the limit! Promises, guarantees, I lacked everything. I could get there; I had everything to believe in, everything to expect; lack of words kill me; I cannot go on. I now leave this so painful life. Full of strength and energy I am obliged to resort to suicide. God is my witness that I seriously wanted to pay back all those who helped me in my disgrace. Fatality crushes me. Everything is against me. Suddenly abandoned by those that I represented I now suffer my fate. I die without bitterness, I confess, and however much they say, the slanders will not preclude me from having a few moments of noble sympathy towards myself. Insulting the man that has been reduced to the last of all resolutions is an abuse. It is enough to be reduced to this. I am not all ashamed of myself. Selfishness would have killed me.’ According to other documents, the man was a so called Alfred Leroy, fifty years old, from Vimoutier, Orne. His profession and residence are unknown and after the customary formalities the unclaimed body was sent to the morgue.”

**

1. Evocation – A. I don’t come as a tortured man. I am saved! Alfred.

OBSERVATION: The words “I am saved” astonished the majority of the audience. The explanation was requested in the sequence of the conversation.

2. We learned from the papers about the desperate act in which you have succumbed to and although we don’t know you, we are very sorry because religion teaches us that we must have pity on all our unfortunate brothers and it is to testify our sympathy that we invoked you. – A. I need to shut out the real motives that led me to that desperate act. I thank you for what you are doing for me. It is a reason for joy, a message of hope. Thank you!
3. Can you first tell us if you are aware of your present situation? – A. Perfectly. I am relatively happy. I did not commit suicide for purely material causes and my last words demonstrate that. I was taken by an iron fist. When I incarnated on Earth I saw that suicide would be in my future. It was a trial that I had to fight. I wanted to be stronger than fatality but I succumbed.

OBSERVATION: It will be seen soon that this spirit does not escape the fate of all suicides, despite what he says. As for the word fatality, it is evident that there is a memory of Earthly things. People consider their destiny as every disgraceful event that cannot be avoided. For him suicide was the test that he had to pass. He yielded to the call instead of resisting, given his free-will, and he assumed that it was in his destiny.

4. You wanted to escape an unpleasant situation through suicide. Have you gained anything from that? – A. Here is my punishment: confusion of my pride, awareness of my weakness.
5. According to a letter that was found with you, it seems that people's cruelty and lack of word have led you to your self-destruction. What is your feeling now towards those who were the cause of your fatal resolution? – A. Oh! Don't you tempt me, don't tempt me, I beg you.

OBSERVATION: This is a remarkable answer. It paints the situation of the spirit fighting the desire of hatred towards those who did him harm, and the feeling of good, pushing him to forgiveness. He is afraid that this question may provoke an answer that might be reproached by his conscience.

6. Do you regret your action? – A. I told you: my pride and my weakness are the cause.
7. When alive did you believe in God and in a future life? – A. My final words demonstrate that: I walk to my punishment.

OBSERVATION: He begins to understand his situation, about which he could have had an illusion in the beginning, because he could not be simultaneously saved and walked to his punishment.

8. When you took that resolution, what was in your mind? – A. I was very much aware of the justice to understand what makes me suffer now. For a short time I entertained the idea of the void but I soon rejected that. If I had such an idea I would not have killed myself. I would have sought revenge.

OBSERVATION: This answer is at the same time very logical and very profound. If he believed in the nothingness after death instead of killing himself he would have revenged or at least he would have started from vengeance. The idea of the future precluded him from committing a double crime. With the idea of the nothingness what was there to be afraid of if he wanted to take his own life? He would no longer fear men's justice and would enjoy the pleasure of vengeance. Such is the consequence of the materialistic doctrines that certain wise men try to propagate.

9. If you were convinced that the cruelest vicissitudes of life are trials of too short a duration before eternity would you still have succumbed? – A. Very short, I know that, but despair does not give space to reason.
10. We beg God for his forgiveness in your favor and send him our prayers, all of us united: "Almighty God, we know the fate of those who shorten their days and we cannot obstruct your justice. But we also know that your mercy is infinite. May that mercy be extended upon the soul of Alfred Leroy! May also our prayers show him that there are people on Earth who care about him, thus mitigating his sufferings for not having had the courage to endure the hardships of life! Good spirits, whose mission is to alleviate the unfortunate ones, take him under your protection; inspire regret in him for his actions and the firm desire of progress through new trials that he will withstand better. – A. Your prayers make me cry hence I feel happier.

11. In the beginning you said: I am saved. How can we reconcile those words with what you said later: I walk towards my punishment? – A. And how do you see God's benevolence? I could not live. It was impossible. Wouldn't you believe that God sees that impossibility in such a case?

OBSERVATION: Amidst some notably sensible answers there are others, and this last one is in that group, through which the spirit shows an imperfect idea of his current situation. There is no surprise here if we consider the fact that he has been dead for a few days only.

12. (To St. Louis) – Could you tell us what is the fate of the unfortunate spirit that we have just evoked? – A. Expiation and suffering. No, there is no contradiction between the first words of that unfortunate spirit and his pains. He says he is happy. He is happy for the termination of life. Since he is still attached to the Earthly bonds the only thing he feels is the absence of the bad things from Earth, but when his spirit is totally separated from the horizons of pain, a slow and terrible expiation will unfold before him, and the awareness of infinity, still hidden to his eyes, shall be the punishment that he had foreseen.
13. Which difference can you establish between this suicide case and the other one of the Samaritan? Both killed themselves out of despair, however their situation is very different: this one is perfectly conscious of himself; speaks clearly and does not suffer yet while the other one did not see himself dead and from the very initial moments he suffered a cruel pain, feeling the decomposition of his own body. – A. Huge difference. The suffering of each of those men reflects the individual character of their moral progress. The latter, a weak and broken soul, held up as much as he believed. He doubted his own strength and God's benevolence, but he cannot be charged with blasphemy or slander; his inner, slow and profound suffering shall have the same intensity as the pain of the former suicide. It is just that the law of expiation is not uniform.

NOTE: The story of the Samaritan suicide can be found in the issue of the Spiritist Review, June 1858.

14. To the eyes of God who is most to blame and who will suffer the greatest punishment: the one who succumbed to his own weakness or the other who was led to despair for the stiffness of his heart? – A. Surely the one who succumbed to the temptation.
15. Can the prayers on their behalf be useful to them? – A. Yes. Prayer is like a beneficial mist.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

April 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Jules Michel

Friend of Mrs. Costel, the medium, deceased when he was 14 years old

Evoked 8 days after his death

1. Evocation – A. I thank you for the evocation. I remember you and our strolls at Monceau Park.
2. And what can you tell us about our comrade Charles? – A. Charles is very sorry for my death. But am I dead? I see, I feel alive, I think as I did before; it is just that I cannot touch myself and I don't recognize anything around me.
3. What is it that you see? – A. I see a great clarity; my feet don't touch the ground; I slide; I feel dragged. I see bright figures and others dressed in white; I feel their pressure and they surround me; some smile at me others scare me with their dark eyes.
4. Do you see your mother? – A. Ah! Yes. I see my mother, my sister and my brother. Here they are! My mother cries a lot. I wish I could speak with her as I do with you. She would see that I am not dead. How can I console her? I beg you to speak of me. I would like also that you tell Charles that I will have fun by watching his work.
5. Do you see your body? – A. Yes, I see my body there, stiff. However, I am not in that grave since I am here.
6. Where are you then? – A. I am here, by your table, on the right hand side. It is funny that you cannot see me when I see you so well!
7. What was your sensation when you left your body behind? – A. I don't remember very well what I felt then. I had a splitting headache and there were a lot of things around me. I felt numb; I wanted to move but I couldn't; my hands were wet from sweat and I noticed a lot of work done on my body; then I felt nothing else and woke up kind of relieved; there was no more suffering and I felt myself light as a feather. Then I saw myself in bed but I was not there; I saw all the arrangements around me and then I left.
8. How did you know that I called you? – A. I don't understand that very well. I just heard your call and I promptly came because, as I used to tell Charles, you are not boring. Good bye Ma'am, so long. We will speak again, right?

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

April 1861

Correspondence

“Rome, March 2nd, 1861

Dear Sir,

I have been involved with spiritist manifestations for about four years now and I am glad to have a good medium in the family that give us communications of a superior order. We have read and read again your work ‘The Spirits’ Book’ that is cause of happiness and consolation to us, giving us the most sublime and admissible notions of our future life. If I could have any doubt about them, the current proofs I have now are more than enough to reaffirm my faith. I lost persons who were very dear to me and I have the inappreciable happiness of knowing that they are happy and I am able to communicate with them. I cannot express my joy when I had that experience. The first time when they gave me real signs of their presence I said: Then it is all true that not everything dies with the body! I owe our Lord for having entrusted me. Believe in my eternal gratitude by the good that it does to me and for the reason that I was unwillingly tormented by the future. The idea of nothing terrified me and beyond the void there was only an oppressing uncertainty. There is no doubt any more. It seems that I was reborn for life. All my apprehensions are gone and my trust in God came back stronger than ever. I do hope that my sons, thanks to you, will not experience the same torments since they are fed by your truths and their mounting reason has to gain in strength.

However, we lack a safe guide to the practice. If I were not afraid of bothering you I would have asked for the advices of your own experience long ago. Fortunately your recent ‘The Mediums’ Book’ came to fulfill that blank and we now march stronger steps since now we are forewarned against the obstacles on the way.

I attach, dear Sir, some copies of the communications that we have received. They were originally written in Italian and have undoubtedly suffered some loss in the translation. Nonetheless I would be most grateful for receiving your thoughts about them in case I am favored with a reply. It will be an encouragement to us all. I apologize for the length of this letter and receive the testimony of sympathy from yours,

Count X...”

NOTE: The amount of material forces us to postpone the publication of the communications transmitted by Mr. Count X... and there are some really remarkable. We only extracted the following answers given by one spirit who communicated with him:

1. Did you know *The Spirits’ Book*? – A. How can the spirits not know their work? We all know it.

2. That is very natural with respect to those who participated in the work. But how about the others?
– A. There is a communion of thoughts and solidarity among the spirits that you cannot understand, you humans that are fed by selfishness and who see through the window of your prison.
3. Have you participated in that work? – A. No, not personally, but I knew that it was to be done and that other spirits, well above me, were in charge of that mission.
4. Which results will that work produce? – A. It is a tree that has already sowed profound seeds on Earth. Those seeds germinate; they will soon mature and later the fruits shall be harvested.
5. Isn't the opposition of the adversaries frightening? – A. When the clouds that cover the Sun dissipate it shines stronger.
6. The clouds will dissipate then? – A. All that is needed is a breath of God.
7. Then, in your opinion, Spiritism shall become a general belief? – A. You should say universal.
8. However, some people seem very difficult to convince. – A. There are some who will never be in this life but death collects them daily.
9. Won't they be replaced by others who will become equally incredulous? – A. God wishes the victory of good against evil and truth against error, as announced. His Kingdom must come. His designs are impenetrable but believe that whatever he wishes he can do.
10. Will Spiritism always be accepted here? – A. It will be accepted and flourish. (at this point the spirit takes the pencil back to the previous answer and strongly underlines it)
11. What is the utility of Spiritism for the victory of good against evil? Isn't Christ's law enough for that? – A. That law would certainly be enough if practiced but how many do practice them? How many only show an appearance of faith? Thus, God seeing that his law was ignored and misunderstood and that, despite the law, people precipitate even more into the abyss of incredulity, God wanted to give them another demonstration of his infinite benevolence, multiplying the proofs of the future before their eyes through the magnificent manifestations that you witness, allowing the warning to be given by those who have already left Earth when they return and say: We are alive. Those who resist before such testimonies will not have an excuse. They will atone for their blindness and their pride through new and more difficult existences on inferior worlds, up until the time when they finally open their eyes to the light. Believe it, that among those who suffer on Earth there are many who atone for previous existences.
12. Can Spiritism be considered a new law? – A. No, it is not a new law. The interpretations given by men to the law of Christ generated struggles that are contrary to its own spirit. God does not want the law of love to be used as a pretext to disorder and fratricidal fights. Spiritism is destined to reestablish the unity of beliefs by expressing itself in simple language and without allegories. It is then the confirmation and clarification of Christianity that is and will always be the divine law, the one that must reign sovereign on Earth and whose propagation will be facilitated by this powerful auxiliary.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

April 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Sent by Mr. Sabò, from Bordeaux

What is that painful moaning that reverberates in my heart, vibrating every single fiber of my soul? It is humanity struggling through the rude and painful work, preparing to give birth to light. Come, spiritists, surround its suffering bed. May the strongest among you stretch their stiff arms to support the convulsions of pain, and may the others wait the birth of that child, receiving it in their arms when it comes to life. The supreme moment arrives; in a last breath of effort it escapes from the conceiving heart, the mother left dazed behind abated by her weakness for some time. However, it was born healthy and robust and life breathes plentiful at full power. You, who have witnessed its birth must follow it every step of the way. Behold! The joy of having given birth resurrects the mother's strength and courage, and with a maternal tone she calls all men to gather around the blessed child, for she foresees that with his powerful voice the scaffoldings of lies will fall in a few years, and immutable like God, truth will unite mankind under its flag through Spiritism. Triumph, however, will only come after the fight since its bloodthirsty enemies conspire against it. These enemies are pride, selfishness, greed, hypocrisy and fanaticism, almighty foes that have ruled sovereignly so far and will not be dethroned without a fight. Some laugh at its weakness, but others are scared of its arrival predicting their own ruin. That is why they try to eliminate it, like Herod sought to eliminate Jesus through the massacre of the innocent. That child has no homeland. It is all over the planet, looking for the people that will be the first to sustain its flag. Such people will be the most powerful among all peoples because that is the will of God.

Massilon

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

April 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Progression of a wicked spirit

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, Medium Mrs. Costel

We published in the December 1860 issue several communications signed by Clara under the title punishment of the selfish, in which that spirit reveals her bad inclinations and her currently deplorable situation. Our colleague, Mrs. Costel, who knew her when she was alive and who serves as a medium worked with her in the process of her moral education. Her efforts were crowned by success. It can be assessed by the spontaneous dissertation below, given at the Society on March 1st last.

“I will speak about the important difference between the divine and the human moral. The former supports the adulterous woman in her lonely fate and tells the sinners: ‘Repent and the kingdom of God will welcome you’ - The divine moral accepts every regret and all confessed faults while human moral rejects them, admitting the occult sins with a smile, saying that they are half-forgiven. It extends the grace of pardon to one; hypocrisy to the other. Truth seekers, you must choose! Choose from the heavens open to regret and tolerance that admits error as long as it does not affect its selfishness and false arrangements, but that denies the passion and the tears dropped after the publically confessed faults. Repent, all of you who sin; renounce to evilness but most importantly to the hypocrisy that hides the ugliness of evil under the smiles and deceiving mask of mutual conveniences.”

Clara

Here is another example of a conversation, obtained in a more or less similar situation. An unknown lady who was a medium was present at the same session, writing at the Society for the first time. She knew a woman that had died 9 years ago and that when alive was not much loved. Since her death she had become perverse, always seeking to do bad things. However, good advices given to her were able to develop better feelings. In this session she gave the following spontaneous dissertation: *“I beg you for your prayers. I need to be good. I have persecuted and obsessed someone that was supposed to do good for a long time. God wants me to stop harassing people but I am afraid that I don’t have the necessary courage. Help me. I have been so bad! Oh! I suffer a lot! Much suffering! Being bad used to make me happy. I have done that with all my heart but I want to stop doing those bad things. Oh! Pray for me.”*

Adèle

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

April 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Envy and the mediums

Sent by Mr. Ky..., a corresponding member from the Karlsruhe Society

“A vain man is to himself and his own intelligence as despicable as pitiful. He keeps the truth away from his eyes, replacing it by his own personal arguments and convictions that he sees infallible and undisputable because they are of his own. A vain man is always selfish and selfishness is the plague of humanity. He shows his insignificance by neglecting the rest of the world. By denying truths that are new to him he also shows the narrowness of his intelligence, perverted by his obstinacy, which in turn increases his vanity and selfishness. Unfortunate is the man who is dominated by these two enemies. When he wakes up from such a state when the truth and light will then be shed upon him from all sides and then only a miserable creature will be seen, someone that madness tried to raise above humanity in his Earthly life, and who will actually be below certain modest and simple people who he thought to be their inferior. You must be humble in your hearts, you who have been endowed by God’s spiritual gifts. Do not think that the merit is yours as much the credit for the work done is not of the utensils used but of the worker. Remember that you are no more than God’s instruments to manifest his Omnipotent Spirit to the world and there is no reason for you to be flattered. Ah! So many mediums become vain instead of humble as their gifts develop! That is a delay in the general progress since instead of being humble and passive the medium frequently repels important communications, out of pure vanity and pride, communications that will come to light through others who are worthy. God does not take into account the worldly position of someone in order to confer that person with the sacred spirit; much to the contrary, for God many times raises the lowly amongst the humble endowing him with the greatest gifts so that the world can see that it is not man but the spirit of God that makes miracles through man. As I said, the medium is a simple instrument of the Great Creator of all things and he is the one to be glorified; He is the one to be thanked for His endless benevolence.

I would also like to say a word about envy and jealousy that is often found amongst the mediums and that is necessary to remove like the weed and as soon as it sprouts, otherwise it can abate the good vegetation around. Envy is as much damaging to the medium as pride, again requiring the same testimony of humility. I say even that it demonstrates a lack of common sense. It is not by being envious of your neighbor’s gifts that you will receive similar ones; if God gives a lot to some rest assured that His reasons are well founded. Envy spoils the heart; it even muffles the best feelings in you; it is thus an enemy that can only be defeated with a lot of effort for there is no truce once envy is with us. That is applicable to every circumstance of your Earthly life but I here refer in particular to envy among mediums, something as much unfounded as ridiculous, a demonstration of man’s weakness when enslaved by passions.”

OBSERVATION: A discussion was established after reading this latest communication at the Society, comparing envy among mediums to that among the somnambulists. One of the members, Mr. D..., said that in his opinion the same happens among the somnambulists who cannot dissimulate their feelings when in the somnambulistic state.

Mr. Allan Kardec counters that opinion saying: “Envy seems to be inherent to the somnambulistic state due to a factor that is difficult to understand and that the somnambulists themselves cannot explain. Such feeling occurs among somnambulists who only show benevolence to one another when in their wake state. With the mediums it is far from natural and it is evidently related to the moral character of each person. One medium is the envy of another because it is in his nature to be envious. Such wickedness, son of pride and selfishness, is essentially harmful to the purity of the communications, while the most envious somnambulist can be very lucid and it can be easily understood. The somnambulist sees things by himself. It is his spirit that separates and acts. He does not need anybody else. The medium, on the contrary, is just an intermediary, receiving everything from strange spirits, and his personality is much less at play than that of the somnambulist. The spirits sympathize with a given medium for his qualities or his vices; now, the most repulsive defects to the good spirits are pride, selfishness and envy. Experience tells us that the mediumistic faculty is independent of the moral qualities; it thus can be found, like the somnambulistic one, in the highest degree in the most mischievous creature. However, the opposite happens with respect to the sympathies from the good spirits, who communicate more naturally and easily the purer the intermediary in charge of transmitting their thoughts is, the more sincere and the more distant from the bad spirits the medium is. They do the same with that respect as we do when we have someone as our confidante. In particular with respect to envy, as this is present in almost all somnambulists and it is much rarer with the mediums, it seems that it is a rule with the former and an exception with the latter, from what we must conclude that the cause must be different for each case.”

Allan Kardec¹⁹

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

May 1861

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

Allan Kardec's speech

Beginning of the new social year

Given at the session of April 5th, 1861

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the time when our Society initiate its fourth year I believe that a special thanks is due to the good spirits who have kindly assisted us and in particular to our spiritual President whose wise advices have helped us to avoid several dangers and whose protection allowed us to overcome the difficulties along the way, which have certainly occurred in order to test our resolve and dedication. Their benevolence – we must acknowledge – has never failed us and thanks to the current elevated spirits of the Society it has triumphed over the ill-faith of its enemies. Allow me a few retrospective observations about this subject.

Experience had showed us regrettable blanks in the bylaws of the Society, blanks that opened the door to some abuse. The Society worked around them and it is to be congratulated ever since. Is it perfect? We would not be spiritists if we proudly believed so. However, when the foundation is good and all the rest depends on the free-will than all we need is the support of the spirits so that we do not stop half-way through.

Among the most useful changes we place at the top of the list, the institution of free members, giving easier access to candidates, allowing them to be known and assessed before their effective admission as full members of the Society. Participating in all works and studies of the Society, they take advantage of all activities but since they have no administrative responsibility they cannot compromise the Society's liability. Then comes the measure whose objective was to limit the number of attendees to the sessions, with a more strict choice of participants; then the prohibition of reading any message received outside of the Society before its prior analysis, followed by an authorization; finally, those who forewarn the Society against whoever might be a cause of disturbance or who tries to impose their views.

There are others which would be superfluous to mention and whose utility is not less important and whose fortunate results we can appreciate every day. However, if such state of affairs is understood inside the Society the same cannot be said about the outside – and there is no need to dissimulate – where we don't count on friends only. We are criticized on several aspects and although we don't have to worry about it considering that the maintenance of order at the Society is of our interest only, it might not be perhaps totally useless to discuss the points that are criticized because if these are founded we should definitely take them into account. Some people criticize our very restricted admission of observers. They say that if we want to make converts we need to inform the public and for that, we must open the doors to our sessions and authorize any questions and interpellations; that if we don't admit anyone but believers

there is no merit in convincing them. This is a tricky argument and if we were to achieve the supposed result by opening the doors then we would be making a mistake by not doing so. Nevertheless, the result would be the opposite and hence we don't do that.

As a matter of fact it would be very unpleasant that the propagation of the doctrine depended on the publicity of our sessions. However large the auditorium might be it would always be very restrict, unnoticeable, when compared to the mass of the population. On another hand we know from experience that true conviction is only acquired through the study, thoughts and continual observation, and not by attending a couple of sessions, regardless of how interesting they may be. Proof of that is the fact that the number of believers who have seen nothing but who have studied and learned is huge. There is no doubt that the desire to see things is very natural and we are far from criticizing it, but we want the conditions to be adequate for people to see. That is why we say: Study first and see later, because you will understand better.

Had the skeptical given more thought to such condition they would have seen, for starters, the best guarantee of our good faith, followed by the strength of the doctrine! The biggest fear of charlatanism is to be unveiled; it fascinates the eyes and is not stupid enough to challenge intelligence that would easily discover the hidden card. Spiritism, on the contrary, does not admit any blind belief; it wants to be clear in all points; wants people to understand everything and be aware of everything. When we recommend study and meditation we are requesting the support of reason, demonstrating that the spiritist science does not fear examination, for one must understand before believing.

Since our sessions are not designed for demonstrations, its publicity would not achieve the objective and would have grave consequences. With a random crowd, carrying more curiosity than the true desire for instruction, and even further, willing to criticize and make fun of things, it would be impossible to find the necessary silence and reverence required by any serious manifestation.

A somewhat malevolent controversy mostly based on the ignorance of the most elemental principles of the science would establish endless conflicts, when dignity could then be compromised. What we actually want the observers to take away when leaving the Society is that the meeting is dignified, serious, that respects others and expects to be respected, discussing matters with serenity and moderation; that it carries out careful examination, investigating everything with the eyes of a mindful observer who seeks enlightenment, instead of the simple lightheartedness of curiosity. Furthermore, ladies and gentlemen, believe me, such opinion does better to the propaganda than if the observers had left the Society with the thought of having satisfied their curiosity, because the impressions caused by the former lead them to think and the opposite would render them more inclined to laugh than to believe.

I said that our sessions are not for demonstration but if we did that to educate and convince the neophytes, everything would take place in an ambient of seriousness and reverence, as in our ordinary sessions. Controversy would still exist but orderly, instructive rather than tumultuous, and whoever showed a non-civil behavior would be excluded; the focus would not be lost and the discussion would be helpful to everyone. That is what we will probably do one day. People may ask why we don't do that earlier in the interest of propagation of science. For a simple reason: we wanted to proceed with prudence and not like the careless who are more impatient than thoughtful. Before instructing others we wanted to instruct ourselves. We want to base the teachings on an overwhelming mass of facts and observations and not on a few isolated experiments, superficially and lightheartedly observed. Every science forcibly meets facts in

the beginning that seem contradictory and only a detailed and thorough study may demonstrate their connection. It was the common law of those facts that we sought in order to show an as broad as possible range, allowing minimal margin for contradiction. It was with that objective that we collected facts, heard and examined them in their inner most details, discussed and commented them with exemption, without enthusiasm. That is how we uncovered the remarkable links between all parts of this vast science that touches the greatest interests of humanity. That was, ladies and gentlemen, the objective of our works, objective that is perfectly characterized by the simple title that we adopted at The Society of Spiritist Studies.

We meet with the objective of instructing ourselves, and not with that of entertainment. Since we don't seek entertainment we don't want to entertain others and that is why we only want to have serious observers around, instead of having curious ones who might expect to find spectacles here.

Spiritism is a science and as any other science one does not learn it jokingly. Besides, it would be a lack of respect to take the souls that left our world by objects of distraction; speculate about their presence and intervention would be unrighteous and profane.

These thoughts address the criticism of some people when they say that we go back to well-known facts and don't always seek new things. At this point in time it is difficult that the facts don't permeate in the same circle; people forget that facts as important as those that may affect the future of humanity cannot achieve the status of absolute truth but through a large number of observations.

It would be levity to formulate a law only based on a few examples. A serious and prudent person is more circumspect; something must be seen not once but many times. That is why we don't back up before the monotony of repetitions, since the confirmation results from that and sometimes instructive nuances and when contradictory facts are presented we look for their causes.

We are not in a hurry to give our opinion about the initial data, which is necessarily incomplete. We harvest when the time is right. We may be marching on a slower pace than some people would like however we march with more confidence, and we don't get lost in a maze of systems. We may eventually know less but we know better which is preferable and we can attest what we know based on the testimony of experience.

As a matter of fact, ladies and gentlemen, you must not think that the voice of criticism against the Society comes from friends of Spiritism; that is not the case. That voice is from the adversaries who feel hurt for seeing the Society advancing calmly and with dignity even through the traps that were laid out and still are. They regret the fact that it is difficult to be accepted as a member for they would love to come here to spread disruption. That is another reason why they criticize since their circle of influence is reduced, thus they say that the scope of the matters are insignificant and unimportant because the Society abstains from discussing political and religious issues. They want to see the Society treading on the dogmatic controversy. Well, that is precisely where they betray themselves. The Society has prudently protected itself against malevolence. By hurting its pride they wanted to drag it through a dangerous path but that will never happen. Since it is only involved with questions of scientific interest it has sheltered itself against the attacks and will remain so. Through prudence, moderation and wisdom the Society reconciled the support of the true spiritists and its influence extends to overseas countries from where people aspire for the honor of membership.

Now, such tribute paid by people that only know the Society by name or by its works or by the achieved respect is a hundred times more valuable than the hastily opinion of the imprudent or the malevolent who want to push it off the cliff and would be happy if they saw it compromised. While I have the honor of heading it all my efforts will be concentrated in that direction. If I had to move away from those guidelines I would then leave it because under no circumstance would I like to have such a responsibility.

In fact, ladies and gentlemen, you are aware of the Society's vicissitudes. Everything that happened before and after had already been announced and everything occurred as foreseen. Its enemies wanted its destruction; the spirits wanted to preserve it since they knew it was useful, and the Society was maintained and will be maintained until the time necessary to accomplish their objectives. If you have analyzed things in detail, as I did, you will not neglect the influence of a superior power that was manifested and you will understand that it all happened for the better good and for its own preservation. There will be a time when it will no longer be indispensable, as it is today. We will then see what needs to be done since the march has already been designed, given all the events.

The most dangerous enemies of the Society are not those from the outside since we can shut the door and the ears on them. The most feared enemies are the invisible ones, who can mingle with us regardless. It is up to us to demonstrate to them, as we have done so far, that they waste their time by trying to impose themselves on us. We know that their tactics is to spread separation, setting the fire of disagreement, inspiring envy, suspicion and creating trivial susceptibilities that generate hate. Let us oppose them with the barrier of charity, mutual benevolence and we will be invulnerable as much against their occult influence as against the diatribes of our incarnate enemies, who are more concerned about us than we are about them and whose names we have the merit of having never mentioned here for reasons of education and for the fact that we have more useful things to worry about. We force nobody to come to us. We welcome with respect and dedication serious persons that in good faith seek enlightenment and those are sufficient for us not to waste our time rushing after the ones who show their backs to us for futile reasons of selfishness and envy. These cannot be considered true spiritists, despite the appearances; they are perhaps spiritists that believe in facts but undoubtedly they are not spiritists who believe in the moral consequences of the facts otherwise they would show more abnegation, indulgence, moderation and less presumption of infallibility. Seeking them would be a disservice since it would reinforce in them the belief in their importance and that we could not move on without them. We should not worry about those who try to stain our images either. People who were a hundred times more worthy than us were also stained and ridiculed. We could not be privileged there; it is up to us to demonstrate by our actions that their diatribes fall in the void and their weapons will turn against themselves.

After having thanked in the beginning the spirits that assist us we must not forget their interpreters for their service, some of them with such dedication and complacency that are never dismissed. We cannot pay them back but with only the testimony of our satisfaction. The world of the spirits waits for them and their every devotion is compensated in proportion to the lack of self-interest, humility and abnegation.

Summarizing, ladies and gentlemen, in the last year our works progressed with perfect regularity, interrupted by nothing. A large number of facts of the highest interest were reported, explained and commented; very important questions were solved; all cases that were exposed to our eyes through the evocations, every investigation that we carried out came to confirm the principles of the science and strengthen our beliefs; several communications of incontestable superiority were obtained through several

mediums; from the province and from abroad we received some remarkable communications, not only demonstrating how much Spiritism is spreading but also how seriously it is seen everywhere. There is no doubt that this is a result for which we must feel happy but there is another one not less pleasing which in fact had been predicted since the beginning: it is the unity established in the theory of the Doctrine as we study and better understand it. In every communication that comes to us from outside we find the confirmation of the principles taught by the spirits, and since the majority of people who send them are unknown to us one cannot say that they suffer our influence.

The very principle of reincarnation that had found many contradictors in the beginning because it was not understood is now accepted by the force of evidence and because every thoughtful person acknowledges in that principle the only possible solution to a large number of problems of religious and moral philosophy. Without reincarnation we were held up at every step. It is all chaos and confusion. With reincarnation everything is explained in the most rational way. If that principle still finds some adversaries, more systematic than logical, their number is quite limited. Now, who has invented it? There is no doubt that it was neither you nor I. It was taught to us and we accepted it. That is all that we did. Only a few systems survived out of the many that appeared in the beginning and we can even say that their rare followers are among those who pass judgment after the first impression and frequently according to preventions and preconceived ideas. However, it is now obvious that anyone who takes the burden of doing an in-depth investigation of all questions and assesses cold-bloodedly without prevention and particularly without a systematic denial is inexorably dragged towards the fundamental and prevailing theory by both reason as well as by logic and we can even say in all corners of the world.

The Society, ladies and gentlemen, has not achieved all that alone. Nonetheless, and without vanity, I believe the Society may claim a small part of that. Its moral influence is greater than thought and that is precisely why it has never veered off from the pre-designed line of moderation. It is a fact that the Society is exclusively dedicated to the study, not allowing to be carried away by the self-serving passions that loom around it; that it does so very seriously as any scientific assembly must do; that it pursues its objective unblemished by any intrigue, throwing stones to no one, not even collecting those that are thrown against it. That is undoubtedly the main cause of credit and consideration that the Society enjoys and from which it may feel proud and that gives certain weight to its opinion. Through our efforts, ladies and gentlemen, out of prudence and with the spirit of union that must reign among the true spiritists, let us continue to show that the principles embraced by us are not dead letters and that we preach as much by theory as by example. If our Doctrine contains numerous repetitions, the reason is the fact that people find it more rational than the others. I doubt that the same would happen had we professed the doctrine of the exclusive intervention of the devil and the demons in the spiritist manifestations, doctrine that is totally ridicule today, exciting more curiosity than fear, but on some intrepid people who will soon acknowledge their uselessness.

As it is professed today, the Spiritist Doctrine has amplitude scope that encompasses all questions of morality. It suffices all aspirations and one can say the most demanding reason by anyone willing to study it and who is not dominated by prejudices. It does not suffer from the petty restrictions of certain philosophies; broaden the circle of ideas to infinity and nobody is capable of elevating their own thoughts above that, thus extracting man from the sphere of selfishness where some tried to confine him. Finally, it is supported by the immutable principles of religion of which it is a blatant demonstration. That is undoubtedly what conquers so many educated followers in all countries, and what will make it prevail in

a not so distant time, and that despite the adversaries who in their majority are more motivated by interest than conviction. Its fast advancement since it entered the serious philosophical path is a safe guarantor of the future that is reserved and that is announced all over the world, as you know. Hence, let your enemies speak and act. They are powerless against God's will since nothing happens without his permission and as an enlightened clergyman said recently: "If such things happen it is because God allows for the revival of the faith that is fading away in the darkness of materialism."

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

May 1861

The angel of cholera

One of our corresponding members in Warsaw sent us the following:

“... I dare call your attention to a fact that is so extraordinary that it would be necessary to classify it as absurd if the character of the person that reported it to me were not a guarantee of its reality. All of us who know everything that has been so carefully analyzed by you regarding Spiritism, and who believe that understand it well, we cannot find an explanation for this fact. Thus, we pass it on for your discretion, hoping that will forgive the time required to read it all in case you don't find it worthy of a more serious examination. Here are the facts:

“The person that I mentioned above was in Vilnius in 1852, a city of Lithuania, then devastated by cholera. Her beautiful twelve-year-old daughter was gifted with every quality that characterizes a great nature. Her outstanding intelligence was noticed at a very young age combined with a truly angelical kindness and goodness of heart. She was one of the first to enjoy a mediumistic faculty in our land always supervised by spirits of higher order. She frequently had premonitions of what was about to happen, and not in a somnambulistic state, always predicting with accuracy. The details above seem relevant to give you a proper assessment of her honesty. One evening, when the candles had just been put out, the girl who was still perfectly awake saw an enraged and bloody figure of an old woman standing by her bedside, notably giving her the shivers. The woman approached the girl and said: ‘I am cholera and I come to demand a kiss from you. If you kiss me I will leave for good and the city shall be free from my presence.’ The heroic girl did not step away from the sacrifice. She pressed her lips against the frigid and humid face of the old woman and the vision, if that was a vision, vanished. The girl could only find consolation in her father's arms. Her father could not understand a thing but he believed that she was telling the truth. They said nothing to nobody though. Around noon they received the visit of a doctor friend of the family who said: ‘I come to bring you good news. Not one patient was taken to the cholera hospital last night and I just came from there.’ In fact since that night there was no more new cholera cases. About three years later the same person and her family visited the same town again. During their stay the cholera reappeared and the number of victims was in the hundreds. One night the same old woman showed up again to the young lady who was perfectly awake, asking her for the same thing, adding this time that if she obeyed her wishes the cholera would disappear for good. Like in the first event, the girl did not refuse. She then saw a grave opening up and then consuming the old woman. The cholera faded away like in a miracle and I am not aware of any other case in Vilnius. Was it

hallucination or a real apparition? I don't know. All I can say is that I don't have any reason not to believe the young lady and her parents."

This is actually a very singular fact. The skeptics will certainly say that it is hallucination but it will probably be very difficult for them to explain the coincidences with a material event that could not be foreseen. In the first occurrence this could have been taken by an event of chance, that convenient way of explaining what one cannot understand. But two occurrences in identical circumstances are more extraordinary. Admitting that there was an apparition, it was still necessary to understand the meaning of that woman. Would that really be an angel, exterminator of cholera? Would the pandemics be personified by certain spirits in charge of provoking or eliminating them? One could be led to believe so by observing the extinction following the will of that woman. However, why would she address that girl, a stranger in town, and how could a kiss from that girl have such an influence? Although Spiritism has given us the key to so many things, we have not gotten the final word and with reference to the case above the latter hypothesis was not completely absurd. We must confess that in the beginning we were inclined to believe so since we could not identify traces of hallucination. However, the teachings of the spirits came to knock our hypothesis down. Here is the simple and very logical explanation given by St. Louis in a session at the Society on April 19th, 1861.

Q – The event that has just been reported seems very authentic. We would like to have an explanation about it. To begin with, could you tell us who that woman was that appeared to the young lady saying that she was cholera?

A – She was not cholera. A material plague has no human appearance. It was the girl's familiar spirit trying her faith, making such a trial to coincide with the end of the scourge. The trial was beneficial to the young lady. It fortified the blossoming virtues in that blessed and protected creature. High ranking spirits that keep the memory of their acquired virtues when returning to the world sometimes receive such warnings that would be dangerous to a not so elevated soul hence not so well prepared by previous migrations through testimonies of love and faith.

Q – Had her familiar spirit enough power to predict the future and the end of such plague?

A – The spirits are instruments of the divine will and are frequently turned into celestial messengers.

Q – Do the spirits have any influence over the scourges as their producing agents?

A – They have nothing to do with that like the trees don't act upon the winds or the effects on their causes.

Since we expected answers according to our initial thoughts we had previously prepared a number of questions that became useless. Once more this demonstrates that the mediums are not a reflex of the thought of someone that questions them. As a matter of fact, we must say that we had no previous opinion about this subject. In the absence of something better we were inclined to believe in what we said because it did not seem impossible to us. However we find the simple and more rational explanation given by the spirit infinitely preferable. In reality another instruction may be drawn from the fact. What happened to that girl may have happened before on other occasions and even in former times since the spiritist phenomena are from all times. Couldn't that be the reason why former peoples were led to personify

everything and see a particular genie in everything? We don't believe that its cause is in the poetic vein since these ideas are found in the least advanced peoples.

Let us suppose for a moment that an event similar to the one described above had occurred in a superstitious and barbarian people. Nothing else was needed to lead them to believe in a malevolent entity that could only be appeased by the sacrifice of victims. As we have already said, all gods of paganism have no other origin but the spiritist manifestations. Christianity came to knock their altars down, but it was reserved to Spiritism to unveil their true nature, shedding light onto the phenomena either mystified by superstition or exploited by greed.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

May 1861

Phenomena of apportation

This phenomena, no doubt, constitutes one of the most extraordinary among the spiritist manifestations, and also the rarest. It consists of the transportation of a foreign object to appear at the place where we are. We have heard about it for a long time, but only recently were we able to witness the phenomenon and we can now speak about it from experience. For starters we must say that this is one of those phenomena more prone to mystification and consequently everyone is strongly advised to be on guard against fraud.

The art of deception may travel long ways when considering events of such a nature and someone who is not familiar with people involved in that kind of work could easily fall victim of fraud. The best guarantees is first, the character of the persons involved, their known honesty and the absolute distinterest Of individuals who experiment with similar effects; second, in the careful examination of every detail and circumstances in which the phenomena is produced; and finally, an enlightened knowledge of Spiritism, the only force capable of uncovering if there is anything suspicious about the phenomena.

We said that the phenomenon is one of the rarest and perhaps produced even less than the others according to someone's wishes or following a given schedule. It can very rarely be provoked but most of the time it is spontaneous and whoever may boast about being able to produce it at will and at a given time could easily be called ignorant and be under the suspicion of fraud; this would be even more reinforced if there would be any material interest behind it. A medium that takes any advantage of their faculty may be truly a medium but since it is subject to intermittences and since the phenomena depends exclusively on the spirits who are not submitted to our caprices, it follows that a greedy medium may easily resource to deception to avoid failure or to produce more effects, according to the circumstances. For this kind of medium, the spirit must always act or it is replaced by deception, sometimes hidden under the simplest disguises. These initial thoughts aim at helping the observers to be on guard, taking us back to our subject. Before that, it is our duty to publish the letter below, sent from Orléans dated February 14th last:

“Dear Sir,

The person who writes the letter to you is a credible spiritist. The facts reported herein are rare; they must be beneficial to everyone and have already led several people around us who witnessed them to believe. The first event took place on January 1st, 1861. One of my relatives who unknowingly was endowed by mediumistic powers in its highest degree, only learning about it when I spoke with her about Spiritism, from time to time she saw her mother but considered it to be hallucinations and tried her best to avoid them. On January 1st about 3 pm she saw her again. She and her husband were so scared, although he saw nothing, leaving her really confused. A few minutes later her husband found a ring sitting on a table in their living room, a ring that his wife immediately recognized as her mother's, that she herself had put on her mother's finger when she died. A few days later the lady suffered some sort of suffocation and I advised her husband to apply magnetic passes on her, which he did. Three minutes later she was asleep but showed perfect lucidity. She told the husband that her mother was there with them and that she brought the ring to demonstrate that she was taking care of them. The husband then asked if she could see his daughter who had died when she was 2 years old, and that was eight years ago, and if she could bring them a souvenir from her. The somnambulist then responds that yes, she was there, as was the husband's mother; that tomorrow she would bring a rose to be found on the desk. It did happen like that; a lifeless flower was there, together with a piece of paper containing the following words: 'to my dear Dad. Laura.' Two days later in another magnetic sleep, the husband asks if he could get some hair from his own mother. His wishes were satisfied immediately. The hair was on the fireplace. Then two letters were spontaneously written by the two mothers.

Now I will get to the facts that took place in my own house. After a serious study of your books about Spiritism, faith came to me without ever seeing a single fact. The Medium's Book advised me to try to write but I had no result. Convinced that I would never obtain anything without the person that I mentioned above, I invited her to come to Orléans with her husband. Monday, February 11th, 10 pm – magnetic sleep and ecstasy; she sees the spirits that had promised to follow her around us. I asked if I would become a writing medium. She answered: '*Yes, in 15 days*', adding that she would write through her mother the next day to convince one of my friends that she asked me to have invited. On the next day, February 12th, at 8 am she falls asleep. We ask if she would like to have a pencil. '*No*' she says, '*my mother is near you and she is writing. Her letter is on the fireplace.*' I go there and find a folded piece of paper with the following words: '*Believe and pray; I am with you; this is to convince you.*' She also said that later that night I could try to write having her hand on top of mine. I dared not to expect any result however I wrote the following: '*Believe; I will return; don't forget magnetism; so long.*' My relative was supposed to leave the next day. At night we wrote the following: '*The spiritist science is not a joke; it is true; magnetism may lead to that. Pray and invoke those called by your hearts. So long. Catarina.*' It was her mother's name.

I was asked many times to write about these facts to you; I was even criticized for not having done so before. Besides, she told us that we could have a proof of what I am telling you and that her mother could confirm these facts if evoked by you.

Yours sincerely... ”

This letter reports two remarkable phenomena: apportionment and direct writing. Here is a fundamental observation about it: when husband and wife got the first results they were alone and could not have any interest in deceiving one another. Second, the transportation of the ring that was buried with the mother was a positive fact, which could not have resulted from deception since no one jokes about these

things. Several events of similar nature have been reported to us by trustworthy persons in authentic circumstances. But here is one that we have witnessed ourselves, as well as several other members of the Society.

Ms. V. B... is a 16 to 17 year old lady, an excellent writing medium and also a clairvoyant somnambulist. During her sleep and most of the time she sees the spirit of one of her cousins who had brought her different objects on several occasions, among the items have been: rings, chocolate candies in large quantities and flowers. She must be asleep for about two hours before the phenomenon is produced. The first time we watched a phenomenon of that kind where she had a ring put on her hand. Since we know the young lady and her honest parents there was no reason for doubt. We must confess however that the way it was produced was not very much concluding to strangers. In another session it was different. After two hours of sleep during which the young lady was busy with very interesting things, but strange to our objectives, the spirit appeared to her with a bouquet of flowers, only visible to her. It was only later, that after having being stimulated by endless requests, the spirit dropped a bunch of flowers at her feet. The lady was not happy. The spirit was still holding something that she wanted. New requests and about half an hour later a bunch of violets surrounded by moss appeared on the floor. Sometime later a fist size chocolate candy fell by her side. The taste was similar to a handmade pineapple preserve. All that lasted about one hour and during the whole time the somnambulist was always isolated from the public; the person who magnetized her was also at a large distance. We were positioned in such a way that we could not lose sight of a single movement and sincerely declare that there was nothing suspicious at all. On that occasion the communicating spirit by the name Léon promised to come to the Society to provide explanations as requested. He was evoked on March 1st together with the spirit of Ms. Catherine that had manifested in Orléans, and below is the conversation that followed:

1. (Evocation of Ms. Catherine) – A. I am present and ready to respond.
2. You told your daughter and the relative from Orléans that you would come here to confirm the phenomena that they have witnessed. We would be delighted to receive your explanations about it. To begin with, I would ask you why you have insisted so much to have them writing to me reporting those events. – A. What I said I am ready to do now since you are the one who needs to be informed the most. I had asked my children to communicate these proofs to you aiming at the propagation of Spiritism.
3. A few days ago I witnessed similar events and I will request the spirit that produced them to kindly come to us here. Having observed all phases of the phenomenon I have several questions to ask him. I ask you to support him in providing the answers in case it is necessary. – A. I will do as you ask since the two of us together can provide better clarity and accuracy.
4. (Evocation of Léon) – A. I am ready to do as I promised, Sir.

OBSERVATION: The spirits generally utilize a casual yet polite form of speech with us. This one presents the particularity of always using the word “Sir” when evoked.

5. Can you please tell us why these phenomena only happen during the magnetized sleep of the medium? – A. That is due to the nature of the medium. The facts that I produce when that medium is asleep could also be produced in the waking state.
6. Why does it take you so long to produce the transportation of objects and why do you excite the medium’s greed so much and the will to have the promised object? – A. That time is necessary to prepare the fluids that serve the transportation. As for the excitement it is just used to entertain the public and the somnambulist.
7. I thought the excitement could produce a more abundant emission of fluids from the medium, facilitating the necessary combination. – A. You are mistaken, Sir. The fluids we need do not belong to the medium but to the spirit and in certain cases those fluids can even be dismissed and the transportation can occur immediately.

8. Is the production of the phenomenon due to the special nature of the medium and thus could occur with other mediums more easily and more promptly? – A. The production is due to the nature of the medium and could not occur but with other mediums of similar nature. As for the promptness, our habit of communicating several times with the same medium is of great help.
9. Must the nature of the medium correspond to the nature of the fact or that of the spirit? – A. It must correspond to the nature of the fact and not of the spirit.
10. Does the influence of the public that is present to the event serve any purpose? – A. When there is doubt, opposition, it can definitely cause us harm. We prefer to do our tests with believers and persons that are familiar with Spiritism. It doesn't mean that ill-faith can halt us completely.
11. Here there are only believers and very sympathetic persons. Is there any obstacle for the fact to occur? – A. There is since I am neither willing nor prepared.
12. Would you be on another day? – A. Yes.
13. Could you schedule it? – A. One day, when you don't ask me for anything, I will surprise you with a nice bunch of flowers.
14. Some people would perhaps prefer chocolate candies. – A. If there are gastronomes they can also be satisfied. I believe that the ladies who do not neglect the flowers will like the candies even more.
15. Will Ms. V. B... need to be in a somnambulistic state? – A. I will do the transportation having her awake.
16. Where did you get the flowers and candies transported from? - A. I pick the flowers from a garden that I like.
17. But how about the candies? Doesn't the store owner detect that they went missing? – A. I take them from where I wish. The store owner doesn't notice because I replace them.
18. However, the ring has a value. Where did you get it from? Won't it cause a loss to the person from whom you took it? – A. I took them from places unknown to everyone so that nobody has missed them.
19. Is it possible to bring flowers from other planets? – A. No. That is not possible to me.
20. Could other spirits do that? – A. Yes. There are spirits more advanced than me that can do it. As for myself, I cannot. You must be satisfied with what I bring you.
21. Could you bring flowers from another hemisphere, like for example, from the tropics? – A. As long as it is from Earth, I can.
22. How did you introduce those objects considering that the room was locked? – A. I made them come in with me, covered by my substance so to speak. I cannot give you more explanation than this.
23. (to Mrs. Catherine) – Since the ring that you brought to your daughter was buried with you how did you get it? – A. I removed it from the ground and brought it to my daughter.
24. (to Leon) – How did you make those objects visible since moments earlier they were invisible? - A. I removed the matter that covered them.
25. Could you make the transported objects disappear again and take them back? – A. As I brought them in I can take them out at will.
26. Yesterday (the spirit corrects writing Wednesday). Right, on Wednesday the medium saw you using a pair of scissors to cut orange tree flowers from a bouquet in her room. Did you really need a cutting instrument? – A. I had no scissors but I made sure that I was seen like that so they would believe that it was me who was cutting them.
27. But the bouquet was under a glass bowl. – A. Oh! I could have removed the bowl.
28. Have you? – A. No.
29. We cannot understand how that can be so. Do you believe that we will one day understand that phenomenon? – A. It won't be long; we not only believe but we are sure that it will happen.
30. Who has just answered? Léon or Mrs. Catherine? – A. Both of us.

31. Does the production of the transportation phenomenon cause you any suffering or embarrassment? – A. It is the cause of no suffering when we have the permission but it would cause a lot if we wanted to produce effects without authorization.
32. What would be the difficulties? – A. Nothing more than bad fluid dispositions that can be adverse to us.
33. How do you transport the object? Do you hold it in your hands? – A. No. We cover it ourselves.
34. Would you have the same ability to bring an object of considerable weight, as for example 50 Kg? – A. The weight means nothing to us. We bring flowers because that is more pleasant than a heavier mass.
35. Sometimes objects disappear without a known cause. Could that be something caused by the spirits? – A. That happens many times and more frequently than you imagine but it could be fixed by asking the spirit to return the missing objects.
36. Are there effects that are considered to be natural phenomena and that in fact are due to the action of certain spirits? – A. Your days are full of those facts that you don't understand because you have not given any thought to that but a little reflection would allow you to see with clarity.
37. Among the transported objects aren't there some fabricated by the spirits that are spontaneously produced by the modifications that the spirits may produce on the universal element? – A. Not by me since I don't have the permission. Only an elevated spirit can do that.
38. Could an object produced like that have stability and become an object of common use? For example, if a spirit produced a snuff-box could I make use of that? – A. It could if the spirit wished so but it could also exist only to be seen and disappear after a few hours.

OBSERVATION: The phenomena that took place at Rue des Noyers described in the August 1860 issue of the Spiritist Review may be classified in the category of transportation phenomena. The difference is in the fact that in that case, they were produced by a bad spirit that only wished to cause disruption, while the ones discussed here are produced by benevolent spirits that wish to please and demonstrate sympathy.

NOTE: See *The Mediums' Book* about the theory of formation of objects, chapter entitled "Laboratory of the invisible world".

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

May 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Dr Glas

Born in Lyon and deceased on February 21st, 1861, at the age of 35 and a half years old
Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, April 5th, 1861

Dr. Glas was a devout spiritist. He succumbed after a painful and long lasting disease where his suffering was only softened by the hope which Spiritism comforted him with. His laborious and eventful life was full of bitter concerns and an initially unknown accident shortened his existence. He was evoked after his father's request.

1. (Evocation) – A. I am here.
2. For us it is a real pleasure to be able to communicate with you, first in order to attend your father and your wife's wishes but also considering your knowledge which we hope can benefit us all. – A. I hope this communication can give consolation to those who have sympathy for me and that it may be instructive to you.
3. It seems that you have succumbed after enduring a cruel disease. Could you give us some explanations about its cause and its nature? – A. My disease – now I see clearly – was totally moral and ended up painfully taking my whole body. As for my sufferings, they are still very present and I cannot forget. Persistent work, added to a continual agitation in my brain, which was the true source of my disease.

OBSERVATION: That answer is confirmed by the following passage from a letter by his father: *“His laborious and eventful life was full of bitter concerns and an initially unknown accident shortened his existence.”* – This letter had not been read before the evocation and neither the medium nor the attendees were aware of that.

4. It also seems that your beliefs helped you to endure the suffering with courage, for that we congratulate you. – A. I had the consciousness of a better life. That says it all.
5. Have those beliefs also helped you to speed up your separation? – A. Infinitely because those spiritualist ideas are the necessary understandings that keep you away from any terrestrial influence.
6. We kindly ask you to describe to us as precisely as possible the nature of mental confusion that you have experienced, the duration and your sensations when you became aware of your condition. – A. When I died I was perfectly aware of myself and I could glimpse calmly what so many others fear with much dread. My passage was short and there was no change in my self-awareness. I don't know how long the confusion lasted but when I woke up I was really dead.
7. At the time when you acknowledged yourself were you isolated? – A. Yes. As a matter of fact in my heart I was still entirely connected to Earth. It was only gradually that I saw spirits around me.
8. What is your opinion about your comrades who want to demonstrate through science that man is formed only by matter and that there is only the nothingness waiting out there? – A. Pride! They will perhaps be quiet when the time of their death is near; it is what I wish. Ah! As Lamennais said not long ago there are two sciences, the good one and the bad one. Theirs is the science that comes from man, the bad one.

OBSERVATION: The spirit was referring to a communication that had just been given moments earlier, a proof that he had not waited for the evocation to come to the session.

9. Are you always close to your wife, your son and your father? – A. Almost always.
10. Is your feeling now, when you see them, different from what you had during your life? – A. Death gives a broader vision to the feelings, like it does to the ideas, but now it is filled with a hopefulness that man cannot understand on Earth. I love them but I wish I had them with me. It is particularly due to future hopes that the spirit must have courage and firmness.
11. Since you are here, can you effortlessly see them at home? – A. Oh! Perfectly.

OBSERVATION: An inferior spirit could not do that. Only those who have certain elevation can see different points simultaneously. The others are still too attached to Earth. Reading this answer some people would undoubtedly say that it was a good opportunity for control; that we should have asked the spirit what his relatives were doing at that very moment and then verify its accuracy. What would have been our objective then? To make sure that it was truly a spirit speaking with us? But if it was not a spirit, the medium was deceiving us. However, that medium has been providing service to the Society for many years now and we have never had any occasion for suspicion as far as his good faith is concerned. Had we done that as a proof of identity it would not have done us any good because a deceiving spirit would know that as much as an honest one. Thus, the question would have entered the category of curiosities and proof, always neglected and never responded by the good spirits. We know from experience that it is possible but we also know that when a spirit wants to get into some details they do so spontaneously and when they believe to be useful and not just to satisfy a whim.

12. Can you distinguish between your spirit and your perispirit? What difference can you establish between the two? – A. I think therefore I exist and have a soul, said the philosopher. I know

nothing better than that. As for the perispirit, it is a natural and vaporous shape, as you know; but seeking the soul is the same as seeking the absolute spiritual.

13. Do you believe that the faculty of thinking resides in the perispirit? In a word, that the soul and the perispirit are one and the same thing? – A. It is absolutely the same thing as asking if your thought resides in your body. One can be seen; the other can be felt and conceived.
14. Thus, you are not a vague and undefined being, but limited and bounded? – A. Limited yes but fast as a thought.
15. Can you kindly determine the place where you are here? – A. To your left and to the right hand side of the medium.

NOTE: Mr. Allan Kardec is sitting at the place indicated by the spirit.

16. Were you forced to leave your place and give it to me? – A. Absolutely; we pass through everything as everything passes through us; it is the spiritual body.
17. Thus, am I embedded in you? – A. Yes.
18. Why don't I feel you? – A. Because the fluids that make the perispirit are very ethereal, not sufficiently material to you. However, through prayer and will, in a word through faith, the fluids may become more material and heavier, even tangible and that is what happens during physical manifestations - the conclusion of that mystery.

OBSERVATION: Imagine a light beam that penetrates a dark room: one can trespass it, be embedded by it without affecting its form or nature. Although that beam is some sort of matter it does not offer obstacle to the passage of a denser matter. The same applies to a column of smoke or vapor that one can go through without resistance. The difference here is that since vapor is denser than light it will produce an impression on the body that doesn't happen with light.

19. Suppose that you could become visible to the eyes of the assembly here at this very moment. What would be the effect of our two bodies like one embedding the other? – A. The effect that you naturally imagine. Your left side would be less visible than your right hand side; you would be in a mist, in the fog of the perispirit. The same would happen to the right hand side of the medium.
20. Now supposing that you could become not only visible but also tangible, as it sometimes happens. Would that be possible at all, considering our current lay-out? – A. I would forcibly change place a little bit. I would form myself by your side.
21. A short while ago when I asked about visibility you said that you were between the medium and I then indicating that you would move to another place. It means that for tangibility it would be even further away. Wouldn't that be possible for you to take the two appearances thus remaining in your original position, keeping me embedded in you? – A. Absolutely not. I would reconstruct myself on the side; I cannot become dense at that position; I cannot stay there but in a misty form.

OBSERVATION: A serious teaching stems out from that explanation. In the normal state, that is fluid and invisible, the perispirit is perfectly permeable to solid matter. In the state of visibility there is already the beginning of condensation that makes the perispirit less penetrable. In the state of tangibility condensation is complete hence there is no penetrability.

22. Do you believe that science one day will submit the perispirit to the appreciation of the instruments as it is done to other fluids? – A. Perfectly. You don't know more than the surface of matter; but the finesse, the essence is only gradually known. Electricity and magnetism are the right path.
23. Which other fluids have analogy to the perispirit? – A. Light, electricity and Oxygen.
24. There is a person here that seems to believe to have been your schoolmate. Do you recognize that person? – A. I don't see that. I don't remember.
25. That is Mr. Lucien B... from Montbrison who attended college in Lyon with you. – A. I never thought of meeting you as well. I have done some serious studies on the Earth but can assure you that my studies as a spirit are much more serious. I thank you a thousand times for your kind remembrance.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

May 1861

Several problems and issues

We received the following letter from Mr. Jobard of Brussels, with the answers he has obtained to several questions.

“My dear Mr. President,

Since Brussels is as far away from Paris as the Moon is from the Sun, the rays of light from Spiritism have not brought warmth to us yet. However Mr. Nicolas B... has been with us for two days, and he indicated a first class intuitive writing medium that delights us here, so much so that he is surprised himself with the magnificent essays given by the spirit of Tertullian who wants him to write a book with explanations about the creation of the worlds, from chaos to God. Yesterday I read them to Wiertz, the great painter, who got the message and wants to dedicate a 100 ft. painting to it. I cannot send you these sublime essays before you can provide proof of identity. I have enclosed a few passages extracted from the medianimic²⁰ drafts that I keep with great care.

We evoked Cabanis, the materialist, who is as unhappy as your atheist and all other pencil breakers. Then we evoked Henri Mondeux to learn about the long line of mathematicians that he may have inhabited. Everybody wants to have Jud revealed, the assassin of Mr. Poincaré. The reediting of Gaete was announced eight days in advance. I was also asked to write a book but don't know where to start from, since I am not a medium and cannot use a medium under the pretext that it is no longer necessary. Your Lyon speech is remarkable. I had it read to the more advanced *humanimals* of our Moon. There aren't many over here. What a pity! When might I be able to warm myself from your sun? Farewell my dear Master.

²⁰ Related to the special faculty or action of intermediary between souls in flesh and souls in the spirit-world. We say "A medianimic communication;" "Possession of the medianimic faculty constitutes a medium."²¹ Paris, typography H. Carion, Rue de Bonaparte, 64

Jobard

Weren't the wizards, wise men and great philosophers of ancient times, actually mediums? – A. Yes, evidently. The link connecting them to superior intelligences acted upon them giving them inspiration of noble thoughts, not to mention their own superiority that allowed them more accurate assessments. They transmitted prophecy-like ideas to the incarnate spirits because prophecies are nothing more than inspiration from great spirits. Since these spirits enjoyed some divine attributes their proclaimed ideas were like premonitions and were necessarily carried out for those indicated times and periods.

Is mediumship then a favor to those who have it? – A. The true medium that does not turn that sublime gift into a profession must evidently become better. How could it be different if at every moment he can receive such favorable impressions to his advancement on the good path? The philosophical ideas produced not only by his own spirit but more importantly by us are corrected in every aspect where his limited and weak intelligence may not understand completely.

OBSERVATION BY MR. JOBARD: These just answers lead to the natural consequence that as the numbers of mediums multiply the human race improves by that and at a given point in time it will bring the kingdom of God to Earth.

The statistics of criminality rarely show workers from the iron industry. Would iron have any influence upon them? – A. Yes because in that manual labor of transformation of matter there is something that must elevate the spirits, even the least gifted ones. There is a magnetic influence on them. Iron is the father of all minerals; it is the most useful to man always present in his daily life while the so called rich minerals represent the source of all human passions to the least evolved spirits. They are the instruments of the evil spirit.

Can all metals recombine into others as certain experts indicate? – A. Yes but such transformation will only happen with time.

How about the diamond? – A. It is Carbon separated from its original source in a gaseous state, crystallized under pressure that you cannot appreciate. But that is enough with questions. I can no longer answer them.

Tertullian

OBSERVATION BY MR. JOBARD: The spirits generally refuse to answer questions that could bring wealth to idle men. Those must seek that wealth and research is part of the trials that must be endured in the penitentiary that we have to experience. It is likely that the spirits don't know better than we do regarding the discoveries that still have to come; nonetheless, they can foresee them as we also can; they can guide us in our research but cannot spare us from the pleasure or the actual work of doing research. It is not less enjoyable though when we believe to have found a solution, seeking approval as a sign of confirmation.

NOTE: See *The Spirits' Book* question #532 and thereafter; *The Mediums' Book*, chapter about Evocations – questions that can be addressed to the spirits, #78 and following questions.

OBSERVATION BY MR. ALLAN KARDEC: The letter from our honorable comrade is prior to our March issue of the Review in which we included an article from Mr. Poinso. As for Henri Mondeux

there were several explanations given at the Society but the circumstances have not allowed us to finalize his evocation and that is the reason why we have not yet manifested anything about it. Regarding Mr. Jobard's request for us to ensure the identity of the spirit that communicated using the name Tertullian, we have already answered to him what we have also published in *The Mediums' Book*.

There could not be proof of identity of spirits from personalities of the past. Especially when it is about a superior teaching, most of the time the name is just a support to get the message across considering that among the spirits that come to enlighten us the great majority are undoubtedly formed by unfamiliar spirits. The name is more a sign of analogy than identity. It only has a secondary importance. The first thing to take into account is the benevolence and wisdom of the teaching. If in any way it does not contradict the character of the person whose name is used, if it is worthy of that name, then this is the essential part. If it is inferior, then the origin is suspicious since a spirit can do better but not worse than when he was alive considering that the spirit may gain but not lose what has been acquired.

The following answers, seen from that standpoint, seem to be okay to be attributed to Tertullian, from what we conclude that yes it can be him, although we cannot affirm positively so, or even if a spirit at his level who has taken that name in order to indicate his category. The questions and answers below were received from one of our corresponding members from St. Petersburg.

1. I would like to understand the objective of the beauty of the Universe. Isn't that a trying obstacle? – A. One believes in everything that is expected; one expects everything that is beloved; one loves everything that is beautiful. Thus, beauty contributes to the strengthening of faith. If it frequently turns into temptation it is not because of beauty itself which is an attribute of God's creation, but due to the passions that destroy everything in their way like the foul mythological harpies.
2. And what can you say about love? – A. It is a gift from God when it germinates in a non-corrupted, chaste and pure heart; it is calamity when mixed with passions. It elevates and purifies in the former case as much as it disturbs and agitates in the latter. It is always the same and remarkable law of the Eternal: beauty, love, memory from another existence, talents that you bring since birth. All gifts from the Creator may become poisonous by the contaminated breath of passions that free-will can restrain or develop.
3. I would like to have some questions from *The Mediums' Book* answered by a good spirit, starting from page 223, about the transfiguration. – A. You may ask.
4. In the case of the young lady from the Saint-Étienne area, if the phenomenon was produced by the increase in density of her perispirit, combined with that of her brother, with an increase in her body weight and volume, how come her eyes, which must had been in the same place, could see through the thick layer of a new body that was forming before them? – A. As the somnambulists see with their eye lids closed: through the eyes of the soul.
5. The body was enlarged in the phenomenon above. At the end of Chapter VIII one reads that it is likely that if the transfiguration had happened with the appearance of a child the weight would have diminished in proportion. I cannot understand from the theory of radiation and transfiguration of the perispirit that the size of a solid body can diminish. It seems to me that the size of the body should surpass that of the two bodies combined. – A. Since the body may become invisible by the will of a superior spirit, the body of the young lady becomes invisible by the action of a force independent of her will. At the same time, combined with that of the child, her perispirit may form the image of the child. The theory about changing the specific weight is known to you.
6. After having dissipated my doubts and reaffirmed my faith in its foundation, Spiritism still leaves an unsolved question to me. How come the new spirits that are still created by God and that are destined to become pure spirits after going through the sieve of many existences and trials, how

come they leave the Creator's hands, source of the whole perfection, in such an imperfect state, and can only improve gradually, distancing themselves from their own origin? – A. That mystery is one of those that the Eternal don't allow us to penetrate while both, errant and incarnate spirits, who haven't yet achieved the perfection that is our destiny, thanks to God's benevolence, perfection that will take us back to our origin thus closing the circle of eternity.

OBSERVATION: Our correspondent does not say who was the spirit that answered the questions above but the wisdom in the answers demonstrates that they don't come from a common spirit and this is the important thing since and as it is already known the name means nothing. We have nothing to say about his first answers that are totally in agreement with what we have been taught, demonstrating once more that the theory provided about the spiritist phenomena are not a product of our imagination, given by the spirits at different times and places and beyond the limits of our personal influence. It is only the last answer that doesn't resolve the proposed question; we will try to supply the answer here.

To begin with let us say that the solution to the issue may be easily deduced with some development from what is given in *The Spirits' Book* question #114 and the following questions about the progression of the spirits. We don't have much to add. The spirits leave the hands of the Creator, simple and ignorant, but not good or bad, otherwise God would have created some spirits to good and happiness and others to evil and disgrace from the beginning, something neither in agreement with his benevolence nor justice. At the time of their creation, the spirits are only imperfect as far as their intellectual and moral developments are concerned, like the child at birth or the germ inside the seed of the tree. However, they are not naturally bad. Simultaneously to the development of reason, the free-will leads some to choose the good path and others to choose the bad one, and that is why some achieve the objective faster than others. But all of them, without exception, have to go through the trials of the corporeal life in order to acquire experience and have the merit of winning the fight. Some win and others don't but the losers can always stand up again and recover their losses. This discussion raises an even more serious issue that has already been presented several times. Since God knows everything, past, present and future, he must know that a given spirit will take the wrong path, will fail and become unhappy. In that case, why has he been created then?

Yes. God certainly knows well the direction that a given spirit will take otherwise he would not be sovereignly omniscient. If a bad move by the spirit were supposed to lead to an absolute eternity of penalties and sufferings; if there were no possibility of recovery after a failure, then the objection above would have the power of an incontestable logic and this is perhaps the most powerful argument against the eternal penalties since in that case it is impossible to solve the dilemma: either God does not know the fate reserved to his creature and then he is not infinitely omniscient or if he does know, then he created someone to be forever unhappy and then he is not infinitely good. With the Spiritist Doctrine there is thorough agreement and no contradiction: God knows that a given spirit will take a bad path; he knows every single danger that shall exist in that path but he also knows that the spirit will come out of this and that it is just a delay. Out of benevolence and in order to facilitate the spirit's journey God provides many warnings along the way, warnings that the spirit unfortunately does not always observe. It is the tale of two travelers who want to get to a beautiful place where they are going to lead a happy life. One knows how to avoid the obstacles and temptations that would hold him back; the other one carelessly crashes against the same obstacles, frequently falling behind but his time will come. If good people warn him against the danger during his journey and if he doesn't listen to them, out of pride, it will be all the more reprehensible.

The dogma of the absolute eternity of penalties has multiple flaws, not only based on the teachings of the spirits but also based on the simple logic of common sense. Any attempt to sustain it ignores the most essential attributes of the divinity; it shows contradiction when trying to state something on one side while negating the same thing on the other; such dogma falls apart and the ranks of its supporters become enlightened every day so that if it is absolutely necessary to believe in such a dogma to be a Catholic then soon there will be no true Catholics, as there would not be if the Church had decided to impose the belief in the movement of the Sun and the six days of creation. Persisting on a thesis that is rejected by reason is the same as throwing a fatal blow against religion thus feeding materialism with weapons. Contrary to that, Spiritism comes to revive religious feelings that diminish under attacks of disbelief, providing solutions to issues related to a future life acceptable by even the sternest reason. Rejecting it would be the same as refusing an anchor of salvation.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

May 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Mrs. de Girardin

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, medium Mrs. Costel

NOTE: Since some criticism was made about a communication given by Mrs. de Girardin in a previous session, she gave a spontaneous answer to them. She indicates the circumstances around that communication.

“I come to thank the member that kindly came out in my defense and moral rehabilitation before you. In fact when alive I used to love and respect the laws of good taste, those of delicacy I tell you from my heart, given my gender during that time. After my death God allowed me to raise to higher levels and to practice with simplicity the duties of charity that unite us all, men and spirits. With this explanation, I will not discuss the communication that bears my name since criticism and censorship are neither suitable to me nor to the medium. Thus, believe me that I will come whenever I am evoked but I will never get into futile discussions. I spoke about the children. Let me go back to that subject that was the painful ulcer of my life. Women need the double crown of love and maternity to fulfill the mandate of self-sacrifice entrusted by God when sending them to Earth. Alas! I never knew those sweet and tender worries that imprint in our soul by those frail submissions. How often I have gazed at those playful children touching my dress with bitter tears in my eyes. I felt the anguish and humiliation of my failure. I shuddered,

waited, listened, and my life filled with worldly success, was a fruit filled with ashes, that left me a bitter and disappointing taste.”

Delphine de Girardin

OBSERVATION: There is a lesson in this message that cannot go unnoticed. Mrs. Girardin said that when alive she used to love and respect the laws of good taste, those of delicacy, making reference to certain passages of her preceding communication that had provoked some objections. She also says that she preserved those feeling after her death. Consequently she rejects everything that may bear her name and denies those feelings. The soul mirrors the qualities and defects that are shown during their corporeal life with the exception of eventual progress that may have occurred but the soul is never inferior to its prior condition. Therefore there are sometimes very subtle nuances to be observed in the communications from the spirits so as to distinguish between what could be a replacement and what is really from that spirit. The really superior spirits are never caught in contradiction and one can boldly reject anything that may betray their character. This assessment is more difficult since a perfectly authentic communication may be mixed with thoughts from the medium, who does not clearly express the idea, or a strange spirit that interposes his thoughts between the medium and the communicating spirit. Hence, communications that denies the character of the communicating spirit in all points and in the essence of his ideas must be considered of doubtful authenticity. Nevertheless, it would be unfair to condemn the whole text due to some partial stained remarks that may come from the causes above.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

May 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Painting and music

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, medium Mr. Alfred Didier

Art has been defined a hundred thousand times: it is beauty, truth, goodness. Music that is one branch of art belongs entirely to the domain of sensations. Let us be clear and understand one another. The sensation is produced when a person understands art in two different but entirely interconnected ways: through the mind that leads to melancholy or philosophy and through the heart, through emotion. Music, in my opinion, it is the art that goes straight to the heart. The feeling, you understand— is thoroughly in the heart; painting, architecture, sculpture, in particular painting, mostly reaches the brain. In short, music flows from the heart to the spirit, painting from the mind to the heart.

The organ was created by religious elation. When poetry plays on the organ on Earth, the angels respond from heaven and serious and religious music elevates thoughts and soul; gentle music vibrates the nerves, nothing more. I wish I could cite a few personalities but I don't have the right: I am no longer on Earth. Like Mozart's Requiem, that killed him. I don't wish that any more spirits receive their death through music, but the living-dead, however, must forget all that is earthly, to raise their moral evolution.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

May 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Celebration of good spirits
the arrival of a brother

(Sent by Mrs. Cazemajoux, a medium from Bordeaux)

We also have celebrations, and that happens frequently because the good spirits from Earth, our beloved brothers, when they leave behind their material envelope they reach out to us and we go in large numbers to welcome them at the door of the dwelling they will now inhabit with us; and these celebrations are not agitated, as in yours. Human passions have no place in such celebrations, your passions disguised by kind faces and heads crowned with flowers that hide jealousy, pride, envy, vanity, the desire to please and prevail over their rivals, enjoying fictitious pleasures.

Here is the kingdom of joy, peace and concord; everyone is happy with their position and glad for their brother's happiness. Then, my friends! With that perfect harmony among us our celebrations have an indescribable appeal. Millions of musicians sing the wonders of God and His creation followed by harmonious lyres, a sound more dazzling than your sweetest melodies. Long processions of air bound spirits fly like zephyrs casting clouds of flowers upon the newly arrived, flowers whose aroma and wide-

ranging nuances you cannot understand. Then there is the fraternal banquet to the guests who have just finished their trials and come to receive their rewards for a job well done. Oh! My friend, I wish I could tell you more but your language is limited to describe such magnificence.

I have told you enough, my beloved ones, to stimulate in you the desire and then, my dear Émile, free from the mission that I have been assigned by your side on the Earth, I will continue to lead you through space, helping you to thoroughly enjoy that happiness.

Felicia (wife of the evoked, Émile and his guiding spirit since last year)

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

May 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Come to us

(Sent by Mrs. Cazemajoux, a medium from Bordeaux)

Spiritism is the application of the purest moral of the Gospels preached by Christ; and those who condemn it without knowing it are not very sensible. In fact, why classify it as superstition, charlatanism, sorcery, demonic, things that even the vulgar common sense would accept if properly investigated? The soul is immortal: it is the spirit. The perishable body is the inert matter left behind by the spirit, which then becomes a rotting nameless pile of decomposition. And you who are skeptical about Spiritism, you believe that this life of pain, sufferings and deception to the majority has no other objective but the grave!

Make no mistake. You poor ones, disowned from any Earthly wealth, from its greatness and pleasures, come to us! Come to us and you shall be consoled when you see that your sufferings and hardship will open the doors of happy worlds to you and that God, fair and good to all creatures, has only tried us for our own good, according to the words of Jesus: *Blessed are those that mourn: for they shall be comforted* – Thus, come skeptical and materialists. Hold the flag that reads: Love and charity to everyone, all

brothers; benevolence and justice, indulgence from a great and generous father to all of his creatures that advance through safe but unknown paths. Charity and moral progress, together with intellectual development, will lead you to the Author and Lord of all things.

We only give you these lessons so that you can work and spread the teachings but more than anything else that you use them without any bitterness. Sow the seed. Your good thoughts and God's help will make it fruitful, in the beginning to a small group only but that will grow and help you reach a good and plentiful harvest.

Ferdinand, medium's son

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

May 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Intellectual and moral progress

(Sent by Mr. Sabò, from Bordeaux)

I am here to tell you that moral progress is the most useful to acquire because it disciplines us against our bad inclinations and make us good, charitable and dedicated to our brothers. Intellectual progress, however, is also useful to our advancement because it elevates the soul helping us to make healthier assessments of our actions, facilitating moral progress.

It introduces us to the teachings provided by God for many centuries by many men of various merits, who came in all shapes and forms, speaking all languages to help us understand the truth, and were nothing more than spirits already advanced, sent by God for the development of human knowledge. But in time, the light that used to illuminate only to a few will shine for all. Do your best to understand the greatness, the power, the magnificence and justice of God; to understand the sublime beauty of his work; the

magnificent rewards to the good and the punishments to the bad ones; to understand, at last, that the only objective that you must have is to get closer to Him.

Georges, Bishop of Périgueux and Sarlat, happy to be one of the guides to the medium

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

May 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

The floods

(Sent by Mr. Casimir H., from Innsbruck, translated from the German Language)

Once upon a time a water spring appeared in a formerly barren region. At first it was only a trickle of water that flowed into the plains, to which no importance was given. Gradually it became bigger, turning into a small creek and then a river; expanding, it encroached upon neighboring terrain, but those who remained untouched by the waters, had their fields fertilized bringing large profits to them. A nearby landowner, discontent seeing his land diminish, tried to stop the flow to recover his stretch of land,

thinking that such action would expand his wealth. As it turned out, the blocked river flooded everything, land and owner.

Such is the image of progress: like the impetuous river, it breaks opposing levees, dragging along the unwise that instead of following its course, try to block it. The same will happen to Spiritism. God sends it to fertilize the moral terrain of humanity. Blessed are the ones who are able to take advantage of that and unfortunate are the ones who try to oppose God's designs! Don't you see it advancing by leaps and bounds in the four corners of the globe? Its voice is heard everywhere and it will soon muffle the voice of the adversaries in such a way that they will be forced to silence and forced to bow before the obvious. Men! Those who try to stop the irresistible march of progress await difficult trials. God allows that to happen for the glorification of some and punishment of others but gives you in Spiritism, the pilot which shall lead you to the harbor, carrying in its hand the flag of hope.

Wilhelm, the medium's grandfather

Allan Kardec²¹

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Speech about future life

Channing

Given on Easter Sunday, 1834 after the death of one of his friends

We have been given a number of times in this Review, spontaneous communications from the spirit Channing that does not contradict his superiority of character and intelligence. Our readers will appreciate below some passages of his texts when alive, using fragments of one of his speeches, whose translation we owe to the kind support of one of our subscribers. Considering that his name is not much known in France we provide a short biography below as an introduction to his discourse.

21 Paris, typography H. Carion, Rue de Bonaparte, 64

**

William Ellery Channing was born in 1780 in Newport, Rhode-Island, New York State. His grandfather, William Ellery, signed the famous declaration of independence. Channing was educated at Harvard College, to attend the medical school but his tastes and talents drove him towards a religious career when in 1803 he became the minister of the Unitarian Chapel of Boston. He then remained in that city where he professed the Unitarian Doctrine, a protestant sect that counts on many followers in England and in the USA, at the highest social echelons. He became known for his broad and liberal views and is counted as one of the most prominent men in the US given his remarkable eloquence, his many publications and his philosophical depth. A self-declared follower of peace and progress he relentlessly preached against slavery and for that he initiated such a fierce war against that institution, many liberals felt his exceeding enthusiasm was harmful to his own popularity, sometimes seemingly out of place. His name granted him authority among those who fought slavery. He died in Boston at the age 62. He was replaced by Gannet as leader of the Unitarians.

**

“To the great majority of men, heaven is almost always a world of fantasy. It lacks substance. The idea of a world where the creatures have no dense bodies, pure spirits covered by spiritual or ethereal bodies seems fictitious to them. Something that cannot be seen or touched does not seem real to them. That is sad but not surprising for how can men, immersed in matter and its related interests, not cultivating the acquisition of knowledge about the soul and its capabilities, how can they understand a more elevated spiritual life? To the crowds, someone that clearly and happily speaks about future life and about the victory of the spirit against the corporeal decomposition is a visionary dreamer. Such skepticism about heaven and spiritual things is irrational and unphilosophical as shameful.”

“And how irrational is the imagination that there aren’t other worlds but this one and no other more elevated way of living than ours! Who can doubt, after looking at the boundless Creation, that there exist superior beings or see any irrationality in conceiving that spirits do exist in a less circumscribed way, less bounded than here on Earth, and that there is a spiritual world?”

**

“Those who have left us for another world must cherish an even more profound interest for this one. Their links with the ones left behind improve rather than dissolve. If the future state is a betterment of the present one; if they must grow and expand in intelligence and love, their memories, fundamental power of intelligence, must act upon the past with an ever greater energy, and every lovely affection that we enjoyed here must renew. The idea that this Earthly life would be erased from the memory of the spirit would be the same as destroying its utility; it would be the rupture of the link between the two worlds and a subversion of responsibility, otherwise how could a forgotten life be reached by punishment or reward? No. We must carry the present with us, whatever the future may be, happy or unfortunate. It is true that the good ones will build new and even stronger and more sacred bonds; however, under the expanding influence of that better world the heart will have a greater capacity to keep the previous bonds while new ones are constructed. He will keep a kind memory of his birth place while enjoying a more mature and a happier life. If I could imagine that those who have left this world are actually dead for those who stay I would love them and honor them less. A man that forgets those left behind seems deprived of the best feelings of our human nature; and if the just in their new motherland were supposed to forget their parents on Earth; if, approaching God, they were expected to stop putting a good word for them, could we believe that such a change was beneficial to them?”

“One could ask if those in heavens not only keep a cherished memory of the ones left here on Earth but also that are aware of their present and immediate condition. I have no reason to believe that such an awareness does not exist. We are used to thinking of heaven as something far away from us, but there is no proof of that. Heaven is the union, the society of spiritual beings. Can’t they populate the universe, thus carrying heaven along with them everywhere? Is it likely that those creatures are restricted, like us, by physical boundaries? Milton said:

*Millions of spiritual beings walk the Earth
Both when we wake and when we sleep.”*

“A new sense, a new vision could show us that the spiritual world surrounds us from all sides. But even if you suppose that heaven is far away, there is no reason to believe that its inhabitants are not close to us and we are visible to them. However, how do we understand presence? Am I not present to those of you that I cannot reach with my arm but who I can clearly see? Isn’t that in total agreement with our knowledge about nature to suppose that those in heaven, regardless of their dwellings, may have spiritual senses and organs through which they can see at a distance as easily as we can see what is near us? Our eyes can effortlessly see planets that are millions of miles away, and with the help of Science we can even see the details of their surfaces. We can even imagine a visual organ sensitive enough or an instrument sufficiently powerful to allow for the detection of inhabitants of those far away planets. Why then, those who have already entered into a more elevated stage of their existences, covered by their spiritual bodies, why wouldn’t they be able to contemplate our Earth as easily as when it was their own dwelling?”

“That can be true and it is not an abuse to think so. It could be abused. We don’t think of the dead as if they were contemplating us with a partial Earthly love. They love us more than ever, but with a spiritual and renovated warmth. Their only wish is to see us worthy of reuniting with them in their place of generosity and piety. Their spiritual eyes penetrate our souls. If we were able to hear their voices it would not be a declaration of personal attachment but a lively appeal for better efforts on our side, to a firmer abnegation, to a broader charity, to a humbler patience, to a more loving obedience to God’s will. They breathe from the atmosphere of God’s benevolence and their mission now is more important than it was here.”

“You may then ask: if the dead are aware of the hardships that afflict us, would it follow that there is suffering in that blessed life? My answer is that I cannot see heaven but as a world of sympathies. It seems to me that there isn’t anything that may attract their attention better than the misery of their brothers. But if that sympathy may yield sadness on one side, it is far from making them unhappy. In our inferior word, a selfless compassion, together with the power of lessening the suffering of others, is a guarantee of peace, frequently leading to the purest pleasures. Free from our current diseases and enlightened by a broader vision from the divine governance, such sympathy will provide more joy to the virtues of those blessed beings, and as any other source of perfection, it will increase their happiness. The friends who leave us for that other world are not among strangers; they don’t feel the loneliness of someone that has exchanged his homeland for an unknown country. The kindest human words of friendship are not even close to the scores of felicitation that await them at the entrance of that world. There the spirit counts on safer ways of revealing oneself than here. The newcomer feels surrounded by virtues and benevolence and by that intimate feeling of sympathetic spirits around him, and new bonds may be instantaneously created, stronger than those cemented by years of worldly relationships. The most intimate affections in our world are cold when compared to those among the spirits. How do they

communicate? Through which language and organs? We don't know that but we do know that as the spirit progresses it becomes easier to them to transmit their thoughts."

"It would be a mistake to believe that the inhabitants of heaven are limited to the reciprocal communication of their ideas. Those who reach that level enter into a new state of activity, of life and endeavors. We may think of the future state as something so happy that nobody will need help there, that there is no more need for any effort and the good ones have nothing else to do but to enjoy. Truth is, however, that any activity on Earth, even the most intense, is similar to a child's game when compared to the activity and the energy developed in that more elevated life. And that is how it must be since there is no more active principle than intelligence, beneficence, love for the truth, desire of perfection, sympathy for the sufferings and devotion to the divine works that form the widening principles of life beyond the grave. That is when the soul has total awareness of its capabilities; that the infinite truth unfolds before our eyes; when we understand that the universe is a boundless sphere of discoveries to science, to goodness and worship. Those new interests of life, which reduce the current ones to nothing, multiply forever. Hence, one must not imagine heavens as a motionless community. I envision it as a world of prodigious plans and efforts for its own betterment. I consider that as a society which has to go through successive phases of development, of virtues, power and knowledge, through the energy of its own members."

"The celestial genius is always active, exploring the great laws of creation and the eternal principles of the spirit; unveiling beauty in the order of the universe and discovering the means of advancement for each soul. There are different degrees of intelligence, as with us here, and the most advanced spirits find happiness and progress enlightening the ones behind. The education that was initiated here continues there and a more divine philosophy than the one we learn here revealing its very essence to the spirit, stimulating his joyful efforts towards his own betterment. Heaven has a connection with the other worlds. Its inhabitants are God's messengers in the whole creation. They have great missions to accomplish and given the progress of their endless existence, they may be entrusted with the care of other worlds."

**

This speech was given in 1834. In those days there was not a word about manifestations of the spirits in North America. Hence, Channing did not know them. He would otherwise have stated that at certain points he only mentioned it as a hypothesis. Nevertheless, isn't that remarkable that this man had foreseen with such accuracy what would only be revealed a few years later, since apart from a few exceptions, his description of future life is in perfect agreement with that revelation? The only missing point is reincarnation and if carefully examined one can see that his speech is close to that, as with the manifestations of the spirits that he remains quiet about since he did not know them. In fact he admits the spiritual world around us, among us, plentiful of solitudes towards us, helping us to advance. From there to the direct communications there is only a step. He also states that in the celestial world there is no perpetual contemplation but activity and progress; he admits the plurality of the corporeal worlds, but more or less advanced; had he admitted that the spirits could continue their progress in those worlds and we would have the reincarnation right there. Without it the idea of progressive worlds cannot be reconciled with that of the creation of the souls at the moment of birth of the bodies, unless one can admit the creation of more or less perfect souls and then it is necessary to justify God's preference. Isn't it more logical to admit that if the souls of a given world are more advanced than those of another it is because they have already lived on inferior worlds? The same may be said about the inhabitants of Earth, comparing the savage to the most civilized among themselves.

In any case isn't such a description of life after the grave for its logical deductions more accessible to the most vulgar intelligence and acceptable by the sternest reason, and isn't that a hundred times more

adequate to lead to conviction and trust in the future than the horrible and inadmissible picture of the endless tortures borrowed from the Paganism of Tartarus? Those who preach such beliefs cannot imagine the number of disbelievers that they generate and the number of recruits sent to the ranks of materialism.

Notice that Milton who was cited in the speech above has an opinion similar to Channing's about the invisible world in our environment that is also the opinion of the modern spiritists. The fact is, that Milton, as well as Channing and many other notables, were spiritists out of pure intuition. That is why we tirelessly repeat that Spiritism is not a modern invention. It has occurred at all times because there were souls at all times and the masses have always believed in the soul. Therefore we can find fragments of this idea in a large number of old as well as modern texts, sacred and profane. Such intuition of the spiritist ideas is so general that we daily see lots of people who are not at all surprised when they hear about them for the first time. All that was missing was a formula for their belief.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Correspondence

Letter sent by Mr. Roustaing, from Bordeaux

The letter below was sent by Mr. Roustaing, Attorney at the Imperial Court of Bordeaux and former President of the Bar Association. The principles expressed in that letter by such an educated man, given that he is placed amongst the most enlightened, may perhaps give pause to some of those who consider themselves as having the exclusive privilege of reason and place all the followers of Spiritism as fools.

“My dear Sir and highly distinguished spiritist leader,

I received the influence and collected the benefits of these words from Jesus to Thomas: ‘Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed’, profound, divine words that show the safest, the most rational path, the one that leads to faith according to St. Paul’s maxim accomplished and realized by Spiritism: ‘Rationabile sit obsequium vestrum’.

When I wrote to you for the first time last March I said: I saw nothing, but I read and got it and I believed. God rewarded me well for having believed without having seen; later I saw and I saw well; I saw under favorable circumstances and the experimental part came to excite, if I may say so, the faith that I had gotten from the Doctrine, strengthening and giving life to that faith.

After having studied and understood, I knew the invisible world like someone that knows Paris from studying it on a map. Through experience, continual work and observation I got to the invisible world and its inhabitants, like someone that knows Paris from walking around it, but without having gone to every corner of that large capital city. Yet, since the beginning of April and thanks to what I have learned from you, from the excellent Mr. Sabò and his moral family, all good and true spiritists, I was able to work and work intensely with them or at my place in the presence and with the support of the followers from our city, who are convinced of the spiritist truth although not all of them are in fact spiritist practitioners.

Mr. Sabò sent you the accurate result of our activities, material that was taught to us by superior spirits through evocations or spontaneous manifestations. We were taken by both joy and surprise as much as by confusion and humility when we received those precious and truly sublime lessons from so many elevated spirits who came to visit us or who sent us messengers to speak in their names.

Oh! Dear Sir, how happy I am for no longer professing the cult to matter on Earth; this Earth that I now know is a place of exile, trials and atonement to our spirits! How happy I am for getting to know and have understood reincarnation, with its full reach and consequences, and as a reality rather than fantasy! Reincarnation, that sublime and equitable law of God, as my guide and guardian spirit said yesterday, so beautiful, so reassuring, for it allows us the possibility of doing tomorrow what we could not have done the day before; that allows the creature to advance to the Creator; ‘that just and equitable law’, according to a statement from Joseph de Maistre, during the evocation of his spirit that we carried out and you got the notes; reincarnation is ‘a long and tough path to walk to get to God’s dwelling’ using the divine words of Jesus. Now I understand the meaning of these words from Jesus to Nicodemus: ‘How can you be a doctor of the law and not know these things?’

*Now that God has allowed me to understand in full all the truth of the Gospel, I wonder how the ignorance of men, teachers of the law, could resist this interpretation of the texts; produce and error and falsehood that brought and maintained materialism, disbelief, fanaticism or cowardice? I wonder how this ignorance, this error could occur when Christ proclaimed the need to revive saying **‘you must be born again’** and thereby reincarnation as the only way to see the kingdom of God, something that was already known and taught on earth and that Nicodemus should know: You are a doctor of the law and you do not know it! It is true that Christ added at each step: ‘Let those who have ears hear’; and also: ‘They have eyes and they see not; they have ears, but they hear and do not understand’; this can be applied to those who came after him, as well as those of his time.*

God, in his benevolence, I said, has rewarded me for our work so far and the lessons that we were given by his divine messengers, 'devout and intelligent missionaries among their brothers', - in the words of the spirit Fénelon – 'to inspire their love and the love to their neighbor, forgetfulness of injuries and the worship to God'. Now I understand the wonderful meaning of these words of the spirit Fénelon when he speaks of those divine messengers: 'They have lived so many times that they have become our masters.'

I joyfully and humbly thank these divine messengers who have come to teach us that Christ is on a mission on Earth for the propagation and the success of Spiritism, the third revelation of divine grace to accomplish these final words of the Gospel 'Unum ovile and unus pastor'; by telling us: 'Have no fear! Christ (called by them the Spirit of Truth), Truth is the first and the holiest missionary of the spiritist ideas.' These words had deeply impressed me, and I wondered: But then where is Christ in his mission on Earth? 'Truth commands - in the words of the spirit of Marius, bishop in the early days of the Church - this phalanx of spirits sent by God, sent to Earth for the spread and the success of Spiritism.'

What sweet and pure joy we get out of these spiritist charitable works towards the suffering spirits, with the help of the evocations! How reassuring is a communication with one of those who were our relatives and friends on Earth; by knowing that they are happy or being able to mitigate their suffering! How cheerful and brilliant light these spiritist lessons shed on our souls, teaching us the whole truth of Christ's law, giving us faith through our own reason, helping us to understand God's omnipotence, his greatness, his justice, his goodness and infinite mercy, placing us before that pleasant need to practice the divine law of love and charity! What a sublime revelation they gave us, by teaching that those divine messengers advance as they help us to advance as well, thus growing the ranks of those pure spirits! Such is the remarkable and divine harmony that simultaneously shows us the unity in God and the solidarity among all creatures, showing them under that influence and the impulse of that reciprocal solidarity called up to improve and improving but not without difficulties and failures in their first steps out of the long and tall spiritual climb, and after having walked all the steps, getting to the original state of ignorance and simplicity, to the intellectual and moral perfection and through that perfection, to God.

Remarkable and divine harmony that shows us the great division between inferiority and superiority, the distinction between worlds that are places of exile where there is only trials and penance, and other superior worlds, dwellings of the good spirits, where all they have to do is to advance towards the good.

Reincarnation, once well understood, teaches humanity that we are all in a transient journey in which we are all free to not come back as long as we do what it takes; that power, wealth, dignity, science, all are given as part of trials and as a means of progress towards good; that they are not in our hands but as a security and instruments for the practice of love and charity; that the beggar that walks by a wealthy man is his brother before God, and might even have been before men; that he might have been rich and powerful. If he is now living an obscure and miserable condition it is for having failed difficult trials, then reminding us of the famous expression about social conditions: 'From the Capitol to the Tarpeian rock there is only a step' but with the difference that through reincarnation the spirit stands up from the fall and may even reach celestial regions after reaching the Capitol's peak.

Reincarnation erases every single Earthly vanity, according to Plato's expression: 'There is no king that is not descendent from a shepherd and there is no shepherd that is not descendent from a king'; it frees man from the cult to matter and morally levels all social conditions. It is the basis for equality and fraternity among men and spirits, in God and before God, and freedom that is just a lie and a utopia

without the law of love and charity, as we were recently told by the spirit Washington. As a whole, Spiritism brings the truth and unity of the moral and intellectual progress to men, a great and sublime undertaking of which we are nothing more than very humble apostles.

So long, my dear Sir. After having gone quiet for three months I am now overwhelming you with this lengthy letter. Please reply when you can or want. I would propose to travel to Paris to have the pleasure to meet you in person and exchange a fraternal handshake with you. My current health condition does not allow me that right now. You can do whatever you may find adequate to this letter. I am honored to openly and publically say that I am a spiritist.

Yours truly,

Roustaing, Attorney”

Everyone will appreciate, as we did, the good thinking expressed in this letter. One can see that although Mr. Roustaing has only recently been initiated he moved on to be a master of assessment. Fact is that he studied the Doctrine serious and profoundly, quickly grasping the consequences of the seriousness within Spiritism, and contrary to many others, he did not stop at the surface. He had seen nothing before, as he said, and he was convinced because he had read and understood. What he did was also done by many others and we have always reinforced that those, far from being superficial, are the ones who give serious thought to the matter. They give more importance to the meaning than the form and for them the philosophical part is the essence and the phenomena per say are the accessories, and even if the phenomena did not exist, they say, there would still be a philosophy, the only one capable of solving so many up until now unresolved issues; it is the only philosophy that provides a rational explanation about the past and the future of man. Thus, they chose a doctrine that explains rather than one that does not or hardly explains. Anyone that gives some thought to that will understand well that one could make abstraction of the manifestations and the doctrine would still outlive that. The manifestations confirm and reinforce the doctrine but do not form their essential foundation.

Channing's speech that we saw earlier is a demonstration of that since he was led to the same consequences just by reasoning, about twenty years before the unfolding of the manifestations in North America. There is another point that stands out to a serious spiritist. The citations given by the author of this letter shows that he did not limit himself to the thoughts contained in the communications that he had received, also demonstrating that he was not just admiring beautiful literary productions, goods to preserve in an album, but he studied them, he gave serious thoughts to them, enjoying the benefit in the process. Unfortunately there are many to whom such teaching is a dead word; people who collect communications as someone that collects nice books, never reading them.

We must congratulate Mr. Roustaing for something else. It is the declaration with which he terminates his letter. Unfortunately not everybody has the courage to sustain their opinion as he does, stimulating the adversaries as a consequence. We must acknowledge, though, that things have changed since some time now. Two years ago people only spoke about Spiritism in a closed room; the books were only bought in hiding and care was taken to keep them under cover. Today things are very different. People are already used to the rude remarks of the scorners, laughing at them instead of being fearful. People are no longer

afraid of declaring themselves spiritists as much as they are not afraid of saying that they are followers of this or that doctrine, of animal magnetism, of somnambulism, etc. The subject is openly discussed with anyone that shows up, like the classical writers and the romanticists, without any humiliation for defending this or that. It is a huge progress that demonstrates two things: the advancement of the spiritist ideas in general and the little consistency of the arguments used by the adversaries. The natural consequence will be the silence of the latter ones who thought they were stronger and in larger numbers; but when they see people discussing the subject from all sides they will not perhaps be converted but will keep their reservation.

We know a little town that a year ago had only one follower who was pointed at like a rare animal and even considered as such; he was perhaps disinherited by the family or even lost his job. Today there are a large number of followers there. They openly gather in assembly, giving no importance to what others may say; when they saw local authorities, workers, officers, engineers, lawyers, accountants, etc. among them, who did not hide their sympathies towards the cause, the scorners stopped the mockery and the local paper, edited by a strong personality who had already thrown his stones and was preparing to destroy the new doctrine, but afraid of having stronger people on his back decided to keep a judicious silence. That is the story of many other places that will generalize as the followers of Spiritism, whose number grows by the hour, raise their heads and their voices. People may try to eliminate one head that sticks out but when they see twenty, forty, one hundred, who are not afraid of speaking out loud, giving courage to those who don't have it, they think twice.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Prayer

The following poem was sent to us by one of our corresponding members from Lyon. He is so deeply-rooted in the Spiritist Doctrine that we cannot let go of the opportunity of giving him a space in our Review.

How can I, oh mortals, with my weak accents,

Give your hearts the most sublime incense!

You will learn from these verses during this career,

How to pray and the meaning of prayer.

It is a surge of love, of fluid fervor,
That escapes the soul and rises towards our Savior.
Sublime effusion of the humble creature,
Returning to his source, ennobling his nature!
Praying does not change the Creator's art,
Always immutable; but the paternal heart
Spreads its divine stream upon the one who implores,
And doubles the heat of the fire it devours.
He then feels elevated, growing,
Through the love to the neighbor, the heart is pounding.
The more he grows in love the more the Sublime Being
Fulfills his heart with the blessings of learning.
Then comes a holy desire to pray for the dead,
Carrying their burden of pain, a bitter regret,
Showing the needs their condition claims.
He then addresses to them his invisible balms,
Whose efficacy, consoling remedy,
Penetrates their souls, giving them liberty.
They revive; it is a new hope, a glimmer
Helping in their struggle; freedom they conquer.
Like the mortals overwhelmed by evil,
That a supreme balm returns to normal,
They regenerate before this impulse, occult
From the majestic and ardent prayer, and its divine cult.
Let us multiply the enthusiasm; nothing is lost my friend;
Prayers, prayers for them, prayers to the end;

Prayer, it is always prayer, the divine star
That becomes a focus of love, and overwhelms afar.
Let us pray for the dead, yes, and before long and from above
Outpours upon us their rays of love!

Joly

The objective and the effects of prayer are perfectly defined in these verses, evidently inspired by an elevated spirit. God certainly does not breach his own law by our request since this would be the denial of one of his attributes: immutability; but the prayer acts in particular upon its target; it is both a testimony of sympathy and commiseration that is addressed to that spirit, thus helping to lessen their burden. Next, its active effect is to excite in the soul the desire for repentance, inspiring the will for the practice of good. *“God will reward each of us for what we have done.” – Romans 2:6.* That eminently fair law keeps the fate in our own hands and consequently rendering the duration of sufferings subordinated to the duration of the unrepentant. It thus follows that if the soul were forever remorseless the penalties would be eternal. Thus, if through the moral action of praying we provoke repentance and voluntary reparation, it is then through the prayer that the time of atonement is abbreviated.

All of that is perfectly clear in those verses above. Such doctrine may not seem very orthodox to the eyes of someone that believes in a merciless God, deaf to the pleading voices, and that condemns his own creatures to endless sufferings for their failures in a transient life; one must acknowledge, however, that the doctrine above is more logical and according to the true justice and to God’s benevolence. We learn from everything, religion as well as reason, that God is infinitely good. With the dogma of the eternal fire we should add that he is infinitely ruthless, an attribute that is in contradiction with the former since one denies the other.

In fact, the number of believers in the eternity of sufferings diminishes by the day, and that is a positive and unquestionable thing. They will soon be so few that they will be counted, and even if the Church claimed heresy, rejecting all those who don’t believe in the eternal penalties from its ranks, there would be more heretics among the Catholics than true believers and it would then be necessary to condemn every clergyman and theologian that, like us, interpret those words in a relative rather than absolute sense.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Marquis de Saint-Paul

It is a mistake to believe that there is nothing to gain from conversations with the spirits of common people and that it is only the nobility that offers useful teachings. There are certainly many useless lessons among them but sometimes a serious observer obtains unforeseen revelations from those when one least expects it. As a matter of fact, there is a point that is of great interest to us for it touches us closely: the passage, the transition from the current to the future life, a feared passage that only Spiritism can help us

face it fearlessly, and that we can only know by studying the current cases, that is, from those who have just made that transition, famous or not famous.

Marquis de Saint-Paul was a member of the Society, deceased in 1860 and evoked following a request from his sister on May 16th, 1861.

1. Evocation. – A. I am here.
2. Your sister has asked us to evoke you, and although she is a medium she does not feel confident enough in the current development of her mediumship. – A. I will do my best to respond.
3. First, she would like to know if you are happy. – A. I am still in an errant state and in this transient state there is no absolute happiness or unhappiness.
4. Has it taken you long to become aware of yourself? – A. I spent a long time in a confused state and only emerged from it to bless those who had not forgotten me and who prayed for me.
5. Can you estimate the time you spent in this confused state? – A. No.
6. Which relatives did you promptly recognize? – A. I recognized my mother and my father who welcomed me when I woke up. They were the ones who initiated me in my new life.
7. How could it be that towards the end of your illness it looked like you were speaking with your loved ones from Earth? – A. Because I had the revelation of the world I was about to enter before I died. I became clairvoyant before I died and my eyes were veiled during the definitive transition and separation from the body, because the corporeal links were still very strong.

OBSERVATION: The phenomenon of early separation of the soul is quite frequent. Many people foresee the world of the spirits before they die. That certainly happens to smooth out the pain of leaving life behind through hope. But here the spirit adds that his eyes were veiled at the time of separation. It is a common occurrence; at that very moment when the spirit loses consciousness. The spirit never witnesses the last breath of the body and the actual separation occurs unsuspectingly. The agonizing convulsions are purely physical whose sensation is almost never experienced by the spirit. We say almost because it may happen that the suffering may be imposed onto the spirit as a punishment.

8. Why were your memories mainly of your childhood? – A. Because the beginning is closer to the end than is the center of life.
9. What do you mean? – A. I mean that those in agony remember and see the pure and young years as a reassuring mirage.

OBSERVATION: It is likely that seniors usually have more accurate and detailed memories of their early days for the same providential reason.

10. Why did you always use the third person when referring to your own body? – A. Because, as I said, I was clairvoyant and clearly felt the differences between the physical and the spiritual. Those differences, interconnected by the fluid of life, become very distinct to the eyes of the agonizing visionary.

OBSERVATION: Here we have a singular particularity presented by the death of this gentleman. In his last moments he used to say: - *‘He is thirsty, he needs to drink something, he is feeling cold, one needs to warm him up; he suffers this or that, etc.’* - When asked: But is that you who

are thirsty? He replied: - *'No, it is him.'* – Here the two lives are perfectly drawn: the thinking *self* is in the spirit and not in the body; once feeling separated, the spirit considered his body as another person, as if it were not him. Hence, it was his body that needed attending to and not him, the spirit.

11. What you just said above about your errant state and the duration of your confusion would lead us to believe that you are not happy. However, your character must lead us to a contrary opinion. As a matter of fact there are errant spirits who are very happy as there are others very unhappy. – A. I am in a transient state. Human virtues acquire their true value here. There is no doubt that my current condition is a thousand times preferable than that of my Earthly incarnation, but I have always carried the aspiration of true good and true beauty and my soul will only be satisfied when it has reached the feet of our Creator.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Henri Mondeux

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, April 26th, 1861

Last February the newspapers announced the sudden death of the shepherd Henri Mondeux, the renowned calculator who passed in the early days of February 1861, victimized by a stroke at the age of 34, in the Condom Commune (Gers). He was born in Touraine and since the age of 10, he was recognized for his prodigious capacity of resolving complicated problems of Arithmetic, in his head, although he was

completely illiterate and did not have any formal education. He soon captured people's attention and many used to go and see him while he was taking care of his herd. He made some additional cash while entertaining the visitors who came to asking him to solve mathematical equations. The phenomenon reminded them of Vito Mangiamele, a shepherd from Napoli who had also presented the same prodigy a few years back. A college Math professor from Tours thought that such a remarkable gift should produce even more remarkable results with some additional help. He then started to educate the young man only to discover, that he was dealing with an incredibly rebellious mind. In fact he could barely read and write at the age of 16 and – a remarkable thing – the professor could not get him to remember the names of elementary geometrical shapes, indicating that his skills were limited to the ability of numerical combinations alone. He was then a calculator but not a Mathematician.

Another important fact was that he could never absorb our conventional methods of calculation. He did not even understand them. He had his own way of doing things and he did not know how he did it; he did not understand the phenomenon himself, a phenomenon limited to a prodigious memory of numbers. We say numbers instead of totals because the vision of numerical totals confused him more than helped. He preferred to have the problems formulated verbally rather than in writing.

In short this is the result of our own observations carried out with the young Mondeux that gave us material for a lecture given at the Parisian Society of Phrenology. Such a special gift, although taken to the limit, could not help him to start in any career, even as an accountant to a commercial establishment, something that concerned his teacher and was rightly so. He was sorry for having taken the young man away from his herd, asking himself what would become of that youngster once he was deprived from the common interest that brought them together, particularly considering his age. We lost contact with him for eighteen years. As it seems he found ways of surviving giving presentations from town to town.

1. Evocation. – A. 4 plus 3 is 7 in the other worlds as it is here.
2. We thought of evoking you just after your death but we were told that you were not ready yet. It seems that you are now. – A. I was waiting for you.
3. You may not perhaps remember me but I had the occasion of meeting you in private in Prussia and even attend your sessions. As for myself, it seems that I still see you and the Math teacher that followed you and gave me valuable information about you and your skills. – A. That is all I can tell you that I remember about you, but it is only today that my ideas are clearer.
4. What was the origin of that strange skill that gifted you? – A. Ah! That is the question that I was sure you would ask me. You started by saying: I knew you, I saw you, you were skilled, and finally you ask for an explanation. Well then! I had the ability of reading in my own spirit the immediate calculation of a given problem. You could say that the solution was unfolded by a spirit before my eyes and all I had to do was to read it. I was a kind of clairvoyant and calculating medium, and it must be said as if carrying a little book of calculus, prepared beforehand.
5. As far as I remember you did not have this sort of sarcastic wit when alive. You were actually somewhat circumspect. – A. Well, my skills were thoroughly used for the calculations; there was nothing left for other things.
6. How could you have developed such a skill for calculation and be so poor on other elemental parts of Math? – A. Bottom line is that I was stupid, right? You can say the word, I understand. Here, however, I no longer have to develop a faculty to handle numbers and my skills now develop faster on other things.
7. You no longer have to develop that skill for the numbers... (the spirit writes not waiting for the end of the question) – A. That means that God has assigned a mission to all of us. You, he said, will scare away the wise Mathematicians. I will make you look like dumb so that they will be even more astonished; beat them in all calculations and make them say: How can he do it better

than us? What is it that he has that is stronger than education? God wanted them to look beyond the body since what it is that exists and is more material than a numeral?

8. What did you do in your previous existences? – A. I was sent to show other things.
9. Were they always related to Math? – A. No doubt since that is my specialty.
10. I had formulated a few problems to check if you still had the same ability but according to what you have just said it seems pointless. – A. I no longer have solutions to give you. I cannot do that. The instrument is bad since it is not a mathematician.
11. Can't you overcome that limitation? – A. Ah! Nothing is impossible. Even Sebastopol was taken over. But what a difference!
12. What do you do now? – A. Do you want to know my occupation? I wonder and wait a little bit before restarting my career as a medium that must go on.
13. What do you believe is going to be that mediumistic skill? – A. Always the same but more developed and remarkable.
14. (A member makes the following reflection): From the answers it appears that he acted as a medium on Earth, leading to the supposition that he had the support of another spirit, thus explaining why he does not enjoy the same skills today. – A. I was wired in such a way that I could see those numbers provided by other spirits to me. I captured them better than you would; I had the skills of calculation because that is what I was prepared for. All means of convincing are sought. They are all good, great or small, and the spirits capture them all.
15. Did you make a fortune with your skills, going around the world with your sessions? – A. Oh! You ask a medium if he made a fortune! Wrong direction. Of course not!
16. But you did not see yourself as a medium! You did not even know what that was. – A. No. It surprised me also that I received so little financially. That served me morally and I prefer my equity duly registered in the great book of God to the income obtained from the State.
17. We thank you for your kindness in responding to our appeal. – A. You changed your opinion about me.
18. I did not change because I always liked you. – A. I am glad I solved the problems otherwise you would not have noticed me.

OBSERVATION: As everyone knows, the identity of the spirits is the most difficult thing to determine. It is generally revealed through unforeseen circumstances and details; by subtle nuances only captured by a very careful examination, often demonstrating more than the material signs that can be easily imitated by deceiving spirits, while these cannot simulate the intellectual capacity or the moral qualities that they lack. One could doubt the identity in this case without a much logical explanation about the difference of the current personality and the other when alive, because the numerical answer that he gives at the beginning of the evocation cannot be considered as an authentic proof. Whatever the opinion that one may form about the communication above we must acknowledge that besides the witty remarks it contains some profound thoughts. The answers given to questions 7 and 16 are notable with that respect. It results from those answers, like from answers given by other spirits, that the spirit Mondeux has a predisposition for Math; that he likely had that skill in previous existences, but he was no scientific celebrity. It would be hard to understand that a true wise man would be restricted to do calculations to entertain the public, without any other reach or scientific utility. There would be much more reason for doubt if he tried to pretend to have been Newton or Laplace.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Mrs. Anais Gourdon

A young lady, remarkable for her kind disposition and by the most eminent moral qualities, died in November 1860. She was evoked after a request from her father and her husband. She belonged to a family of miners near Saint-Étienne, an important aspect to be taken into account for the analysis of the evocation.

1. Evocation. – A. Here I am.

2. Your father and your husband asked me to evoke you and will be very happy for receiving your communication. – A. I am also very happy for being able to communicate with them.
3. Why have you been taken away so soon from the warmth of your loving family? – A. Because my Earthly trials were over.
4. Do you see them from time to time? – A. Oh! I am always with them.
5. Are you happy as a spirit? – A. I am happy, I serve and I love. Heaven does not frighten me and I wait confidently and with love so that my white wings may grow.
6. What do you mean by those wings? – A. I mean I should turn into a pure spirit and shine like the celestial messengers that dazzle me.

OBSERVATION: The wings of angels, archangels and seraphs, the pure spirits, are evidently attributes imagined by men to portray the speed of their dislocation, since their ethereal nature excuses them from any obstacle when covering spaces. However, they may show themselves to people using that accessory, responding to people's thoughts, like others who take the appearance they had on Earth in order to make themselves known.

7. Do you see your brother-in-law who died some time ago, and who was evoked last year? – A. I saw him when I arrived to the spiritual world. I don't see him now.
8. Why don't you see him anymore? – A. I know nothing about that.
9. Can your relatives do anything to please you? – A. My beloved ones should no longer be sad, despite their grief, since they know that I am not gone forever. May my memory be kind, light and fragrant to them! I passed away like a flower and there is nothing sad about my passage.
10. Where does your poetic language come from, considering the position you had when on Earth? – A. It is my soul that speaks. Yes, I had acquired knowledge and God often allows refined spirits to incarnate amidst the roughest people to make them foresee the kindness that they will one day understand and conquer.

OBSERVATION: Without such explanation that is both so logical and so in agreement with God's solicitude to his children, we would hardly understand, at first sight, what could in principle seem like an anomaly. In fact, what can be more gracious and poetic than the language of the spirit of this young lady, raised in the middle of a very tough environment? The opposite is also frequently seen: inferior spirits incarnate among more advanced people, but with the opposite objective. God puts them in touch with a more enlightened world for their own advancement, while serving as trials to that world. Which other philosophy can solve these issues?

11. (Evocation of Mr. Gourdon, the oldest son, already evoked in 1860) – A. I am here.
12. Do you remember that you were evoked by us? – A. Yes, perfectly.
13. How come your sister-in-law no longer sees you? – A. She has moved up.

OBSERVATION: She had responded to the same question: "I know nothing about it"; it was certainly out of modesty. It is now explained: with her superior nature she belongs to a more elevated order of spirits, while he is still attached to Earth. They follow different paths.

14. What have you been doing since that occasion? – A. I made progresses in terms of the acquisition of knowledge, listening to the instructions of our guides.

15. Please, I ask you to provide a communication to your father who would be very happy with that.
- A. My dear father, you must not think that your children are lost and don't suffer by seeing their empty places. I also wait and don't be impatient because I know that the passing days are other steps that need to be overcome, taking us closer to one another. Be grave but not sad since sadness is a mute criticism addressed to God, who wishes to be glorified in his work. In reality, why suffer in this sad life where everything vanishes, except our good or bad deeds? Dear father, be confident and have courage!

OBSERVATION: The first evocation of this young man was marked by the same feelings of filial piety and elevation. It was a huge consolation to his parents who could not get over his loss. That is totally understandable, as it is with the young lady.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Effects of despair

Death of Mr. Laferrière, member of the Institute

Suicide of Mr. Léon L...

The widow and the doctor

We would need several books to register all the dismal accidents caused by despair, even if we only take into account those that are of public knowledge. How many suicides, diseases, involuntary deaths, cases of madness, acts of vengeance and even crimes are produced every day! An educational statistic would be that of the root causes that led those persons to a state of insanity. We would see that in at least 80% of the cases despair is present. But that is not our focus today.

Below we transcribe two cases that were reported in the papers, and we don't do it just to show the news but as material for study. The *Siècle* of last February 17th reported the following regarding the funerals of Mr. Laferrière:

“On Tuesday we took a twenty-year-old young lady to her final dwelling, followed by some saddened friends, after she had endured a terrible disease for some time. Mr. Laferrière was the father of his only child. He was a member of the Institute²² and General Inspector at the Law School. The excessive pain killed that unfortunate father and the resignation of the Christian faith was not enough to console him. Thirty six hours later a second blow shook the family and the same week that had seen father and daughter separated also saw them reunited again. Mr. Laferrière's funeral was attended by a huge and dismayed crowd.”

**

The paper says that Mr. Laferrière had religious feelings and it is nice to see it since we must not assume that all scholars are agnostic. Those feelings, however, were not able to preclude him from falling out of despair. We are convinced that if his ideas about the future were less vague, more positive, such as those given by Spiritism; had he believed in the presence of his daughter by his side; had he had the reassuring opportunity of communicating with her, he would have understood that they were only separated physically and for some time and he would have the necessary patience and submission to God's will up until the time of their reunion; he would have calmed down knowing that his own despair was a cause of disturbance to his beloved one's happiness. These thoughts are even more appropriate to the news reported by the *Siècle* on March 1st:

“Mr. Leon L... is a 25 year-old businessman of the Villemonble bus company in Paris, married for two years to a young lady who he loved very much. The birth of their son, now 1 year old, brought them even closer. This and the successful business led them to foresee a long and happy future.

A few months ago Mrs. L... felt suddenly ill taken by typhoid fever and despite the most diligent care and the assistance of all of science's latest medicines, she soon passed away. Since then Mr. L... has been so sad that there was nothing that could distract him. He was heard more than once saying that he hated life and that he wanted to reunite with the one who was his reason of happiness.

Last night, around 7 pm, on returning from Paris in his car he gave the cabriolet carriage to the wagoner and without a word he entered the room adjacent to the dining room. An hour later a servant came to let him know that dinner was served. He responded that he wanted nothing. His body was bending over the desk, the head supported by the hands, seemingly taken by total weakness.

The servant informed his parents who promptly came to help their son. He had lost consciousness. They immediately sent for Dr. Dubois. As soon as the doctor arrived he attested that the young man was dead.

22 Parisian Institute of Sciences (NT)

He had poisoned himself with a strong dose of laudanum that he had bought for his horses. The young man's death caused great commotion in the region where he enjoyed general sympathy."

**

Mr. Leon L..., no doubt, believed in a future life since he killed himself to reunite with his wife. Had he known through Spiritism the fate of those who commit suicide he would have known that far from short-cutting the path of reunion, his action was an infallible way of keeping them apart. We would like to offer the following opposing fact to those two above, showing the influence that the spiritist beliefs may have upon those who profess them. One of our corresponding members reports the following:

"A lady friend of mine lost her husband whose death was attributed to medical malpractice. She was so angry with the doctor that she persecuted him, ruthlessly, threatening him and telling him out loud and wherever she met him: - 'Assassin, I will make sure that you die in my hands!' – That lady was very religious, a good Catholic. The appeal of religion, however, did not stop her. The situation came to a point that the doctor decided to inform the authorities for his own security. In the town where she lives resides a large number of followers of Spiritism. A good spiritist, friend of hers, told her one day:

- *How would you react if I told you that you can still talk to your husband?*
- *Oh! She said, if I only knew that it is possible! If I were certain that I did not lose him forever, that would give me consolation and I would wait.*

They soon gave her proof. Her own husband came to give her advice and consolation and by the language he employed, she had no doubt that it was him by her side. Since then a total revolution took place in her mind. Eight days later she went to the house of the doctor who was afraid of her visit; instead of threatening him she offered to shake his hand, saying: - 'do not be frightened Sir. I came to apologize for the bad things I have been doing against you, as I forgive you for what you did involuntarily. It was my husband himself that advised me to do what I am doing now. He told me that the cause of his death had absolutely nothing to do with you. As a matter of fact I am now certain that he is around me, that he sees and protects me and that one day we will be together again. Hence, I beg you Sir not to keep any hard feelings against me as I do not hold any against you.'

**

Needless to say that the doctor accepted the settlement immediately and promptly tried to understand the mysterious cause behind his refreshing peace of mind thereafter. Thus, without Spiritism that lady would have likely committed a crime, despite the fact that she was a religious person. Does it demonstrate the uselessness of religion? Not at all. It only shows the insufficiency of the idea that religion provides about the future with such vagueness that to many it presents a kind of uncertainty, while Spiritism in a way allows us to touch it with our fingers, giving the soul a more thorough sense of confidence and security.

Which consolation does materialism bring to the father who has lost his son; the son who has lost his father; the husband who has lost his beloved wife? It says: it is all over. There is nothing left of the beloved creature, absolutely nothing remains from that body that will soon be dissolved. Also their intelligence, the moral qualities, the education, nothing; it all comes to the void; you have lost them forever.

The spiritist says: They are not lost; they all move on; the only thing that is gone is their physical covering; but the spirit, now separated from its prison, is radiant, and it is there, by your side, seeing you, hearing and waiting for you. Oh! The wrongs caused by the materialists inoculating their deceitful

arguments, the poison of unbelievers! They never loved. Otherwise, how could they see in cold blood the very object of their love and devotion turning into a pile of dust?

Therefore it seems that God's greatest rigor has been reserved to them as we shall see them all reduced to the most deplorable condition in the spiritual world and the closer they were from knowing the truth, the less indulgence they will receive from God.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Through spontaneous communication

"Many are invited, but only a few are chosen"
received by Mr. D'Ambel, medium at the Society

This evangelical maxim is much better applied to our present time than to the early days of Christianity. In fact, haven't you already heard the uproar of the storm that must drag the old world and have the summation of all worldly iniquities swallowed into a void? Ah! Blessed the Lord, you who entrusted your faith in his sovereign justice, and like you apostles of the new belief revealed by the superior prophetic voices, go and preach the new dogma of reincarnation and the progress of the spirits according to the way they have accomplished their missions and withstood their earthly trials. Have no fear! The tongues of fire are above your heads. Oh! Followers of Spiritism, you are God's elected ones! Go and preach the divine word. Time has come and you must sacrifice your habits, your works, and your futile concerns. Go and preach! The superior spirits are with you. You will certainly speak to people who will not be interested in listening to God's voice because that voice relentlessly claims abnegation. You will preach altruism to the greedy, abstinence to the perverted, kindness to the domestic tyrants and dictators. Lost words, I know well. But, never mind! You must irrigate the terrain with your sweat for it will not yield and fructify without the persistent efforts of the evangelical hoe and plough. Go and preach!

Yes, all of you, men of good faith, who believe in your inferiority before the globes and spread in the infinity of space, join the crusade against injustice and iniquity. Go; reverse this invasive worship of the golden calf. Go, God is with you! Simple and ignorant people, your tongues will be freed and you shall speak as no other speaker has done before. Go and preach and the attentive crowds will gladly harvest your words of consolation, fraternity, hope and peace. Never mind the traps that will be thrown in your path! Only wolves fall into the traps prepared for wolves and behold, the shepherd will defend his flock against the bloodthirsty adversaries. Thus, move on with your grandiose faith and in small numbers! March on! The great battalions of disbelievers will fall before your eyes like the morning mist dissipates before the early rays of the rising sun. Faith is the virtue that moves mountains, said Jesus. However, all vices and impurities hidden in man's heart are heavier than the heaviest mountain. Go and have no fear to move that mountain of iniquities that future generations will only know as legends of the past, like you, who only has a slight idea about the times prior to the pagan civilization. Yes, there will be moral and philosophical struggles all over the world. Time is near when the divine light will shine on both worlds.

Take the divine word to notables who will show contempt; to scholars who will demand proof; to the little and simple ones who will accept the word because you will find in them the martyrs of the work, where you will see devotion and faith in their earthly punishments! These are the ones who will welcome the sacred consolation with grace and worship, praising the Lord with their songs, bending before his will, thanking him for their misery. May your troops be forearmed with resolution and courage! Onto the work! The plough is ready; the terrain awaits; cultivation is needed. Go now and thank God for the glorious task that you have been assigned. But remember that among the many called to Spiritism several have gone astray. Watch your route and follow the path of truth.

Q – If many of those called to Spiritism have gone astray, how can we identify those who are on the good path? – A. You will recognize them by the application of the principles of the professed true charity; by the number of ill-fated people that they console; by their love to their neighbor, by their abnegation and selfless; finally, you will recognize them by the triumph of those principles since God wishes the establishment of his law. The ones who follow that law are the chosen ones and God will award them with victory but those who betray the spirit of his law, using it as a pedestal to their vanity and ambition, those will be crushed.

Erastus, guardian angel of the medium

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Occupation of the spirits, medium Mrs. Costel

The occupation of the spirits of the second order consists of their preparation for the trials that they will have to endure; it is done through the analysis of their previous existences and observations about the destiny of humans, their vices and virtues and how they can improve or fail. Those like myself, that are fortunate to have a mission are very much engaged with uncountable zeal and love, that the advancement of the souls entrusted to us is counted as a merit; hence, we do our best to inspire good thoughts, to help with good deeds, keeping the bad souls away, opposing their good influence to the harmful ones. Even in that interesting activity and particularly when fortunate enough to be able to guide a medium and provide direct communications, the spirit is still aware of his own needs for improvement.

Make no mistake. There is no idleness to a being that lives as a spirit and all his skills are focused on a single objective that he knows is far away but certain. Boredom can only come from an empty mind and from useless thoughts. Time that is a burden to you, measured by your foolish fears and your frivolous hopes, time does not affect those who are not submitted to the confusion of their souls or the needs of the body. Time goes by even faster for the superior and pure spirits, those in charge of executing God's tasks and traveling the spheres of rapid flights. As for inferior spirits, particularly those with heavy faults to atone, time is measured by their sorrow, remorse and sufferings.

The worst among them seek to escape by doing evil or by the suggestion of bad things. That is when they experience a bitter and temporary sensation like the injured person that scratches his wound just to feel more pain. Hence, their sufferings grow in such a way that they will have no alternative but to administer the proper medicine, returning to the good path. The poor spirits who are the only ones to blame for their weakness and ignorance endure emptiness and isolation. They feel sorry for their earthly body, regardless of their pain. They rebel and despair until they realize that it is only through resignation and a strong will to return to good that they can alleviate their sufferings. As they become calm, they understand that God does not abandon a single creature.

Marcillac, familiar spirit

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Intemperance

Sent by Mr. Sabò from Bordeaux

The choice of good writers is very useful. Those who exert their authority upon you by exciting your imagination with foolish human passions will only corrupt your heart and spirit. There are no moral teachings to be garnered by those who publicly support orgies, intemperance, ecstasy and all material pleasures. Take into account, my friends, that if God gave you passions it was for the achievement of his designs and not for your own rudimentary pleasure. Know this, that if you spend your life satisfying a few mad desires you will keep nothing but remorse and emptiness of heart, and you will not please God.

If you were given the ability to reproduce the human species the reason for that is in the need of thousands of wandering souls that await in space for the opportunity of having a body and restarting their trials; now if you use your physical strength in shameful orgies you work against God's will and for that you shall pay dearly. Thus I recommend that you cast away useless literature that does not help the improvement of your intelligence or your moral betterment. May the serious writers from all times and from all countries help you to approach beauty and good; as they raise your soul to the delights of poetry and may they help you realize your God given gifts!

Felicia, medium's daughter

OBSERVATION: Isn't the idea of such an elevated objective to human reproduction something prominent and sublime? The wandering spirits wait for those bodies, necessary for their own betterment, and the incarnated spirits are tasked with that reproduction, like man, who waits for the product from the fabrication of certain animals to be clothed and fed.

There is another lesson of great significance that sticks out from that. If one does not admit that the soul had lived before it is then absolutely necessary to admit that it is created at the very moment of body formation, from which it follows that the creation of the soul by God would be subordinated to the good will of man, and in most cases it would result from man's intemperance. How can it be! The depravation of customs is condemned by every religion and moral law. We ask any person of common sense if it is at all possible that God may contradict himself to such an extent. Wouldn't that be the glorification of vices as long as serving the purpose of achieving the Almighty designs?

Tell us if that would not be the consequence of the simultaneous formation of body and soul; and it would be even worse than admitting the opinion that man procreates the soul as he does with the body.

Now let us admit the opposite that the soul preexists and every contradiction disappears since humans only procreate the body and God's work, the creation of the immortal soul that will one day return to him, that is no longer submitted to the caprices of humanity.

That is how without reincarnation there is always a new philosophical difficulty that shows up, leading to contradiction and absurd explanations. Hence, the principle of unity of our corporeal life, irreversibly defining the future of mankind, falls on its own basis, losing terrain and followers every day. We can then safely say that the contrary principle will be universally accepted as the only logical one, the only one in agreement with God's justice, the one proclaimed by Christ himself when he said: *'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.'*

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

About the perispirit

Spontaneous message related to a discussion that had just taken place at the Society about the nature of the spirit and the perispirit – Medium Mr. A. Didier

I followed with interest the discussion that you have just had and that has put you in an embarrassing situation. Yes, there are a lack of words related to color and form to express the perispirit and its true nature. But there is one certainty. What some call perispirit is the same as what others call a fluidic and material envelope. When similar things are discussed, one must be careful with the words and not with the sentences. In order to make myself understood in a more logical way, I say that that fluid is the perfectibility of the senses, the extension of the vision and ideas. I speak about the elevated spirits. As for the inferior spirits, the earthly fluids are still totally inherent in them; so it is the matter that you see; hence the sensation of cold, hunger, etc. sensations that cannot reach superior spirits since the earthly fluids are purified around the soul. The soul always has the need for an instrument to advance. The soul without an agent is nothing to you, or better said, it cannot be conceived by you. For us, wandering spirits, the perispirit is the agent through which we can communicate with you. That is why you find the infinite nuances of mediums and communications. Now there is still the scientific point of view, that is, the essence of the perispirit. That is a different subject. You must first understand it in moral terms. The only thing that is missing is a discussion about the nature of those fluids and that is inexplicable at this point in time. Science does not know enough but it will get there if it wants to move forward with Spiritism.

Lamennais

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Angel Gabriel
Evocation of a good spirit in Soultz-Haut-Rhin by Mrs. X.

I am Gabriel, angel of the Lord, in charge of blessing you not for your merits but for the efforts you employ to acquire them. Life must be a struggle. One must never stop or balance between good and evil. Hesitation comes from Satan, from the bad spirits. Courage then! The more thorns in your path the more you need to struggle to walk through it. If the path were sowed with roses what would be your merit before God?

Everybody has their own ordeal on this Earth but not everybody faces that with the kind resignation exemplified by Jesus. It was so great that the angels were touched! How about humanity? Would a drop of tear roll before such pain? Oh! The stiffness of the human heart! Did you deserve such a sacrifice? Cast your face on the dust and implore for God's mercy, God who is a thousand times good, a thousand times kind and a thousand times merciful!

A glimpse, Oh! My God, of your eyes upon your creation without which it will perish! Their heart is not up to your level. They cannot understand such excess of love from you. Have pity on them! A thousand times, have pity! Raise their courage through thoughts that can only come from you. Bless them so that and above all they can produce fruits worth of your greatness!

Praise to the most elevated heavens and peace to every person of good will!

These are the words that God wanted me to transmit to you. May you be blessed in God so that you may one day wake up in his heart!

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Wake up!
Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, Medium Mrs. Costel

I will speak about the symptoms and predictions announced everywhere about the forthcoming events of our century. By their touching kindness, the good spirits, the messengers of God come to warn mankind as the pain of the forthcoming delivery warns the mother. Those always justifiable but often neglected signs multiply to infinity in our days. Why do you feel the prophetic spirit agitating your heart and shaking your conscience? Why such uncertainty? Why is there a weakness that troubles the heart? Why has the public spirit awoken everywhere, proudly bearing its banner? Why? The time has come; the reign of materialism has broken and it is about to fall apart; the pleasures of the body that will soon be neglected will make room for the reign of ideas; the social structure is rotten and will give rise to the young and triumphant legion of the spiritist ideas that will fertilize the empty consciences and mute hearts.

May these words be endlessly repeated in order not to find you distracted and indifferent; you will receive those precious grains waiting to be born, after the farmer has sowed the seeds.

Don't you dare say: *life follows its normal course; our parents saw nothing that has been announced; we won't do better! Let us worship what they worshiped, or even better, let us replace their worship by empty formulas and all will be fine.*

By using those words you sleep. Wake up for it is not the trumpet of the final days that will vibrate in your ears but the voice of truth. This is not about a defeated and humiliated death. This is about the present life, or rather, about the eternal life. Do not forget it and wake up.

Helvétius

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

The genius and the misery
Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, medium Mr. Alfred Didier

There is a very important trial on Earth that must support the morality of Spiritism: it is the terrible trial of the genius, especially the one endowed with superior skills, but subjected to the demands of misery. Ah! Yes. That moral trial, more trying to the mind than to the body, will be of great merit to the person that has accomplished his mission. Be aware of that unstoppable struggle between talent and misery, that unpleasant monster cast upon you during the celebrations of life, like the monster of Virgil telling his victims: *You are powerful but I am the one that kills you; it is me who will turn your intelligence into dust because I am the death of genius.*

I know that it is only a few that are defeated but how many others are there? There is a painter of the modern school who has conceived a very good image on the subject: *'There is man, a genius, whose wings are spread and whose eyes are affixed to the side of the Sun; he is almost standing but he falls back onto the rock which he is shackled, perhaps forever.'*

The man who had this dream might have been chained as well and perhaps after his liberation he remembered those left behind on the rock.

Gérard de Nerval

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Transformation

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, medium Mrs. Costel

I come to speak with you about the most important thing in these days of crises and transformation. At the time when nations are dressed up in their powerful outfits; at the time when the unveiled heavens show you the spirits of those that you thought dispersed like molecules or serving as pasture to worms traveling in the infinity; at this solemn time man can no longer hobble along in the darkness of his personality and materialism.

Like the shepherd in the past, guided by a star on the way to worship the Child-God, man must march towards the promised land of freedom and love, now guided by the bright dawn of Spiritism. One must understand that the great mystery is the extraordinary harmony of nature and its remarkable rhythm are models to humanity. In this amazing diversity that confuses the spirits, you must distinguish the perfect similarity of the relationship between created things and being created and that this powerful harmony initiates all of you, men of action, poets, artists, workers, the union in which we must blend the joint efforts during the pilgrimage of life . Caravans beset by storms and adversities, reach out to one another with your friendly hands and walk together looking up to a just God, the one who rewards a hundred times anyone who have alleviated the weak and the oppressed.

Géorges

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

June 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Separation of the spirit
Sent by Mr. Sabò, from Bordeaux

Body of mud, the origin of corruption where the catalyst of impure passions ferment; it is the organs that frequently drag the spirit to take part in the brute sensations that belong to the material world. When the principle of organic life expires through one of the thousands of accidents of the body, the spirit separates from the links that attached it to its foul prison, and there it goes free in space.

When the spirit is ignorant and in particular very guilty, however, the beauties of the dwelling of the good spirits are hidden by a thick veil, and the spirit remains among bad and inferior ones in a circle where it remains oblivious of its actual position, not knowing where it came from.

The spirit then suffers during a more or less lengthy period of time, until the moment when brotherly spirits come to shine a light on his position, and open his eyes to the remembrance of the places where the spirit has inhabited before, as well as the many other planets where new incarnations will take place.

If the last incarnation were successful it opens the doors to the superior worlds. If it were useless and full of iniquities, the spirit is punished by remorse and after submitting to God's will through regret and with the support of the others, the spirit starts a new life not as a reward but as a punishment or a trial.

Ferdinand, a familiar spirit

Allan Kardec²³

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

July 1861

Essay about the theory of hallucinations

Those who do not accept the incorporeal and invisible world believe to be able to explain everything by the word *hallucination*. The definition of the word is well known: error, illusion of a person that wrongly believes to have perceptions that are not there (Academic – from the Latin, *hallucinari* is the verb err, derivative of *lucem*). The scholars, as far as we know, have not given their definition yet. Optics and Physiology don't seem to keep any secret from them. How is it that they have not yet explained the source of images that people see under certain conditions? Real or not, the hallucinated person sees something. Will they say that the hallucinated believes to be seeing something but in fact the person sees nothing? That is unlikely. You can say, if you wish, that it is a fantastic image. Be it as it may, but what is the source of that image? How does it form? How does it impress the brain? Nothing is said about that.

For sure when the person believes to be seeing the devil with its horns and claws, and the flames of hell and fantastic animals that do not exist, a struggle between the Moon and the Sun, it is obvious that there is no reality there. However, if the imagination is playing games how can that person describe those things as if they were present? That person sees an image, some sort of fantasy. Where would that image reflect, on which mirror? What is the cause of that image, its color and movement? That is what we have been unsuccessfully trying to find out in our sciences. Since scholars want to explain everything through matter and its laws, they must then provide a theory of hallucination using those laws. Good or bad it will always be an explanation.

Facts demonstrate that there are true apparitions and that only the Spiritist Doctrine explains perfectly well and that can only be denied by those who admit nothing beyond the visible world. However, are there hallucinations besides the real visions, using the true meaning of that word? There is no doubt about it. The essence here is to be able to separate the characters that may distinguish them from the real apparitions. What is their source? The spirits give us a hint through an explanation that seems complete to us in an answer given to the following question:

Q – Can we consider as apparitions, the figures and images that frequently occur during our initial sleep or simply with our eyes closed? – A. *Since the senses are benumbed the spirit separates and may see what it could not see with the eyes of the body, near or far away. Those images are sometimes visions but they can also be impressions left in the brain by the sight of certain objects whose traces are kept, in the same way that the brain keeps the memory of sounds. The freed spirit sees in its own physical brain those impressions that remained there, like in a photographic film. Their variety and mixture form bizarre and fleeting shapes that disappear almost immediately, despite the effort that one may employ to retain them. It is a similar cause that must be attributed to some fantastic apparitions that are fictitious, and are often produced during illnesses.*

It is known that memory is the result of all impressions kept by the brain. Through which singular type of phenomenon can such a variety and numerous amounts of impressions exist that they don't get mixed up? That is an impenetrable mystery but not any less strange than the sound waves which cross in the air and remain no less distinct because of that. In a healthy and well organized brain those impressions are clear and accurate. Under less favorable conditions they disappear or merge, like the imprint of a stamped symbol onto a solid substance versus that to a fluid substance; hence, the loss of memory or the confusion of ideas. This seems less extraordinary if one admits there being a special destination to each part of the brain, even to each of the brain's fibers like in Phrenology. The images that come to the brain through the eyes leave an impression that resembles a picture, as if we had it before our eyes. The same happens with the impressions of sounds, smells, tastes, words, numbers etc. According to the fibers that establish the mechanism of transmission of those impressions that are able to be retained, the person then has the memory of shapes, colors, music, numbers, languages, etc. When we imagine a situation that we have already seen it is only a question of memory because in reality we are not seeing that. In a certain state of

liberation, however, the soul sees and finds those images in the brain, particularly those that have left a stronger impression, according to the preoccupations and the disposition of the mind; it will then find the imprint of religious scenes, diabolic, dramatic or other impressions that were seen on different occasions, like from paintings, an event, readings from a book, which also leave impressions. Thus, the soul really sees something: it is the photographic image in the brain.

In the normal state those images are fleeting and ephemeral, because all sections of the brain work freely. But in the state of illness the brain is weakened; the organs are not in a state of equilibrium; some may keep their activities while others may be somewhat paralyzed. That is the reason why some images cannot be erased as in the normal state when facing life's concerns. That is the true hallucination, the first source of fixated ideas, like the exclusive memory of an impression. Hallucination is a retrospective vision of an impression left in the brain.

As you can see, we find the cause of this apparent anomaly in an entirely physiological and well-known law, as in the cerebral impressions, but it was necessary to consider the intervention of the soul with its distinct faculties from the body. Now, if the materialists cannot give a rational solution to this phenomenon yet it is for their denial of the soul, inexplicable in pure materialism. They will then say that our explanation is not good because we utilized the intervention of an unacceptable agent. Unaccepted by whom? By them, but accepted by the vast majority since there have been men on Earth, and the denial of a few does not make a law.

Is our explanation any good? We provide it for what it is worth considering in the absence of others and it may be considered hypothetical while we wait for a better one. At least it has the advantage of providing hallucination with a basis, a foundation, a body and a reason to be, whereas when the Physiologists pronounced their sacramental words of over-excitation, and heightened effects of imagination, they said nothing or did not say everything considering that they did not observe every stage of the phenomenon.

Imagination also plays a role that needs to be distinguished from hallucination as such, although sometimes these two may be combined. Imagination lends inexistent forms to objects like a given shape on the Moon or animals in the clouds. It is well-known that objects may take on strange appearances in the dark when we are unable to distinguish all the parts, and the contours are not clearly shown. How many times has the most composed person not been surprised by clothing hanging in the closet or a vague reflection of light that gave off the impression of a human form? If there is fear or even an exaggeration of doubt, imagination will do the rest. We understand from this, that imagination can alter the reality of the images seen in the hallucination, yielding fantastic shapes and forms.

True apparitions have certain characteristics that an experienced observer would not confuse with the effects that have just been mentioned. Since they can occur in broad daylight, one needs to be suspicious about images that are seen at night for fear of being a victim of optical illusions.

In fact apparitions, like all spiritist phenomena, present intelligent characteristics and that is the best proof of their reality. Every apparition that does not provide an intelligent sign may definitely be put aside as an illusion. Materialistic persons may see here that we provide them with a huge head start.

Will our explanation provided so far cover every single case of vision? No, naturally it will not. From our side we defy any Physiologist to provide a single explanation, based on their exclusive point of view and one that can resolve them all. Then, if all theories of hallucination are insufficient to explain every event it means that there is something different from hallucination per se and that something has its explanation only with the Spiritist Doctrine that encompasses them all.

In fact, if we carefully analyze some frequent cases of common visions we will see that it is impossible to assign them with the same origin as in hallucination. Looking for a plausible explanation to the latter we

wanted to clearly show how they differ from that of an apparition. In both cases it is always the soul that sees and not the eyes. In the first case the soul sees an image that is interior, in the second it is something external, if we can say so.

When a person that we were not at all thinking about and that we consider to be healthy, spontaneously shows up in our wake state and comes to us to reveal details of their death that is taking place as we speak, a fact that had not been reported yet, this cannot be attributed to any effect of memory or concern from our part.

Even if we were worried about that person one still needs to explain the coincidence of the apparition with the time of death, and particularly the circumstances of death, something that was not known and cannot be predicted. Therefore, it is okay to classify fantastic visions as hallucinations that have nothing to do with reality; but that is not the case with those that positively reveal current affairs, confirmed by the facts. It would be absurd to explain both with the same causes and even more absurd to attribute them to chance, the last resort used by those who have nothing to say. It is only Spiritism that can provide the reason for their occurrence by the double theory of the perispirit and the emancipation of the soul. However, how can one believe in the emancipation of the soul if one does not accept that they have a soul?

By not taking the spiritual element into account, science is powerless to solve a large number of phenomena, falling into the absurdity of trying to explain everything with the material element only. It is especially in Medicine that the spiritual element represents an important role. When doctors take this into account they will make less mistakes as they do now. They will then be guided by a ray of light that will guide them more safely in the diagnostic and treatment of diseases. That is what can be observed now in the practice of the spiritist doctors whose numbers grow daily. Since hallucination has a physiological cause we are certain that they will find means of treating it. We know a doctor that is close to discover things of the highest importance because he has learned from Spiritism the true causes of certain diseases and those that are resistant to the materialistic Medicine.

The phenomenon of apparition may occur in two different ways: it is either the spirit that comes to see the person that has the vision or it is the spirit of that person that travels to find the other. The two examples given below seem to characterize both cases well.

A colleague of ours told us not long ago that an officer friend of his was in Africa and suddenly had the vision of a funeral before his eyes. The funeral was of one of his uncles who resided in France and that he had not seen for a long time. He saw the whole procession from the moment it left the mortuary chapel and arrived at the Church and from there to the cemetery. He even noticed several details that he could not have any idea about. At that time he was awake but in a certain state of absorption that lasted until the moment when everything disappeared. Still shocked by those visions, he sent a letter to France requesting news about his uncle, only to learn that he had died suddenly and was buried on the exact day and time when he had the vision and with all the details that he had seen. In this case, it is evident that it was not the funeral procession that came to meet him but that he had gone to meet the procession, whereas the perception occurred through his second sight.

We know a doctor, Mr. Felix Mallo, who once treated a young lady. He thought that the Parisian air was not doing her any good and advised her to spend some time in the countryside with her family, which is what she did. Six months had passed since he had heard from her and he was no longer giving any thought to the case when one evening, at around 10pm he heard from his bedroom, someone knocking on his office door. Thinking that it could be someone in need of urgent care, he invited the person in. He was caught by great surprise when he saw before him the young lady mentioned above, with a pale face, dressed in the same manner as when he first met her, she then calmly said: *‘Mr. Mallo, I come to tell you*

that I died;’ and then she disappears. He was positive that he was awake and that there was no one else in the office. Immediately he sought news about her and learned that the young lady had passed on the very evening that she appeared to him. In this case it was the spirit of the lady that came to meet him. Now, the disbelievers may say that the doctor could be concerned with the health of his patient and that there is nothing special in the fact that he could have predicted her death. Agreed, but, they must also explain the coincidence between the time of her apparition and her actual death considering that the doctor had no news about her. Even assuming that he had believed the impossibility of a cure, how could he predict that she would die on a given day at a given time? We must add that this is not a man prone to a vivid imagination.

Here is another fact that is none the less characteristic and that could not be attributed to any kind of prediction. One of our associates, a Navy officer, was working offshore when he saw his father and his brother to be thrown under a carriage. The father died and the brother was unharmed. Fifteen days had passed when he came ashore in France, where he was greeted by friends who tried to prepare him for some bad news. ‘*You don’t need to worry*’, he said, ‘*I know what you are about to say. My father died. I’ve already known this for fifteen days.*’

In fact his father and his brother were driving a carriage down *Les Champs Élysées* in Paris when one of the horses was scared by something and broke the carriage; his father died and his brother had slight injuries only. These are positive and current facts and one cannot say that these are medieval legends. If each one of us gathers up their memories, recollections, you will see that these facts are more common than thought. Our question is this: do these facts have any characteristics of hallucination? We also fairly ask the materialists to give an explanation regarding the facts in the article that follows.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

July 1861

A providential apparition

The Oxford Chronicle dated June 1st, 1861 states the following:

“In 1828 a ship was traveling from Liverpool to New Brunswick with Mr. Robert Bruce as second in command. As they were approaching the banks of Newfoundland the Captain and his second in command were calculating a full day’s route, the first one in his cabin and the second in an adjacent chamber. The two rooms were designed so that they could see and talk to one another. Bruce was very absorbed in his work that he did not notice that the Captain had left his cabin and gone up to the bridge. Without looking he said: “I found a similar longitude, what did you get?” Since there was no answer he repeated the question and again with no answer. He walked to the Captain’s cabin and saw a man sitting in his chair, writing on his slate board. The individual then turned and stared at Bruce, who ran to the bridge horrified.

- Captain, he said as soon as he saw him, who is that person in your cabin?
- Nobody, I believe.
- I guarantee you that there is a stranger there.
- A stranger! You are daydreaming Bruce. Who would dare to be in my cabin, at my desk without my orders? You may have seen the boatswain or the steward.
- Sir, there is a man at your desk, writing on your slate board. He stared at me and I saw him more clearly than anyone I have ever seen before.
- He! Who?
- God knows, Sir! I saw a stranger that I had never seen before.
- You are crazy Bruce. A stranger! We have been offshore for about six weeks now.
- I know, but I saw.
- Well then, go and see who that person is.
- Captain, you know I am not a coward. I don’t believe in apparitions however I must confess that I cannot bear the idea of going there alone. I would like to have you with me. The Captain then led the way and found nobody. He then said:
- Look now, you had a dream.
- I don’t know how it can be but there was someone there and he was writing on your slate board.
- In that case there must be something written then. He took the slate board where it read: “Take the Northeast route.”

The Captain then had everybody on the ship, including Bruce; rewrite that phrase, attesting that the writing was unlike anyone else’s. They searched every corner of the ship and found no stranger. The Captain had given thought to the mysterious advice and decided to change course and follow the Northeastern route, appointing a man of his personal trust to be on the watch.

Around 3 pm a block of ice was spotted, then a ship with a broken mast and several men on board. As they approached they learned that the ship could not set sail, had no supplies left and everyone on board was starving. Several boats were sent for the rescue operation but as soon as they got on board and to Mr. Bruce’s bewilderment, he saw the very man that he had seen in the Captain’s cabin in the crowd of shipwrecked men. As soon as the wreckage was attended to and the ship was able to reestablish its course Mr. Bruce told the Captain:

- It seems that I did not see a spirit today, after all. He is alive. The man who wrote on your slate board is one of the passengers that we have just saved. There he is. I swear!

The captain then invited the man to his cabin and asked him to write on the other side of the board containing the mysterious words: "Take the Northeast route". The passenger obeyed although intrigued by the request. Taking the slate board, the Captain showed the written words to the passenger and asked:

- Is this really your writing?
- No doubt and I have just written it here, before your eyes.
- Then the Captain turned the other side of the slate and asked: How about this?
- Yes, it is my writing but I don't know how that could happen since I only wrote on the other side.
- According to my Second officer here, he saw you today, around noon, by this desk and writing these words.
- Impossible – this is the first time I have been on this ship.

They then questioned the Captain of the wrecked ship about what could have happened to that man, and he said: *'All I know is that he is one of my passengers. However, just before noon he fell heavily asleep, waking up an hour later. During his sleep he said he was confident that we would soon be saved, saying that he was aboard a ship and then described in detail, everything that we confirmed moments later. When he woke he said that he had no memory of any dream, just a recall of some sort of unexplained presentiment about a ship that would rescue us. Something strange, he added, is that everything in that ship seems familiar although I had never been there.'*

Mr. Bruce then told the Captain the story of the apparition that he had seen and all agreed that it had been providential."

**

This is a perfectly true story. Mr. Robert Dale Owen, former Minister of the USA in Naples, who also mentions this event in his book, found every possible piece of evidence supporting its truthfulness. Our question is whether this event has any aspect that one can characterize it as hallucination! It is understandable that the passenger had a lot of hope in his sleep, the kind that never abandons people in desperation. The coincidence between the dream and the rescue could still be the result of chance. However, how can one explain the detailed description of the ship? Even if it is still chance, then the writing on the slate board is material evidence. And for that reason, what about the advice to change course and navigate in the Northeastern direction, towards the wreckage? The hallucination supporters should kindly provide us with the reasons for all those events, and using their exclusive system.

In their opinion there is deception in the provoked spiritist manifestations. But in the event above there is no indication that the passenger was playing a role in a comedy. That is how the spontaneous manifestations, when supported by undisputable testimony, are of great relevance since there is no room for suspicion of any kind. To the spiritists there is nothing extraordinary about the fact above because they can explain it perfectly well. To the eyes of the ignorant it will seem supernatural, marvelous.

To someone that knows the theory of the perispirit and the liberty of the soul among the incarnated, it is all part of the laws of nature. A critic greatly amused himself poking fun at the story of the man of with his snuffbox published in the March 1859 issue of the Review, saying that it was all the imagination of the sick lady. What is it that is more impossible in that story than in this one? The two facts are explained by the exactly same rule that governs the relationship between spirit and matter. Besides, we ask all spiritists who have studied the theory of phenomena if, by reading the facts that we have just reported, their attention was not immediately attracted to the mode by which it can be produced; if they did not find an explanation; if, as a consequence of the explanation, their conclusion was not a possibility, and by force of that possibility, if their reason was not more satisfied than if they had to accept it just as a matter

of faith, without the support of their intelligence? Those who criticized us for presenting this theory forget that it is the result of long and patient studies, that they could have done the same, as we have, working as much as we did and still do every day; that by providing the means of understanding phenomena we give it a foundation, a reason for its existence, that silenced many critics and contributed by and large to the propagation of Spiritism, considering that people accept it with more good will than something that is understood in opposition to something that cannot be.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

July 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Friends that don't forget us in the other world

One of our subscribers sent us the following conversation, between him and one of his friends whose loss had been very difficult for him, received through an unknown medium, since he is not a medium himself. Besides the remarkable elevation of thought, we will see evidence that the bonds formed on earth, when they are sincere, are not broken by death.

First dialogue, December 28th, 1860

1. (Evocation) Appeal to the spirit of Jules P..., who was so dear to me, to kindly communicate with me. – A. Dear friend, I respond to your appeal; my willingness is as great as my surprise for I did not expect to be able to communicate with you but in a distant time, according to God's will. How glad I am for seeing this time shortened by your will and for being able to tell you how much my earthly trial has served my progress! Although I still remain somewhat errant, I feel very happy and do not cherish any other thought but the appreciation for God's works, allowing me to enjoy all the wonders that he sees useful to me, allowing me to expect a rebirth in a superior world, where I will then climb the fortunate ladder that will take me to supreme happiness. May you, dear friend, by listening to me, see in my words a presentiment of what awaits you! On the final day I will take your hand and show you the way that I have followed for some time now with so much joy. You will have a guide in me as you had a loyal friend in our earthly life.
2. Can I count on you, dear friend, to achieve the happy objective that you let me foresee? – A. Do not worry; I will do my best so that you move in that direction where we will meet again with so much emotion and pleasure. Like in the old days, I will come to give you the testimony of my heart that was so dear to you.
3. From what you are saying, must I conclude that you are much happier now than in your previous life? – A. No doubt, dear friend, very happy indeed, and I could not say enough. What a difference! No more troubles, sadness, physical and moral sufferings. And with that, the vision of everything that was dear to us! I have been by your side many times. I followed you in your career! I saw you when you did not think of me by your side, thinking that I was lost forever. My dear friend, life is precious to the spirit; even more precious when it is kind and when man can use it for his own advancement both on Earth and beyond. Rest assured that everything harmonizes in God's designs to make his creatures happier, and what is only required on their part is to have a heart to love and to bow their heads to be humble; one will then elevate even higher than ever imagined.
4. What can I do to please you? – A. Adorn your thoughts like a flower.

NOTE: A discussion was established about the meaning of this answer. The spirit then added: When I say your thoughts adorned like a flower, I mean, when you pick flowers you must sometimes think of me. What I want you to understand is that this way you will touch me by one of your feelings.

5. Farewell, dear friend. I will take with great pleasure the next opportunity I may have to evoke you. – A. I will be waiting impatiently. Goodbye, dear friend.

Second dialogue, December 31st, 1860

6. (Evocation) A renewed request to my friend to give me a communication that may be useful to my own instruction. – A. Here I am again, my friend. I am glad I can tell you once again how dear you were to me! I want to give you proof of that with my most elevated thoughts. Yes, my friend, matter is nothing; pay no mind to it and have no fear; the spirit is everything; it is only the spirit that remains forever, an unstoppable life through the paths delineated by God. The spirit sometimes stops before a cliff or another to take a deep breath, but while keeping the eyes on our Creator courage is promptly recovered and the transient difficulties are soon overcome; the spirit climbs way up high and admires the benevolence of God who gives the required strengths in the right measure. The spirit then advances. The heavenly paradise shows before his eyes and his heart. He moves on and soon becomes worthy of the foreseen heavenly fate. Dear friend, fear no more; my courage is doubled, my strength ten times higher than when I left your Earth. I no longer doubt the predicted happiness compared to that which I enjoy, it is greater than the most brilliant precious stone in the simplest ring! There you see the greatness behind God's wishes and how difficult it is to the human race to appreciate it and to understand its reach! Even your language cannot help us when we want to explain what seems incomprehensible to you.
7. Do you have anything to add to these beautiful thoughts? – A. I have not finished yet, no doubt, but I wanted to give you proof of my identity. Whenever you wish I will give you new ones.

OBSERVATION: These are moral proofs and there is no material sign here and not even some foolish questions that some people use sometimes, for the purpose of identity. Moral proof is the best and safest since material signs can always be imitated by deceiving spirits; here, the spirit is recognized by his thoughts, his character, elevation and nobility of style. A deceiving spirit could certainly try to imitate in this respect but it would be nothing more than a crude imitation and since it would lack substance he would only imitate the exterior. In fact, such a role could not be played for very long.

8. Since you come with such a benevolent mind, I would gladly enjoy it longer and ask you to please continue. – A. I will tell you this: open the book of your destiny, The Gospel my friend; it will give you an understanding of many things that I cannot express. Forget the words; feel the spirit of this holy book and you will find there all the consolations that your heart needs. Don't worry about obscure terms. Seek the actual meaning and your heart will interpret it as it must be understood. I am more aware now and see our big mistake as analyzing it so coldly when alive. I recognize now that I could have happily been served by the heart, I could have extended further the valuable lessons left by our divine Teacher and drawn from the much needed relief that escaped me.
9. Thank you and goodbye my dear friend. I will gladly use the first occasion to evoke you again. – A. I will come as I did today. I will do my best.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

July 1861

Correspondence

Letter from the President of the Mexican Spiritist Society
Mexico, April 18th, 1861

“To Mr. Allan Kardec, in Paris,

Dear Sir:

My friend, Mr. Viseur, indicated in one of his previous letters that you would like to know the objective and tendencies of the Spiritist Society which I preside over in Mexico. I do that with the greatest satisfaction and the strongest sympathy for your profound knowledge about this subject, asking you to please take into account our little experience but also to count us among the most eager supporters. Although much later than you, Sir, we were fortunate to learn about this gentle truth that the spirits or souls of the dead can communicate with the living. Despite some publications that came from the North, our attention and curiosity was not yet awoken and we did not seek what was then called spiritual manifestations. It was only when your Spirits' Book fortunately arrived here that our eyes were opened, convincing us of the reality of the facts that take place all over the world, helping us to understand them. We then started our own research and experiments, that we then took on the task of preparing ourselves to receive manifestations, through a systematic work. The advice found in your excellent book led us to the great truth that the soul outlives death and that we can communicate with our loved ones after they leave our planet Earth. I would not tell you the truth if I said that we were the first ones around here to learn about the manifestations. Several people in our city were already involved with the subject, a fact that we learned later on. The principle of reincarnation was what mainly impressed us in the beginning, but our own communications with spirits of a superior order given their language, did not allow us to have any doubt about a belief that demonstrates that all these things belong to the natural order and according to the justice of our Almighty God. A proof that demonstrates the superiority of the spirits that guide us is the cure provided to the physical sufferings and the consolation and resignation given to those who suffer morally. Simple logic tells us that good can only come but from a good source. It would be a sign of arrogance, however, if we pretended to be the champions of knowledge about this sublime doctrine. It is up to you, Sir, to teach us as demonstrated by the work produced by your Society. Our Society is formed by experienced members in matters of spiritist belief, and we welcome all those who wish to learn. The fundamental laws that guide us are unity of principles, fraternity among the members and charity with all who suffer. That is how, Sir, the spiritist ideas spread in this region and we can even gladly say beyond our expectations. If you find it convenient to send us your good advice we will always receive it with the warmest regard and as a firm indication of your sympathy.

Yours sincerely, etc.

Ch. Gourgues”

**

On the same day we received the following letter from Constantinople:

“Constantinople, May 28th, 1861

To: Mr. Allan Kardec, Editor of the Spiritist Review

Dear Sir,

Allow me to offer you in my own name and in the name of my friends and spiritualist brothers of this city, two small gifts as a token of appreciation not from people that you don't know yet and that only have the honor of knowing you from your work but which you will accept as a testimony of our fraternal feelings that must unite the spiritualists of all countries. You will accept them also as a proof of the spiritist phenomena, as much sublime as extraordinary that it is. Accept and kindly honor our good Sofia and her sister Angelica, since they are the basis of propagation of Spiritism in Constantinople, this capital city of the East, remarkable for its wealth of history. A true Babel Tower, in this city gathers every religious sect, every nation, where all languages are spoken. Imagine Spiritism suddenly propagating among all that... What a starting point! We are still in a small number but this number grows every day like a snowball effect. I hope it won't be long for us to be counted in the hundreds. The manifestations we have obtained so far to date are, the lifting of tables, one of them weighing more than 100 kg, flying over our heads like a feather; direct raps by the spirits; transportation of objects, etc. We are trying to obtain apparitions visible to everybody. Will we be able to achieve that? They promised us and we wait. We already have a large number of writing mediums; others make drawings, others still compose music even when totally ignoring those arts. We have seen, heard and studied spirits of all kinds. Some of our mediums have visions and ecstasies; others play arias at the piano in their trance state, inspired by the spirits. Two young ladies that have heard or read nothing about animal magnetism apply magnetic passes on all sorts of illnesses, with the help of the spirits and do so using scientific methodologies. There you have, dear Sir, a summary of what we have done in terms of Spiritism so far. I shall provide the result of some of our sessions for your assessment.”

(It is then followed by several communications of the highest moral level, thoughtfully heard by the members of the Society).

“In case you find it useful for the propagation of the spiritualist or spiritist science, since the title does not change anything to me or to my friends for it does not change the form or the substance, I will gladly send you other instructive and concluding messages from the point of view of the spiritual manifestations. All spiritualists of the world will soon be bundled together, as in one and the same family. Aren't we all brothers and creatures of the same father, our God? That is the first principle that must be taught by the spiritualists to human kind, without any distinction of class, country, language, sect or social position.

*Yours, etc.
Repos, Lawyer”*

This letter was followed by a drawing representing a human head in natural size, very accurately executed although the medium had no drawing skills, and a piece of music with lyrics and score for piano, entitled Spiritualism. The whole thing was packed with the following dedication: *“Offered to Mr. Allan Kardec, Director of the Spiritist Review, in Paris, by the spiritists of Constantinople.”*

In the case of the music it was only the lyrics and song that were received by a medium. The actual piano scores were created by an artist.

If we published every letter of support that we receive we would have to dedicate a few volumes to that alone. We would see the repetition of thousands of touching acknowledgments to the Spiritist Doctrine. Many of those letters, however, are too personal to be published. The two above have a general interest, as a demonstration of the reach of Spiritism all over the world, and also the seriousness with which it is considered now, much different, as seen above, from the initial amusement of the turning tables.

The moral consequences of Spiritism are understood everywhere and people see it as the foundation of the Providential reforms that were promised to humanity. We then feel happy to give our testimony of sympathy and encouragement to our distant comrades. Isn't this bond that already brings together spiritists from several parts of the globe, who don't know one another but only through their common belief, isn't that a sign of what is about to come later? That bond is a natural consequence of the principles of Spiritism. It cannot be broken but by those who ignore its fundamental law: charity to all.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

July 1861

Mysterious drawings

A new kind of mediumship

Under this title *The Herald of Progress*, from New York, a journal dedicated to spiritualist matters and directed by Andrew Jackson Davies, published the article below:

“Last year on November 22nd Dr. Hallock was invited along with some others to the house of Mrs. French located at number 8, Fourth Avenue, to witness several spiritist manifestations and to observe the movements of a pencil. Around 8 pm Mrs. French left the living room where the group was gathering to sit on a couch in an adjacent bedroom. She remained there for the duration of the meeting. A few moments after she was seated she fell into some sort of ecstatic state, her eyes were static and delirious. She then asked Dr. Hallock and Prof. Britton to have the room examined. On the bed, across from the place where she was sitting, there was a briefcase tied up by a silk ribbon and also a bottle of wine to be used in the experiment. The paper that was supposed to be used for the drawings was inside the case. We were asked, said Dr. Hallock, not to touch the case or the bottle. Several pencils and two pieces of elastic gum were also on the bed but there was no drawing paper anywhere in the room.

After the room was searched Mrs. French asked Mr. Cuberton to take the case to the living room where the other guests were located, then open it and remove its contents. There were a number of common sheets of paper and among those, six of different sizes were taken by Mrs. French from Mr. Cuberton's hand, and all sheets were placed on a table in front of Mrs. French. She asked for some pins and took a 5 almost 6 in. paper ribbon and placed it on the lower side of a sheet of paper, then pinning the extremities of the paper to the ribbon. Having done that, someone was then invited to take the sheet of paper and allow the observers to examine it, then asked that person to keep the ribbon and the pins and return the sheet of paper to her. She did the same thing to the other sheets, changing the position and number of pins every time and having the set examined by a different person, aiming at having the paper recognized by the position of the ribbons. Once all sheets were examined and returned to Mrs. French Mr. Cuberton then delivered the wine bottle to her. She laid the sheets on the table and spilled the wine on all of them until they were completely soaking wet, spreading the wine around with her hand. She then dried all of them individually, pressing and turning them, blowing and agitating them in the air. That alone lasted for a few minutes. Once this was completed, she lowered the lights and invited the guests to approach. During the spillage ceremony one sheet of paper was left too dry and she repeated the procedure for that one (the wine was actually a simple mixture of grape juice and sugar, duly authorized by the State and produced in New England). Mrs. French then turned the lights back to normal and invited everyone to sit

by her side near the door. Mr. Gurney, Prof. Britton, Dr. Warner and Dr. Hallock were about six feet away from her and the others could see her perfectly well. She then placed one of the sheets on the table in front of her and kept several pencils between her fingers. Dr. Hallock never lost sight of her as he had promised.

It was all set when Mrs. French then warned that the experience was about to begin saying: 'Time'. Then a sudden movement of the hand and for some time, both hands; a distinct noise was heard as if on the paper; the pencils and the paper were thrown away, to a certain distance, on the floor, by a jerky movement. It all lasted 21 seconds. The drawing shows a bouquet of flowers, composed of hyacinths, lilies, tulips, etc.

The same happened to the other sheets of paper. The second one also shows flowers. The third, a beautiful bunch of grapes with its shoots, leaves, etc. It was done in 21 seconds. Number 4 is a branch and leaves containing fruits similar to apricots. The leaves are a sort of moss. Before doing this, Mrs. French asked the observers how long they would allow her to have to finish it. Some said 10 seconds, others less than that. Well, said Mrs. French, on my count of one look at your watches. When she counted 4 the drawing was finished. Attention! One, two, three, four and the drawing was done! The fifth was a shrub of red currants with 12 bunches of unripe fruits, with their flowers and leaves, surrounded by leaves of another species. This drawing was introduced by Mrs. French to Mr. Bruckmaster, from Pittsburg, as if sent by his sister, according to a promise that she had made to him. Two seconds were necessary for that one. Number six, that can be considered the masterpiece of the whole series, is a 9" × 4". It consists of white flowers and leaves painted on a dark background, that is, the drawing was done in the natural color of the paper while the outlines and interiors using colored pencils. With the exception of two drawings produced in the same way but on a different occasion, all drawings are done by pencil on top of a white background. In the center of those flowers at the bottom of the page there is a hand holding an open book, measuring 1" and $\frac{1}{4}$ " × $\frac{3}{4}$ ". The corners are not exactly at right angles but what is really remarkable is the fact that the holes made earlier by the pins to facilitate identification of the sheets outline the four corners of the book. On top of the left hand side page it reads: Galatians VI, followed by the first six verses and part of the sixteenth of that Chapter, covering almost the whole two pages with very readable characters in good lighting, with a naked eye or with the use of a magnifying glass. There were more than a hundred legible words. The time spent for that was 13 seconds. When people were able to attest the coincidence between the holes in the paper and the ribbon Mrs. French, still in trance, asked those around to certify what they had just witnessed in writing. People then wrote over the margin of the drawing: 'Executed in 13 seconds in our presence by Mrs. French. Certified, by the signed below on November 22nd, 1860 at number 8, Fourth Avenue and followed by nineteen signatures.'

We don't have any reason to doubt the authenticity of the event or to be suspicious about Mrs. French's good-faith, despite the fact that we don't know her. We must acknowledge, however, that the whole procedure may seem little convincing to our incredulous, to whom there would not be a lack of objections, saying that the whole procedure kept some similarity with those of conjuring, that does all that without so much apparent difficulties. We must confess that we agree a little bit with them. The fact that the drawings were made is undisputable. It is only the origin that does not seem to be unequivocally established. In any case, if we admit that not a single trick was used, it is unarguably one of the most remarkable facts of direct writings and drawings, whose possibility is explained by the theory. Without such theory events as these would be promptly thrown into the common ditch of fables or magic tricks. However, for the very reason that it explains the conditions under which such events may take place they help us to become better observers and to not admit them unless we have enough proof.

The American mediums definitely have a specialty for the production of extraordinary phenomena since the press in that country has plenty of facts of that kind, far from what happens with the European mediums. Thus, from the other side of the Atlantic they say that we are still well behind in matters of

Spiritism. When we asked the spirits about such a difference they said: *“Each one with their mission. Yours is not the same and God did not give you the least part in the works of regeneration.”*

Considering the merit of the mediums by the speed of execution, the energy and the power of the effects, ours are weaker when compared to those; however we know many people who would not exchange the simple and consoling communications that they receive by the prodigies of the American mediums. Those communications are sufficient to give them faith and they prefer the ones that touch their souls to the others that impress the eyes; the moral teachings that give consolation and makes them better to the phenomena that to cause admiration. There was a short time in Europe when the physical events drew great attention but that were soon replaced by the philosophy that opens up a broader avenue to our minds, tending towards the final and providential target of Spiritism: social regeneration. Each people has its own genius and special tendencies, and everyone within the limits assigned to it, concurs with the designs of Providence., The most advanced shall be the ones that walk faster on the path of moral progress because that is the one who will be closer to God’s designs.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

July 1861

Exploitation of Spiritism

North America claims, and rightly so, the honor of having been the first to reveal the manifestations from beyond the grave in our times; why must she also be the first to give examples of commerce and among these people, so advanced in so many ways and so worthy of our sympathy, why has the commercial instinct not stopped at the doorway of eternal life? Reading their newspapers we find ads like the ones below on every page:

“Mrs. S. E. Royers, somnambulist, medium-doctor, psychological cure through sorcery. Common treatment if required. Description of physiognomy, morality and the soul of people. From 10am to 12pm, Mon-Thu; from 7-10pm, except Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, unless previously arranged. Price: \$1/hour.”

We believe that the sympathy of that medium by her patients seems to be in direct proportion to the amount of dollars paid. It seems unnecessary to provide the addresses.

“Mrs. E. C. Morris, writing medium; from 10am-12pm, and 7-9pm, Mon-Fri.”

“J.B. Conklin, medium. Welcomes guests to his salon every day and every evening. Attend at his home.”

“A. C. Styles, lucid medium, guarantees accurate diagnostic of disease of a present person or money back. Strictly imposed rules: a lucid in person exam and prescription, \$2; psychometric descriptions of characters, \$3. Do not forget that appointments are paid in advance.”

“To the amateurs of Spiritualism. Mrs. Beck, trance medium, speaking, spelling, knocking and rapping. True observers may schedule an appointment from 9-10pm at her residence. Mrs. Beck is associated as being a very powerful rapping medium.”

Would you think that there is such commerce only among obscure and ignorant speculators? Here is the contrary proof:

“Dr. G. A. Redman, experienced medium, is back to New York. He can be found at his home address where he receives as before.”

The exploitation of Spiritualism extended even to common objects. We read an ad in the Spiritual Telegraph from New York: “*Spiritual matches, new invention without friction and smell.*”

Even more remarkable for that country is the following ad that we found in the Weekly American, from Baltimore, dated February 5th, 1859:

“Statistics of Spiritualism. The Spiritual Register from 1859 estimates as 1,284,000 the number of spiritualists in the USA. The Register accounts for 1,000 spiritualist speakers; 40,000 public and private mediums; 500 books and brochures; 6 weekly, 4 monthly and 3 bi-weekly journals dedicated to that cause.”

The exploiting mediums arrived in England. There are many in London who charge nothing less than 1.25 francs per session. We hope that if they try to come to France the common sense of the true spiritist will do them justice.

The production of physical effects excites more curiosity than it touches the heart. Hence the mediums with those skills have the tendency of exploiting such curiosity. Those who only receive moral communications of a higher order have an instinctive distaste for anything that may have smell of speculation of any kind. The reasons for the former are twofold: first, exploitation of curiosity is more profitable because there are a large number of curious people in every country; second, the physical phenomena act less on the moral side thus their scruples are diminished. To their eyes, their skills are a gift that must help them to get by like a beautiful voice is to a singer. The moral question is secondary or inexistent. Thus, once walking that path their self-serving interest develops the skills of astuteness. As a matter of fact, who knows if the customer today will come back again tomorrow? Then, he must be satisfied at any price. If the spirit does not satisfy the customer, the medium will do something that is easier from a material point of view than from a moral or intelligent communication, of elevated moral and philosophical reach. The former ones find recourses in conjuring that is greatly absent in the latter ones. That is why we say that the morality of a medium must be taken into account before anything else; that the best defense against trickery is in the medium’s character, his honorability, his absolute altruism. Whenever there is a shadow of interest, however minor it may be, there is reason for suspicion. Fraud is always disgraceful but when related to moral issues it is blasphemy.

Someone that knows Spiritism only by name and tries to imitate its effects is not more reprehensible than the juggler who tries to imitate the experiments of a wise Physicist. There is no doubt that it would be better that such a thing would never happen but in reality he is not deceiving anyone since his condition cannot be hidden. He only hides the means. The same cannot be said about someone that knows the holiness of what he is trying to imitate with the despicable objective of mystification. This is more than a fraud. It is hypocrisy since one tries to impersonate what one cannot do. One is even more culpable if truly endowed by some mediumistic faculty and uses that to continuously abuse the trust put in him. God knows what is reserved to them, even here on Earth. If the false mediums harm themselves only this would then be a half-evil. The worst part is the ammunition that they supply to the non-believers and the disgraceful behavior shown to undecided persons when such fraud is unveiled. We do not contest their faculties, even some powerful ones of certain mercenaries, but we say that greed is a direct path to the temptation of fraud that must inspire distrust, all the more legitimate, that one cannot see in this exploitation, the effect of zeal for the sole good of the cause.

Even when there is no fraud, criticism may still reproach someone that speculates with something as sacred as the soul of the dead.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

July 1861

Varieties

The visions of Mr. O...

The following article was extracted from the *Spiritual Review*, London April 1861 issue:

“Mr. O... was a kind man from Gloucestershire who had never had any visions up until the day he moved to P..., on October 3rd, 1859. About fifteen days after his arrival he began to have the visions at night. It started just as rays of light that illuminated his bedroom, passing through the window. He did not bother with them, thinking that they were produced by the guard’s lantern or from lightning. One evening, he was staring at a wall when he saw the formation of a flower followed by several stars. On another evening, he saw two magnificent angels playing a trumpet in the mysterious light. On that night he had gone to bed earlier than usual since he was not feeling very well. As Mr. O lay in bed, he experienced a gentle sensation in the presence of the two angels, a feeling that persisted even after they had gone. The same light appeared the following week, but in the shape of a boy embracing a small cat. He also saw several other figures but they appeared too fuzzy to be distinguished. In March, he saw the profile of a lady surrounded by a radiant circle. He then recognized it was his mother and cried with joy: ‘*Mom, my mother!*’ but the vision soon vanished. In the same evening he saw a beautiful and well-dressed lady wearing a hat. A couple of days later he saw a small dog and a boy. He then saw a light form that resembled a window and whose border was not well defined, and that repeated four times, the first 3 visions lasted about 30 seconds each. Mr. O... took this seriously and tried to decipher the meaning of the three visions pondering if it meant that he had only three years or three months to live. The light came back once more. He stood up and it then disappeared in about a minute or so. On April 3rd he saw a bright sign producing the effect of a luminous slit and inside the bedroom he saw the face of a man, from whom he could only distinguish the forehead, the eyes and the nose. The eyes were very big and salient, staring at him and then disappearing. He also had the following visions

April 4th – Face and torso of a lady, smiling at two children that were hugging each other. Later Mr. O... saw the head that he recognized by the hair and forehead as being one of his recently deceased friends.

July 27th – A hand, pointing downwards. It first appeared on the wall like a florescent light, only gradually taking the form of a hand. He then saw the head of an elderly man with the hand and a little bird

of light grey feathers. The man stared at him solemnly and then disappeared; he felt slightly afraid but at the same time, a pleasant warmth. On that occasion he also saw a roll of paper with some hieroglyphs.

December 12th – A bird feeding its chicks in its nest.

December 13th – Two leopard heads.

December 15th – A strong knock was heard by Ms. S... in her bedroom, waking Mr. O... up.

December 16th – Rings of a bell, also heard by Ms. S... and an angel with a radiant child that transforms into flowers. Also a stag deer head with large antlers.

December 18th – A few faces and a couple of pigeons.

December 20th – Several faces of men, women and children.

January 1st – A large ship followed by a child's head that moves from behind the ship.

January 3rd – A cherub and a child.

“One evening he saw a picture, like a painting showing a magnificent portrayal. It was as a clearing in the darkness; he saw fields, trees... a wandering man and a cow. The scenery was illuminated by the most beautiful sunshine. Something common to all the sightings is that they generally illuminate the room, showing the furniture as in broad day light. When the visions stop, it all goes back to darkness. Mr. O... had many more visions that were not annotated.”

**

This seems to be enough for our assessment and we don't believe that any well informed person regarding the causes and nature of the spiritist phenomena may consider them true apparitions. We refer the reader to the first article of this issue when we try to establish the characteristic signs of hallucination, thus understanding the analogy between that and the images described here, considering the large number of animals in the current visions. It is well-known that there are no wandering spirits of animals in the invisible world and hence there could not be any apparition of animals, except in cases in which the spirit forces that type of appearance with a given objective; even in that case it would only be the appearance and not the spirit of this or that animal. There is no discussion that apparitions do exist but one must be careful and not to think that they are seen all over the place and perhaps mistakenly be taken for some sort of tricks played by an easily impressed imagination or the retrospective vision of some images impressed in the brain. The same thoroughness with which Mr. O... reveals certain irrelevant particularities of his visions is an indication of major concerns on his mind. In short, we find nothing in Mr. O's... visions that identify true apparitions and we even believe that it is very proper to mention such cases that are not followed by adequate comments and prudent reservations since these are the ones that provide ammunition to criticism.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

July 1861

Grammar and the spirits

A serious grammatical error was found in *The Spirits' Book* by a knowledgeable critic who sent us the following note:

"I read on page 384, § 911, line 23 in The Spirits' Book: 'There are many people who say: I want; but their wish only shows on their lips; they say they wish but they are very happy with the opposite.' Had you written: 'They want and are very happy that it is otherwise', don't you think that the French language would have benefited from that? I am led to believe that your writing spirit is a fraud, inducing language mistakes. Do promptly punish him and in particular correct him."

We regret the fact that we cannot acknowledge the author of such observation. No doubt it is out of modesty and to avoid our recognition that he forgot to provide his name and address, just signing: *A spirit, protector of the French language*. Since it seems that this gentleman, or spirit, takes the time to read our work, we beg the good spirits to have him reading our response.

It is obvious that the gentleman knows that the noun *person* in French is feminine and that the adjective and pronouns agree in gender and number with the nouns to which they refer. Unfortunately one cannot learn everything in school, particularly referring to matters of the French language. If the gentleman who declares to be the protector of our language had transposed the limits of *Lhomond's Grammar* he would know that we find the following in *Regnard's*: *'Although those three persons had very different interests they (masculine form in French) were tormented by the same passion, after all.'* He would also find this in *Vaugelas*: *'Persons (feminine form in French) consumed by virtues have such a righteous spirit in all things and such a judicious attention that precludes them from being slanderous (masculine form in French).'* Therefore the rule found in the *Grammaire Normale des Examens*, by Mr. Lévi Alvarès and Mr. Rivail, Boniface edition, etc. *'Sometimes one may employ the masculine pronoun 'il' (he in French) by syllepsis and thus replace it by the feminine noun personne (person). Such substitution may only occur when the thought involving the word personne is not exclusively related to women, and also when the pronoun 'il' is so distant that it will not hurt the ears.'*

Regarding the pronoun *personne* (which can also mean *nobody* in French), Boniface makes the following observation: ‘However, when the pronoun *personne* specifically designates a woman the adjective that refers to her may occur in the feminine. It can be said: *Personne n’est plus jolie que Rosine* (Nobody is more beautiful than Rosina – the word *jolie* in French is feminine – translator note).

Hence, the spirits that wrote the statement discussed above are not as ignorant as intended by the gentleman. We even believe that they know better than he does, although in general the spirits are not too worried about grammatical accuracy, like some of our scholars who are not always first rank at spelling. Moral of the story: It is better to know before criticizing.

In any case and to calm the scruples of those who don’t know much and may think that the whole Doctrine is jeopardized by a spelling mistake, real or imaginary, we have revised the fifth edition of *The Spirits’ Book* that has just been released because:

‘... *Sans peine, aux rimeurs hasardeux*
L’usage encor, je-crois, laisse le choix des deux’

... Without any harm, the use still allows the daring poets,
I believe, to choose between the two.

It is really interesting to see the extent to which the adversaries of Spiritism will go to attack it with every weapon that they can get their hands on. It is really amazing that despite the multitude of darts propelled, despite the stones thrown on its path, and despite the traps laid down in its course, nobody has found a way of stopping its progress and Spiritism conquers a frightening space to those who believe for it to be possible to knock it down by a simple snap of the fingers. After the snaps, the series of athletes have tried with their blows; Spiritism has not been shaken but only ran faster.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

July 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Mediums' role in the communications
Obtained by Mr. D'Ambel, a medium at the Society

Regardless of the type of writing medium, mechanical, semi-mechanical or simply intuitive, in essence our methods of communication with them don't vary much. In fact, our communication both with the incarnate and disincarnate spirits occurs through our thoughts. These thoughts don't need to be coated by words to be understood by the spirits; they all perceive the thoughts that we want to communicate to them, as long as we address those thoughts to them, and because of their intellectual faculties; that is to say, that such thinking can be understood by this or that according to their development, while in others, these thoughts do not awaken by any memories or any knowledge in the depths of their hearts or brain, it is not perceptible for them. In this case, the incarnate spirit that serves as a medium to us is more adequate to transmit our thoughts to other incarnate spirits, although he might not understand them, than a not much advanced disincarnate spirit in case we needed his intervention, because the Earthly person serves us physically with his body as an instrument, something that a disincarnate and wandering spirit cannot do.

When we are able to find a medium that is well equipped with knowledge acquired in his present life and also with a wealth of knowledge acquired in previous existences in a latent state that facilitates our communications and we prefer that since our communication is much easier than using a medium whose intelligence is limited and of insufficient previous knowledge. We will clarify this through some precise and clear explanations.

Our spirit to spirit communication is instantaneous with a medium that has a current or previous intelligence well developed and the phenomenon happens by a skill that is in the very nature of the spirit. In that case we find the necessary conditions in the brain of the medium that allows us to cover our thoughts with words that are acknowledged by the medium, and that is in the case of intuitive, semi-mechanical and purely mechanical medium. That is why whatever the diversity of spirits that

communicate through a given medium, the dictations thus obtained always have some personal contribution from that particular medium.

Yes, although the thought may be completely foreign to the medium; although the subject may be derived from the usual circumstances of the medium; and although what we want to say does not come from the medium absolutely; he still influences the communication by the skills and capabilities that are inherent to that person. It is the same as observing a scenery through different lenses and filters, say green, white and blue. Although the landscape or the observed objects are entirely independent from one another they still keep a common shade that comes from the lens filter.

Even better, the mediums may be compared to those glass bottles filled with colored and transparent liquids found in pharmacies. We, from our side, are like the rays of light that enlighten you about certain moral, philosophical and intimate points of view, through the blue, green or red mediums, so that our radiant rays of light are obliged to pass through the more or less transparent glasses, of better or inferior quality, that is, through more or less intelligent mediums, and those light beams cannot reach their objectives but by coloring with the shades or the specific forms and characteristics of those mediums.

Finally, and to end the comparison, we the spirits are like composers of our own music or a musician that wants to improvise an aria but has only a piano or a violin or flute or a bass or even a cheap whistle at hand. It is undisputable that the piece will be better understood by the audience with the piano, the flute or the violin. Although the sounds of the piano, the violin and the bass are essentially different, our composition will still be the same except for the nuances of the sound. However, if we only have a whistle at our disposal, with only two holes below for funneling the air; for us, there lies the difficulty.

In fact when we are obliged to use less advanced mediums, our work is more tedious, more painful, for we are forced to employ inadequate means and that is more complicated for us, because we are then forced to breakdown our thoughts and conduct, word for word, letter by letter, which is annoying and tiresome and real obstacle to the speed and development of our manifestations.

That is why we are so glad when we find suitable mediums, well equipped, endowed with the necessary materials to be promptly used, in a word, good instruments because then our perispirit acting upon the perispirit of that medium, only needs to give the first impulse to the serving hand that holds the pencil or the pen; while with the limited mediums we are obliged to do similar work as when we communicate by rapping, that is, pointing out, letter by letter, word by word, for each phrase that translates every thought that we wish to communicate.

These are the reasons that lead us preferably to the more educated and enlightened classes for the propagation of Spiritism and the development of mediumistic writing faculties, although it is exactly in that social class that we find the greatest numbers of doubters, rebellious and immoral individuals. But it is the same as we leave to you today, the less advanced spirits produce tangible communications; the raps and movements of objects, the same applies to those men among you who are less serious and prefer phenomenon that impresses their eyes or their ears to those that are purely spiritual and psychological.

When we wish to provide spontaneous dictations, we act with our minds upon the brain of the medium, assembling our material with the elements that we provide and all of it is unconsciously done to the medium. It happens as if we were to take all the money from your pocket and then arrange all the coins accordingly, to how we would feel the most useful.

When the medium wishes to question us directly it is advisable that he gives a lot of thought to that and proceeds in a methodical manner, thus facilitating our work in providing the answers. For as Erastus told

you in the preceding instruction, your brain may often be in a state of inextricable disorder and that for us it is a hard and painful process to penetrate the labyrinth of your thoughts.

When the questions are to be asked by others, it is advisable and useful that they be read to the medium first, so that it can be identified with the evoked spirit, becoming permeated by it, so to speak; because that then makes it much easier for us to respond by the affinity which now exists between our perispirit and the medium that serves as our interpreter.

We can certainly talk about Math through a medium that knows nothing about it. However, the medium may often have that knowledge in a latent state, that is, characteristic of the invisible creature and not to the incarnated one, because his current body may be a rebellious instrument to that kind of knowledge. The same may be said of Astronomy, Poetry, Medicine and the multiple languages, as with everything else related to human knowledge. Finally there is the laborious work of putting together letters and words, like in typography, utilized with mediums that are completely unaware of the subject that is presented.

As we said before, the spirits don't need to paint their thoughts. They detect and transmit their thoughts just by the simple fact that they have them. The corporeal creatures, on the contrary, need the thoughts to be coated. While you need the letter, the word, the noun, the verb, and the full statement to understand something, even mentally, we do not need any visible or tangible form.

Erastus and Timothy, spiritual guides of the medium

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

July 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

The hospital
Received by Mr. Didier, a medium at the Society

I was strolling around the docks near Notre-Dame on a wintery evening; a neighborhood of death and despair; as known by most poets; this neighborhood, from the Court of Miracles to the Morgue, has always been the receptacle of all human misery. Now that it is all in ruins, these huge monuments of agony, that man called hospitals of l'Hôtel-Dieu (Christian hospitals of The Hotel (house) of God) may collapse as well. I watched the pale lights that pierced the dark walls and thought: How many desperate deaths! What a common grave of thoughts which engulfs us each day by changed hearts, so many have fallen innocent! It was then that I thought, so many died as dreamers, poets, artists and scholars! There is a narrow bridge-like corridor over the river that splashes loudly below; that is the path of those who live no more. The dead then enter through another building which on the front of it should be written as the Doorway to Hell: *This is the end of hope*. It is there, in fact, that the body is sliced up by Science but it is also there, that Science steals the last breath of hope from faith.

No sooner than having taken a few steps, as I was absorbed by these thoughts; as our thoughts travel faster than we do, I was approached by a young man with a yellow appearance who was shivering and unceremoniously asked me for a light for his pipe. He was a medical student. No sooner said than done; I also smoked and established a conversation with the stranger. Pale, emaciated and weakened by vigils, with a wide forehead and sad eyes, these were my impressions of him. He seemed thoughtful and we read each other's mind.

- I have just come from doing a dissection, he said, but all I found was matter. Oh! My God, he added in a cold blooded tone, if you want to get rid of that strange disease called belief in the immortality of the soul, come with me and see the daily dissolution of that matter that we call the

body, come and see how to turn off these enthusiastic brains, the generous hearts that deteriorate; come and see that they all find the same void. What foolishness to believe!

I then asked him his age.

- I am twenty four years old. I leave you now because it is too cold.

I saw him leaving and asked myself: Is this the result of Science?

To be continued.

Gérard de Nerval

NOTE: A few days later Mrs. Costel received the following communication in private, whose analogy with the preceding one carries a special meaning.

One evening I strolled around the deserted docks. It was sunny and warm and the golden stars stood out against the dark blue sky. The elegantly rounded moon and its white ray shone like a smile upon the deep water. The poplars, silent guardians of the banks, launched their slender forms, while I passed by slowly, looking at the reflection of the stars in the water and God's reflection in the vastness of the vaulted blue. A woman walked ahead of me and I followed her steps out of pure curiosity, my steps seemingly regulated by hers. We walked like that for a long time. When we then approached the façade of *Hôtel-Dieu* (*Christian Hospital*, House of God) with its illuminated holes here and there the woman stopped, then looked at me and said, as if I were her companion:

- My friend, do you believe that those who suffer here feel more pain in their souls than in their bodies? Or do you believe that physical pain extinguishes the divine spark?
- I believe, I said profoundly surprised, that for the majority of the unfortunate people that suffer and agonize at this very moment, the physical pain is their rest hence they forget their usual misfortune.
- You are mistaken, friend, she said with a compassionate smile. The illness is a supreme anguish to the disowned of this Earth, to the poor, to the ignorant and to the abandoned ones. It does not bring obliviousness but to those like you who only suffer the nostalgia of the dreams and whose pains are crowned with violets.

I tried to respond but with a gesture she stopped me, and pointing her hand towards the hospital she said:

- Unfortunate people struggle there, calculating the number of hours that the disease stole from their paychecks; anguished women think of the cabarets that stuns the pain and the husbands who leave their hungry children behind; there, beyond, and everywhere the earthly concerns muffle and diminish the weak spark of hope that finds no dwelling in those desolated souls. God is even more forgotten by these miserable people torn apart by their sufferings than he is in their normal toil. This happens because God is too far away, too high in the skies, and misery is very close. What to do then to allow those men and women to leave their corporeal lives with dignity, instead of falling like insects; or even, to help them mitigate their sorrow and desperation when facing the battles of life and death? You, dreamer, you that writes verses about the Moon, haven't you given any thought to this formidable problem than can only be resolved by two things: charity and love?

That woman seemed to grow bigger and I felt divine goose bumps running all over my body. She continued to speak and her great voice seemed to fill the city with harmony:

- Listen up! She said. Go all of you, the powerful, the wealthy, the intelligent ones, go and spread the good news. Tell the unfortunate ones that God, their father, is no longer hidden in the inaccessible heavens and that He is sending them back the spirits of their lost loved ones, to console them and to help them out; that their parents, mothers, children, sees them at their bedside, communicating with them in a well-known language, telling them that there is a new dawn beyond the grave that dissipates like the clouds; the Earthly evils. The angel opened the eyes of Tobias; may the angel of love in turn open the closed souls of those who suffer hopelessly!

Having said that, this woman gently touched my eyes and I could see the spirits through the walls of the hospital, like pure flames illuminating the desolated rooms. Their union with humanity was consumed; the wounds of the soul and the body were healed and soothed with a balm of hope. Legions of spirits, more numerous and brighter than the stars, cleared the way before the suffering ones, chasing away the impure vapors of despair, doubt and of the air and the Earth, like a raging river that escaped with only one word: love.

I remained motionless for a long time and as if transported out of my body; then darkness invaded Earth once more and the space was empty again. I looked around but the woman was gone. I was scared and oblivious to everything around me. Since that evening I have been called the dreamer, the mad one. Oh! What a gentle and sublime madness is the belief in life after the grave! And how depressing and stupid the crazy idea that shows the void as the only reward to our miseries and to our modest and obscure virtues! Who is the mad one here: the one that has hope or the one who despairs?

Alfred de Musset

After this last communication was read Gérard de Nerval then spontaneously writes the following, through another medium, Mr. Didier:

“My honorable friend Musset finished for me. We agreed to that. All we needed was that his continuation would give precisely the answer to the first part that I gave you, and it was also necessary to have a different style and more comforting images.”

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

July 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Prayer
Sent by Mr. Sabò, from Bordeaux

Storm of human passions, you that asphyxiate all good feelings of every incarnate spirit who only has a vague memory of them deep down in their consciences, who shall abate your fury?

It is prayer; prayer is the one that can protect people against that ocean of horrible monsters like pride, envy, rage, hypocrisy, lies, impurity, materialism and blasphemy! Prayer is the strongest levee you can build, made of rock and cement, bearing with you in the bloody fight against those monsters which will hopelessly fall over the cliff to the abyss!

Oh! Heartily prayer, unstoppable invocation of the Creator by its creature, if they only knew your strength, how many hearts would have reached out to you in their weaknesses! You are the precious antidote that cures the almost always fatal ulcers forced by matter onto the spirit, carrying in their veins the poison of brutality.

However, how small is the number of those who pray well! Do you really believe that you deserve a lot from God just because you spent a long time reciting formulas and reading books? Make no mistake! The real good prayer is the one that comes out of your heart. It is all clarity. It may even show some anguish or the desire for forgiveness and the good spirits take that prayer along and deposit it at the feet of our just and kind Father, and God feels that incense as a pleasant aroma.

God then sends back the large numbers of troops needed to fortify those who pray well against the spirit of evil. They become strong as immovable rocks; they break against the waves of human passions, and

when they have found pleasure within these struggles, of which must be filled with merit, they build, like the halcyon, their nests amid the storms.

Fenelon

Allan Kardec²⁴

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

August 1861

NOTICE

During the July 19th session, the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies determined that from August 15th – October 1st the Society will be on vacation this year and therefore all sessions are suspended during that period.

Psychic-physiological phenomena

Persons who speak about themselves in the third person

The following fact was reported in the periodical *Le Siècle*, on July 4th, 1861 according to the Havre newspaper:

“A male victim of an incredible mental anomaly has just passed away at the hospice. He was a soldier by the name of Pierre Valin who was wounded in the head during the battle of Solferino. His injury was completely healed but since the event he considered himself dead. When asked about his health he used to say: ‘You want to know how Pierre Valin is doing? Poor man! He died from a bullet injury in the head in Solferino. What you see here is not Valin, it is a machine that resembles him but a not very good copy. You should ask to have it done again and better.’ Every time he spoke of himself he would say him instead of me. He frequently fell prostrated, completely motionless and insensitive and that could last days. He was then treated with mustard filled gauze and blistering agents that never had any painful reaction. He often had his arms and legs pinched but he never manifested any pain. To make sure that he was not

pretending the doctor used to poke him on the back while talking to him; he felt nothing. On several occasions he refused to eat saying that it was unnecessary, that he had no bowels, etc.”

However this is not the only case of that kind. Another soldier that was also injured in the head spoke in the third person and using the feminine form. He used to say: ‘Ah! She suffers a lot! She is very thirsty! etc.’ In the beginning he was led to see the mistakes which he acknowledged with surprise but later he would go back and repeat it so much so that towards the end of his life he only spoke in that manner.”

“In the same way and after a head injury a Zouave²⁵ that was perfectly cured lost his memory of nouns. A Drill sergeant who knew very well the names of the soldiers in his battalion but since the event he used to call them as: The large brown haired, the little carrot, etc. He began using periphrases to command the troops just to designate the musket, the sword, etc. They had to send him home.”

“The final years of the renowned doctor Baudelocque also offered an example of similar lesion but less characteristic, though. He remembered well what he had done during his healthy life. He recognized those who came to visit him by their voices since he had become blind, but he had no awareness of his current situation. For example, when asked: ‘How is your head?’ he would respond: ‘I have no head.’ If asked to extend his arm to have his pulse checked he would respond that he did not know where his arm was. One day he wanted to feel his pulse himself hence he was helped and his right hand was placed on his left wrist. He then asked if that was really him who was feeling the pulse. Yet, he counted the beats correctly.”

**

Physiology reports phenomena that seem abnormal and that science remains quiet about them in every step of the way. Why so? We have already said that and it is never too much to repeat: they try to attribute everything to the material element, with no account to the spiritual element. As long as it remains in that restrictive path, science will remain powerless to resolve thousands of issues that show up all the time under its scalpel, as if saying: “As you see there is something else beyond matter since one cannot explain everything with matter alone.”

And here we are not speaking of some bizarre phenomena only, that could find science unprepared, but we are speaking about the most common effects. For example, what about dreams? We don’t speak about the real dreams, those that are real perceptions of distant things, present or future, but simply about the fantastic dreams, or memories. Can that science explain how those clear and accurate images that we sometimes see are produced? What is that magic mirror that somehow keeps the image of things? In natural somnambulism that nobody denies, how does it explain the strange ability of seeing without the help of the eyes? And that is not vaguely, but with minor details, to the point of a somnambulist being able to carry out a task that would require sharp vision in the waking state.

Thus, there is something in us that sees without the eyes. The sensitive person not only sees but acts, thinks, calculates, organizes, foresees and carries out intellectual tasks that the same person is incapable of doing in the normal vigil state and from which they keep no memory. Hence, there must be something that thinks and that is independent of matter. What is that? Science stops here. Such facts are not rare, though.

A scholar, however, will go to the other side of the world to see and calculate an eclipse but he will not visit his neighbor’s house to observe a phenomenon of the soul. The spontaneous and natural facts that

²⁵ Title given to certain light infantry regiments in the French Army, normally serving in French North Africa between 1831 and 1962

demonstrate the independent action of an intelligent principle occur in large numbers but such action is even more evident in the magnetic and spiritist phenomena in which the isolation of that principle is produced at will, so to speak.

Let us return to our subject. We registered a similar fact in the June 1861 issue of the Review, regarding the evocation of the Marquis de Saint-Paul. Towards his final days he used to say: "He is thirsty. He needs water. He is cold. He needs to be warmed up. He has pain here or there, etc." And then when he was told: "But Sir, it is you who is thirsty", he responded: "No. It is him."

The reason for that is the fact that the thinking '*self*' is in the spirit and not in the body. Since the spirit is already somewhat separated from the body, it then considers the body as a third party, as if it were not him. Thus, it was necessary to give water to that other being, to the body, and not to him, the spirit. That is why he gave the following answer to this question in his evocation: "Why did you always speak in the third person" to which he responded: "Because, as I said, I saw and felt very well the differences between the physical and the spiritual. Those differences that are intertwined by the fluid of life become very distinctive to the eyes of the agonizing clairvoyant."

A similar cause must have produced the effect noted on the soldier mentioned above. They may perhaps say that the wound caused a kind of madness. The Marquis de Saint-Paul, however, had not been wounded. He was perfectly healthy and we are positive about this because it was confirmed to us by his sister who is a member of the Society. What was spontaneously produced in him could perfectly well have been produced in others by the effect of an incident. As a matter of fact, every magnetizer knows that it is very common to have the somnambulists speaking in the third person, thus creating a distinction between the personality of the soul, or spirit, and that of the body. In the normal state, both individualities get mixed up and their perfect assimilation is necessary to the harmony of life, but the intelligent principle is like those gases that are not easily contained and escape in the first opportunity. There is always the tendency of separating from its heavy corporeal burden as long as the equilibrium is no longer in place by the force that keeps the two together, by any given cause. Only the harmonic activity of the organs may keep the complete and subtle union between the soul and the body. However, at the minor suspension of that activity, the soul is airborne again. That is what happens during sleep, or when the senses are benumbed, in catalepsy, lethargy, in the natural or magnetized somnambulism, during ecstasy, during what is called daydreaming or second sight, during the inspirations of the genius, in every significant stress of the mind, that sometimes renders the body insensitive. That is how, finally, those things may happen as a consequence of certain pathological states. A large number of spiritual phenomena have no other cause but the emancipation of the soul. Medical science does acknowledge the influence of moral causes but does not admit the spiritual element as the active principle. That is why medicine confuses these phenomena with organic madness and also why a purely physical treatment is applied, treatment that frequently leads to real madness something that only had the appearance of madness.

Among the facts mentioned above there is one that seems really bizarre. It is the officer who spoke in the feminine third person. The primitive cause of the phenomenon, as we said, is the distinction between the two personalities as a consequence of the separation of the spirit. There is, however, another cause revealed by Spiritism and that must be taken into account, since it may give a special character to the thoughts: it is the vague memory of previous existences that in the state of emancipation of the soul may awake and allow a retrospective vision about some points of the past. In those cases the separation of the soul is never complete. The thoughts are affected by the failing organs and for that very reason they are not very lucid, as they are not at the first moments after death either. Suppose the man that we spoke about had been a woman in his preceding existence. In that case he could confuse the memory that he might have preserved with his current condition.

Couldn't we find a similar explanation to the obsessed idea of certain alienated persons who believe to be kings? If they were kings in preceding existences they may be affected by some memory of that. This is only a hypothesis but which does not lack credibility to the acquainted with Spiritism. If this cause is possible some will then say that it cannot be applied to the cases in which mad people believe to be wolves or pigs since everyone knows that man has never been an animal. That is correct but a man may have been in a condition that forced him to live among dirty animals and savage people. That could well be the source of such illusion that to some may have been imposed as punishing to this present life. When we are presented with facts of such a nature instead of referring them to the purely physical diseases, if we carefully followed all their phases with the support of the data provided by the spiritist observations, we would effortlessly detect the double causes that we identified and we would promptly understand that we cannot treat them with showers, bleedings and cauterizations.

Mr. Baudelocque's case also finds its explanation in analogous causes. The article says that he had no awareness of his own existence. That is a mistake since he did not consider himself dead; he was just unaware of his corporeal life. He was in a more or less similar situation as the spirits, who at their initial moments just after their deaths don't believe to be dead and take their bodies as someone else's since they cannot understand the situation, given their disorientation. The same that takes place with certain disincarnate spirits may also happen to some incarnate. That is how Mr. Baudelocque could make an abstraction of his body and say that he had no head, once his spirit had no corporeal head. The spiritist observations provide numerous examples of this kind, thus shedding new light onto an immense variety of phenomena that up until now could not be explained and were simply inexplicable without its foundations. There is still the case of the Zouave that lost the memory of nouns to be examined. But this case can only be explained by considerations of a different order, which fall into the field of organic physiology. The developments led by that event commit us to devote a special article about it, to be published soon.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

August 1861

American manifestations

The *Banner of Light*, a New York journal from May 18th, 1861 brings the following:²⁶

“Deeming the following extraordinary facts worthy of being placed upon record in an authenticated form, we forward them to the Banner for publication, with our signatures attached, as evidence that they occurred in our presence, and under the herein stated.

On Wednesday evening, May 1st, we met the medium H.M. Fay, by appointment, at the residence of Mr. W. B. Hallock, in New York. The medium seated himself near a table, upon which were placed a tin horn, a violin and three separate pieces of small-sized bed-cord. The company were seated in a semi-circle in front of the medium, and the table six or eight inches from them, and with their hands joined, which gave every member of the circle the assurance that his neighbors on his right and left, retained their position in every one of the experiments herein related. The lights were then put out and the company ordered to sing. In a few minutes, a light was called for. The medium was found still seating in his chair, with his hands crossed behind him at the wrists, which were firmly tied together, the knots being between the wrists, and the rope being wrapped around each wrist so tightly as to press into the flesh and obstruct the venous circulation, so that the hands became much swollen. The ends of the rope were then passed upon

26 Excerpted from the original publication *Banner of Light*, from New York, dated May 18th, 1861 kindly provided by Ms. J. Korngold of the USSC (N.T.)

the inside of the back of the chair, and then brought round and tied, one to each of the front legs of the chair. Another rope was found wrapped firmly around his legs, just above his knees, and tied tightly, while a third rope secured his ankles in the same manner. In this condition, we were satisfied that the medium could neither have tied himself, nor could he untie himself, nor use his hands, nor walk, nor rise from his chair. A member of the circle then placed a sheet of white paper upon the floor, under the medium's feet, with a pencil upon the paper. The light was put out, and, almost immediately, the horn was seized by a power of same kind, and struck upon the table and the floor repeatedly, rapidly, and very violently, so as to make deep indentations in the table. A mouth also seemed to be applied to the horn, and conversed through it, freely and rather jocularly, at times, with the members of the circle. The articulation of the words was as distinct as that of a person in the form when speaking through a horn. The sound was that of a full male voice, and the tone somewhat louder than the tone of common conversation. Another voice, fainter, somewhat guttural, and with a less distinct articulation, also, at times, conversed with the company. A light was called for, and the medium was found still in his chair, bound hand and foot, as already described, and his feet within the pencil lines that had been traced around them. The light was again put out, and soon the horn commenced its pounding and its talking as before. The circle was next told to sing, and the manifestations apparently ceased; but at the call for the light, the ropes were found removed from the medium's ankles and knees; his hands, however, were still tied, as already described, and his feet within the pencil lines upon the with paper. Again the light was put out, and again the pounding and the talking through the horn were resumed. Then, followed an order for singing, which was continued for a few moments, when the light was called for, and the medium was found untied, sitting in his chair, with his feet within the pencil lines. This closed the first series of manifestations.

The light was again put out, and after a few moments singing by the circle, the light was struck, and the medium was found tied with one rope around his ankles, with another just below his knees, while with a third his wrists were tied in front of him, even more tightly than before, and then lashed to his right thigh. A member of the circle then tied his limbs to the chair, and putting a sheet of white paper under his feet, traced with a pencil the outlines of his feet as before. A bell was also put upon the table and the light extinguished, as before, there was pounding upon the floor and table with the horn, and talking through the horn; then the bell was lifted from the table and rung very loudly, about midway between the medium and the circle, and seeming to sweep over an arc of five or six feet at each stroke of the clapper. During the ring of the bell the medium repeatedly in a loud voice, exclaimed: "I am here, I am here," thus assuring us that he was still in his chair, while the bell was at a considerable distance from him. The light was ordered, and the medium was found still tied as described, with his feet within the pencil lines.

A large bright spot, an inch and a half in diameter, was now made upon the back of the violin by rubbing it with phosphorus. The light was put out, and very soon the violin rose six or seven feet above the floor and floated rapidly around in the air, making a large sweep at times, of seven or eight feet. In its movements it could easily be followed by the eye, as the phosphorescent spot made upon it was distinctly visible; it was also easily followed by the ear, as its strings were thumbed upon during its flight. As the violin floated around, the medium repeatedly exclaimed in a loud voice: "I am here, I am here," giving us the assurance that he was still in his chair and not following the violin in its movements. The light was called for, and the medium was found tied, as already described, and his feet within the pencil lines.

A member of the circle next placed a tumbler half full of water upon the table and a slip of paper between the medium's lips. The light was then extinguished. After a few moments singing by the circle the light was ordered, and the tumbler was found empty, with no trace of the water upon the table or the floor, the medium being still tied as last described, his feet within the pencil lines, and the paper between his lips dry. Again the light was put out, and again relighted in a few moments, when the medium was found untied. This closed the second series of experiments.

Mrs. Spence, now sat near the medium, and facing him. A gentleman then sat between the two, so as to place his right foot upon Mrs. Spence's feet, his right hand upon the medium's head, and his left hand upon Mrs. Spence's head. The medium then grasped the gentleman's right arm with both hands, each hand grasping at separate places, while Mrs. Spence grasped the gentleman's left arm in the same way. The light was put out, and after a short interval, it was again struck up, when the parties were observed to be still in the relative position just described.

The gentleman then stated, that neither the medium's nor Mrs. Spence's hands had been removed from his arms; yet, while the light was out, he distinctly felt the fingers of a hand playing upon his face, pull his nose, slap him upon the cheek, making a noise that was heard by the rest of the circle; also that he was repeatedly tapped over the head with the violin, making a noise that was perceptible to all present.

Another gentleman then took the first gentleman's place, and he also stated that he was handled and struck in the same way; and so each member of the circle, taking, in turn, the position just described, testified to having been touched, handled and struck about the face and head, by what seemed to be a hand, and sometimes also by the violin; all, however, while the light was extinguished, but while the medium's hands and feet and also Mrs. Spence's were secured as described. This closed the third series of experiments, in all of which, as well as in those first two series, we are satisfied that the manifestations were not produced either by Mr. Fay or by any member of the circle.

Yours truly,

Charles Patridge, R. T. Hallock, Mrs. Sarah P. Clark, Mrs. Mary S. Hallock, Mrs. Amanda, M. Spence, Miss Alla Britt, William Blondel, William P. Coles, W. B. Hallock, B. Franklin Clark, Peyton Spence.

New York, May 3, 1861."

OBSERVATION: We don't deny the possibility of all these things and we have no reason to doubt the honorability of the countersigners, despite the fact that we don't know them. However, we stand behind our thoughts given in our last issue regarding the two articles about the mysterious drawings and the exploitation of Spiritism. Some say that such exploitation does not shock public opinion in America and that they find it very natural that mediums may seek compensation. That is understandable in a country where *time is money*. That will not preclude us from saying what we have already said in another article: *that the absolute altruism is an even better guarantor than all physical precautions.*

If our texts have contributed to cast discredit upon the self-serving mediumship in France and elsewhere we believe that this is not the least service done to serious Spiritism. These general thoughts are not absolutely directed to Mr. Fay whose position before the public we ignore.

A.K.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

August 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Don Peyra, Prior of Amilly

This evocation was carried out last year by the request of Mr. Borreau, from Niort, who sent us the following note:

“Some thirty years ago we had at the Priory of Amilly, in the surroundings of Mauzé, a priest by the name Don Peyra who held the reputation of being a sorcerer. In fact, he was always involved with the occult sciences. They say things about him that would sound fabulous but that according to the Spiritist Science might well be possible. About twelve years ago I had contact with his spirit during some very interesting experiments that I was doing with a somnambulist. He presented himself as an assistant and with whom we could not fail in our experiments, but we did fail. I come to ask you, if this is not at all an inconvenience, to have him evoked and asked about his previous and current relationships with me. From there on I might have some interesting things to tell you someday perhaps.”

First dialogue, January 13th, 1860

1. Evocation. – A. I am here.
2. Where does the reputation of being a sorcerer come from? – A. Old wives’ tales. I studied Chemistry.
3. Why have you contacted Mr. Borreau from Niort? – A. The wish of having some fun, considering the power that he thought I had.

4. He says that you presented yourself as a helper to his research. Could you tell us the nature of that research? – A. I am not that indiscreet to reveal a secret that he considered proper to keep from you. I take offense in your question.
5. We don't insist but wish to tell you that you could have answered in a more adequate way to people who seriously and benevolently interrogate you. Your language is not compatible with that of an advanced spirit. – A. I am what I have always been.
6. What is the nature of these things that people say about you? – A. As I said, they are just stories. I knew their opinion about me and far from trying to deny, I did what I could to reinforce it.
7. Considering your preceding answer it seems that you have not done much progress after your death. – A. Truth be said I did not try it, since I did not know how. However, I believe there is something to be done. I gave some thought to that not long ago.
8. Your language surprises us considering that it comes from a spirit that was a priest and thus should have thoughts of certain elevation. – A. I truly believe that I had little instruction.
9. Kindly elaborate. – A. I had a lot of instruction on how to believe but not enough on how to understand.
10. In that case you were not what people call a good priest? – A. Oh! No!
11. What do you do as a spirit? – A. Always Chemistry. I believe I would have done better had I looked for God instead of matter.
12. How can a spirit be involved with Chemistry? – A. Allow me to say that this is a silly question. Do you really believe that I need the microscope or the alembic to study the properties of matter that you know is penetrable by the spirit?
13. Are you happy as a spirit? – A. I give you my word that I am not. As I said, I believe I followed the wrong path and I will change that, particularly if I am fortunate enough to find some help, I, who should have prayed for the others; I confess that I have not always done that for the money I received; and that is if I thought there would not be any retaliation against me.
14. We thank you for having come to us and we shall do for you what you have not done for others. – A. You are more worthy than I am.

Second conversation, June 25th, 1861

Since Mr. Borreau sent us new question to be addressed to the spirit of Don Peyra he was evoked again through another medium, providing the answers below, from which we can extract useful lessons about the individualities in the spiritual world as well as a general teaching.

15. Evocation. – A. What do you want from me and why do you disturb me?
16. It was Mr. Borreau, from Niort, that asked us to address some questions to you. –A. What else does he want from me? Isn't he happy to disturb me in Niort? Why does he need to evoke me in Paris where I have no business? I wish he would leave me alone. He calls me, put me in touch with somnambulists, and evokes me through others. He is annoying, this man.
17. Nevertheless you must remember that we have already evoked you once and that you answered more kindly than today. We even promised to pray for you. – A. I remember that very well, but promise and action are two different things. You prayed but the others...
18. Others have certainly prayed as well. Now, are you willing to answer Mr. Borreau's questions? – A. I assure you that I would not do it for him, who is always on my back, pardon the expression but that it is true, particularly considering that there is no affinity between us. But as for you who had pity on me and begged for God's mercy on my behalf, I want to answer the best I can.
19. A short while ago you said that you were disturbed. Could you give us an explanation about it for our own instruction? – A. I meant that you called my attention and my thoughts to you - you

involved me requesting my answers, at least out of education. That is not a good explanation. My mind was somewhere else, in my studies, in my common occupations. Your evocation forced my attention to you, to the Earthly things. As a consequence and since I was not thinking of working with you, I was disturbed.

OBSERVATION: The spirits are more or less talkative and come with more or less good will according to their character. However, we can rest assured that like serious men they don't appreciate to be disturbed uselessly. As for the lightheaded spirits, that is different: they are always ready to get involved in everything, even when not invited.

20. When you were in touch with Mr. Borreau did you know about his beliefs in the possibility of realizing great things that would be enough to convince the incredulous? – A. Mr. Borreau wanted me to help in a kind of half magnetic half spiritist operation. However, he is not wired to carry out such activity and I did not think that I should help him any longer. In fact I would if I could. Time was not right and it is not right for that yet.
21. Could you see and tell him the reasons for his failure in Vendée that determined his fall as well as of his somnambulist and two other assistants? – A. You can use my preceding answer here. Mr. Borreau was knocked down by the spirits who wanted to teach him a lesson to not look for what should be kept hidden. I was the one who pushed him down using the fluids of the magnetizer.

OBSERVATION: This answer agrees perfectly with the theory given about physical manifestations. The spirits did not push him with their hands but with the animated fluid of the persons combined with that of the spirit. The dissertation given below about the transportation of objects contains a development of the highest interest about this subject. A comparative analogy seems to justify the expression used by spirit. When a person approaches a body charged with positive electrical charge the person is charged with the opposite charge. The voltage increases up to the discharge level. At that level the two bodies are connected by the violent discharge and the person receives a shock that, according to the amount of electricity, may knock the person down or even kill her. In such phenomenon it is always necessary that the person provides her contribution with the electrical charge. If we consider the electrified body as an intelligent being that acts and understands the operation, we would say that she combined her own electrical fluid with that of the person. In the case of Mr. Borreau things may not have been exactly like that but it is clear that a similar effect may have taken place and that Don Peyra was logical when he said that he knocked the others down with their own fluids. This will be even better understood when referred to *The Spirits' Book* and *The Mediums' Book* with respect to the universal fluid that is the principle of the vital fluid, the electrical fluid and animal magnetism.

22. During his long and dramatic experiment he says that he had made discoveries that to him where even more remarkable than what he was looking for. You are aware of that, aren't you? – A. Yes. But there is something that he did not discover: that it is not up to the spirits to help people in research like the one he was doing. If they could, then God would not be able to hide anything and people would neglect their own work and skills to look for treasures with the intervention of the spirits, having all that provided on a tray, easily achieving glory and fortune. Truly, we would have a lot to do if we were supposed to satisfy everyone's ambitions. Can you imagine the uproar in the spiritual world just by the general belief in Spiritism? We would sometimes be called to the left, sometimes to the right; here to dig up the land and satisfy the lazy one; there to spare an idiot the effort of solving a problem; then to provide energy to the oven of a Chemist; and we would have to give the philosopher's stone to everybody. The most important discovery that Mr. Borreau could have made was to understand that there are always

spirits who have fun by providing people with the mirage of a gold mine, even to the eyes of the most clairvoyant somnambulist, making them believe that they are where they are not and making fun of you, just when you believe to have found them, and all that is to teach you that wisdom and work are the real treasures.

23. Was Mr. Borreau's objective to find a treasure? – A. It seems to me that I have already told you when you called me the first time that I am not indiscreet. If he meant to keep it from you it is not up to me to tell you that.

OBSERVATION: The spirit is clearly discreet. In fact this is a quality found in all of them, even the least advanced ones, leading to the conclusion that if a given spirit made indiscreet revelations about someone it would most likely be for fun and thus it would be a mistake to take them seriously.

24. Could you give us an explanation about the invisible hand that wrote several characters that he found on the pages of a notebook that was prepared to receive them? – A. The writings were not from the spirits. He will learn about their source later but I must not reveal it now. The spirits may have provoked them with the objective that I mentioned earlier but they were not the ones who did it.

OBSERVATION: Although the two dialogues above were separated by an eighteen months interval and received through different mediums, we must acknowledge a sequence, a similarity of language and style that would not raise any doubt regarding their authorship by the same spirit. As for the identity, it becomes clear from the letter below, sent by Mr. Borreau, after he had received the second evocation from us.

**

“July 18th, 1861

Dear Sir,

This is to thank you for your work and your kindness in sending me the last evocation of Don Peyra. As you say, the spirit of the former Prior was not in a good mood, vehemently showing his impatience with this new initiative. A great lesson results from that, Sir. The spirits who play the spiteful game of tormenting us may in turn be paid with the same token by us.

Ah! Ladies and gentlemen from beyond the grave! I am only talking about the deceitful and lighthearted spirits – no doubt they will boast about having the exclusive privilege of disturbing us. And here you have a poor man from Earth, a pacifist, just trying to guard against your maneuvers and trying to clarify you, and now he is tormenting you to the point that you feel his heavy burden on your spiritual shoulders!

Well, what should I then say, my dear Prior, when I hear you confessing that you took part in the spiritual mob that obsessed me with cruelty, tricking me so many times during my trips to Vendée? If it is true that you were there, you must have known that I conducted my research only with the objective of finding the truth through unquestionable facts. There is no doubt that it was very ambitious, I appreciate that, but at least it was very honest, I believe. The only problem was that I was not strong enough to fight and you and your peers knocked me down in such a way that we were forced to abandon the activity, carrying our dead, since your fantastic

maneuvers led to that terrible struggle, debilitating our poor somnambulist who passed out and for a period of not less than 6 six hours gave almost no sign of life, to the point that we thought she was dead.

Our situation can be undoubtedly better understood if you take into account the fact that it was around midnight and that we were in the bloody fighting fronts of Vendée's war, in a savage region surrounded by bare mountains, whose echoes repeated the lancinating screams of the victims. I was horrified and thought of the terrible responsibility I had from which I did not know how to escape. I was confused! Only prayer could save me and it did. If that is what you call lessons you must agree that they are tough! It was certainly to give me one of those lessons that you called me to Mauzé a year later. I was better educated then and I knew what to think about the existence of the spirits and the actions and gestures of many of them. Besides, the situation was no longer dramatic as it was in Châtillon. I was then free to fight.

My apologies Sir, that I allowed myself to get carried away with the Prior; My intention is to ask you something else if you would allow me so. A few days ago I visited the house of a very dignified man who has experienced much, since his youth and I showed him the communication that you sent me. He recognized perfectly well the language, the style and the caustic spirit of the former Prior, and told me the following facts:

‘Forced to abandon the Priory of Surgères by the Revolution, Don Peyra bought the small property of Amilly, near Mauzé, where he established residence. He became known for his wonderful cures through the use of magnetism and electricity, successfully employed. Since his business was not doing as well as he wanted, he used charlatanisms and with the aid of his electric machine, played tricks passing them off as sorcery. Far from fighting this opinion, he provoked and encouraged it. There was in Amilly a long pathway, outlined by trees, much used by customers coming from ten to twenty leagues away. His machine was connected to the door knob and when the poor peasants wanted to knock on the door or come inside the house they would receive a terrible electric shock and fall thunderstruck instantaneously. We can only imagine what such events would produce in the minds of non-educated people, particularly in those days.’

We have a saying that goes like this: *dans la peau mourra le renard*, (one remains always cunning) . Alas! I can see that we need to change the skin more than a couple of times before we leave behind our bad instincts. From that, dear Sir, it does not follow that I don't wish the Prior well. No. The proof is that following your example I prayed for him and this is something that I confess I had not done before as he told you.

Yours, etc.

J.-B. Borreau”

**

Noticed that this later is dated July 18th, 1861 while the first evocation took place in January 1860. At that time we did not know all these details about Don Peyra's life and his answers perfectly agree with that. He said for example that he did everything he could to keep up with his fame as a sorcerer. What happened to Mr. Borreau has a remarkable analogy with Don Peyra's mockery applied to the travelers during his life and we are strongly inclined to believe that he wanted to repeat them. In this case he did not need his electrical machine since he has

the great universal machine at his disposal. That possibility can be seen in his answer to question 21.

Mr. Borreau finds some sort of compensation to the malice of certain spirits on the nuisance that we can return to them. However we advised him not to trust that too much since the spirits have better means of escaping from us than otherwise with respect to their influence. In fact, it is clear that if Mr. Burreau had a more thorough knowledge of Spiritism in those days he would know what is reasonable to expect from them, and he would not have ventured into attempts that Science would have demonstrated without leading him to mystification. He was not the first one to learn the hard way. That is why we never stop saying: learn the theory first. It will teach you every practical difficulty allowing you to remove obstacles from which you will feel happy to have left behind with a few scratches only. He claims that his intention was good, because he wanted to demonstrate through a great thing the truth about Spiritism. However, in similar cases the spirits give proof that they wish and when they want, and never when asked for that. We know people who also wanted to give irrefutable proof through the discovery of colossal treasures through the spirits but what happened in fact was that they just spent their own money. We must add that if such proof gave the expected result just once, that would be more damaging than useful since it would provide the wrong idea about the objective of Spiritism, establishing the belief that it can be used as a means of prediction. In that case, Don Peyra's answer to question 22 would be justified.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

August 1861

Correspondence

Letter from Mr. Mathieu about deceitful mediums

“Paris, July 21st, 1861

Dear Sir,

One can disagree about certain points and be in perfect agreement about others. I have just read your thoughts about fraud in the last issue of the Review in the article ‘Exploitation of Spiritism’, regarding spiritualist (or spiritist) communications, to which I am happily and strongly related. Any dissidence with respect to theories and doctrines disappear in those manifestations as if in a magic spell.

I am not perhaps as strict as you are regarding the mediums who accept some sort of compensation in a dignified and adequate way, given the time they dedicate to the experiments, sometimes long and tiresome, but I am, and nobody can be more than I am, severe with respect to those who replace the absence or insufficiency of the expected results by fraud and trickery.

Mixing the false with the true in matters of phenomena obtained by the intervention of the spirits is simply blasphemy, thus indicating a failed sense of moral from the part of a medium who would unscrupulously do that. As you clearly stated, this is the same as casting doubt upon the indecisive minds, considering that there is real fraud. I must add that it is the most deplorable way of compromising honorable people who support the mediums with their knowledge and education, becoming the guarantors of their good-faith, sponsoring them in a certain way. It is prevarication towards them.

Every medium that is knowingly guilty of fraudulent maneuvers and caught on the act – using a trivial expression, *with their hand in the sack*, deserves to be ostracized by every spiritist or spiritualist in the world, and it is their duty to unmask and demoralize them.

If it suits you Sir, to have these words published in your Review, please do as you please.

Yours, etc.

Mathieu”

We would not expect less from the noble feelings that characterize Mr. Mathieu as this energetic reproach to the ill-faith mediums. On the contrary, we would be surprised if he had faced the issue of trust and its abuse with indifference. Such abuse could be easier when Spiritism was not much known. However, as this Science spreads and becomes better understood; as the true conditions for the production of the phenomena are clearly identified, there will be wise eyes everywhere capable of uncovering the fraud. The best way to discourage the fraud is to denounce it wherever it may take place.

Some say that it would be better not to disclose such turpitudes in the very interest of Spiritism; that the possibility of deceiving could increase the mistrust from the indecisive. We don't share such opinion and do believe that it is better to have the indecisive suspicious than deceived, since once they know that they were deceived they could be sent away forever. Besides, there would be an even greater evil; that is the belief that the spiritists are easily deceived. Much to the contrary, they will be even more prepared to believe when they see that the believers are surrounded by precautions, repudiating the deceiving mediums.

Mr. Mathieu says that he cannot be as strict as we are, with respect to the mediums who in a dignified and discrete way accept compensation for the time dedicated to the subject. We are in perfect agreement that there can be and there must be honorable exceptions, but since the attractiveness of earnings is a great temptation and since the beginners don't have the necessary experience to distinguish between the true and the false, we maintain our opinion that the best guarantee of honesty is in the absolute altruism because where there is nothing to gain there is no place for charlatanism.

A person that pays for a service wants something in return for his money and would not accept it if told that the spirit does not wish to communicate. From that, to the means of making the spirit act at any price there is only a step, according to the maxim: *need is the mother of industry*. We must add that the mediums will gain a hundred times more in respect and consideration than they lose in material gains.

They say that consideration does not feed life. It is true that consideration alone is not enough but there are other more honest activities than the exploitation of the souls of the dead.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

August 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Moral influence of the mediums in the communications
Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, medium Mr. D'Ambel

We have already said that the mediums, as mediums, have only a secondary influence in the communications of the spirits; that their role is like that of the telegraph that dispatches messages between distant points of Earth. Thus, when we want to dictate a communication we act upon the medium as the telegraph typist does onto the device, that is, like the clicks of the telegraph draw meaningful characters on a piece of paper thousands of miles away, we also communicate through incommensurable distances that separate the visible from the invisible world, the incarnate from the immaterial world, transmitting all that we want to teach you through the mediumistic instrument. However, like the atmospheric conditions influence the quality of the telegraph transmission, the moral influence of the medium acts and sometimes disturbs the transmission of our messages from beyond the grave, since we are forced to pass them

through a filter that is contrary to its own nature. In most cases though, that influence can be nullified by our energy and our determination thus avoiding the manifestation of a negative action. In fact, essays of elevated philosophical reach and communications of perfect moral content are sometimes transmitted through mediums that are not suitable for such superior teachings; while, on the other hand, less constructive messages also arrive through mediums who feel ashamed for having served as their intermediary. As a general thesis one can say that similar spirits attract similar spirits and that only rarely spirits of elevated spheres communicate through bad filters when they have at their disposal good instruments, in a word, good mediums.

Thus the lighthearted and less serious mediums attract spirits of the same kind. That is why their communications are marked by banal and frivolous things, ideas without proper coordination and sometimes very unorthodox from a spiritist point of view. At times, they may say good things, and they do, but it is exactly in this case that a very severe and scrupulous exam is required because certain hypocritical spirits can skillfully permeate controversy and lies as to mislead the good faith of the audience. One must then suppress every mistaken word or phrase and only retain from the dictation what is accepted by logic or something that has been already taught by the Doctrine. Communications of this nature should not be feared more by the isolated spiritists or recent and unenlightened groups than in sessions where the followers are more advanced and have gained more experience; regardless of how much the crow covers itself with the feathers of a peacock it will always be mercilessly unmasked.

I shall not speak about those who enjoy and ask for obscene communications. Let them be satisfied by the presence of cynical spirits. As a matter of fact, communications of such a nature seek solitude and isolation on their own. In any case they can only provoke disdain and embarrassment amidst serious philosophical groups. But the moral influence is really felt when the medium replaces the ideas that the spirits struggle to transmit; when the medium extracts fantastic theories from their own imagination, in good faith believing that the communications were transmitted via their intuitive skills. There is a thousand in one chance that in such case, it is a reflex of the medium's own mind. There is even the curious fact that the medium's hand sometimes moves almost mechanically, as if being driven by a secondary or inferior spirit. It is against this critical test that the young and excited imagination crashes, carried away by the enthusiasm of their own ideas, decorated by their own personal knowledge, thus ignoring the simple thoughts of an elevated spirit, exchanging the prey for its shadow and replacing the message by an exaggerated paraphrase.

It is also against this formidable obstacle that ambitious personalities crash, and thus in the absence of communications refused by the good spirits they present their own work as if produced by the spirits. That is why the leaders of the spiritist centers must have an accurate perception and a rare sagacity to differentiate between authentic communications and those which are not, and yet not hurting people who deceive themselves. *When in doubt, leave it out (more is less)*, says one of your old proverbs; therefore, you must admit but only what is a certainty to you. Whenever there is a new point of view you must test it against the crucible of logic and reason. Anything that is rejected by reason and common sense must be firmly declined. ***It is better to reject ten truths than to accept a single lie, a single false theory.*** In reality a whole system could be built on top of a false theory and that would ruin before the first breath of truth, like a monument built on quick sand, whilst if some truths are rejected today because they don't seem to have been demonstrated clearly and logically to you, soon an overwhelming fact or irrefutable demonstration will come to attest their truthfulness. Yet, spiritists, remember that there is nothing impossible to God and to the good spirits but injustice and iniquity.

Spiritism is now sufficiently spread among mankind and has moralized sufficiently the devout followers of its sacred doctrine so that the spirits are no longer forced to utilize bad tools, imperfect mediums. Nowadays if any given medium gives reason for suspicion by conduct or habits, out of pride or lack of

love and charity, repudiate their communications for there is a snake hidden in the grass. That is my conclusion about the moral influence of the mediums.

Erastus

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

August 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Apportation and other tangible phenomena
Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, medium Mr. D'Ambel

In order to obtain phenomena of this kind it is necessary to have mediums that I will call *sensitive*, that is, endowed with the highest degree of mediumistic faculties of expansion and penetrability because their easily excitable nervous system allows them to abundantly project their animalized fluid around them through certain vibrations.

Highly impressionable natures, where nerves vibrate before a minor feeling, before a slight sensation, and are sensitive to moral or physical influences, internal or external, these individuals are prone to become

excellent mediums of physical effects of tangibility and transportation. In fact, their nervous system almost entirely devoid from a refractory envelope which isolates this system in the vast majority, for them provides for the development of this phenomena. Hence, the phenomena of tangibility is more easily obtained through a person with such structure and whose other traits are not hostile to mediumization; these are knocks on walls and furniture, intelligent motions and even lifting of heavy and inert matter in the air. With even more certainty, these results would be obtained if instead of one medium, we have on hand several equally endowed mediums.

However, there is a significant difference between tangible phenomena and apportations; the work carried out by the spirit in this case is not only more difficult and complex but also there is the need to operate with a single medium since several mediums cannot simultaneously contribute to the production of the same phenomenon. On the contrary, it may happen that the presence of certain individuals who are not sympathetic to the spirit may radically hinder the work. That is why, as you see, apportations also requires greater concentration, and also the diffusion of certain fluids that can only be obtained with the help of the most gifted mediums who, in a word, have the best equipped *electrical-mediumistic* sensitivities. Generally speaking the cases involved with the apportation phenomena are and will continue to be very rare. Needless to say, that these are and will always be less frequent than other phenomena of tangibility; of which you yourself, can infer why. Moreover, these phenomena are of such a specific nature, that not only are special mediums required but also not every spirit can produce them. There must be certain influence that exists between the affinity between the spirit and the medium, a certain analogy, certain similarity that allows the expansive part of the *perispiritic fluid* of the medium²⁷ to mix, unite and combine with that of the spirit who wishes to perform an apportation. This fusion must be such that the resulting force becomes, that is to say, of the same unique clarity as in a furnace where the electrical current acts upon the coal.

You will then ask why this union, this fusion is necessary? For the production of this phenomena it is necessary that the essential properties of the driving force of the spirit must be augmented by some of those mediumized; that is the vital fluid, indispensable for the production of all mediumistic phenomena, is an exclusive attribute of the incarnate and thus, the acting spirit is forced to absorb it. It is only then that the spirit can isolate, make invisible and move certain objects and even bodies, using certain properties of your environment which are unknown to you.

For now, I am not allowed to reveal those specific laws that govern the gases and fluids that surround you. In a few years though before one generation has passed, these laws and the explanations of these phenomena will be revealed to you and a new variety of mediums will appear, falling on a cataleptic state when in trance. Now you see the difficulties around the production of an apportation. Hence, the logical conclusion is that these are extremely rare occurrences and all the more reason, that spirits are even less likely to be involved with them since there is the requirement on their part for an almost all materialistic effort and that is tedious and a nuisance to them. On another hand, it may also happen that despite their energy and good will, the state of a medium itself may impose them, creating an impassable barrier.

It then becomes obvious by your own reasoning, I have no doubt, that the cases of raps, movement and levitation are simple phenomena that occur by the concentration and expansion of certain fluids, and that they can be provoked and obtained at will and by the work of mediums who have those abilities, when assisted by good and benevolent spirits; whereas the phenomena of apportation is complex, demanding

27 It is clear that when there is a lack of terms to express a new idea the spirits know perfectly well how to create neologisms. The words *electro-dynamic* and *perispiritic* are not ours. Those who criticized us for the creation of words like spiritist, Spiritism and perispirit may do the same to the spirits.

special circumstances and cannot occur by the simultaneous action of several spirits, is carried out by one medium only and require, in addition to the needs of tangibility, a very particular combination of fluids in order to isolate and render the apported object(s) invisible.

All of you spiritists, you must understand my explanations and be aware of the need for that concentration of special fluids for the mobility and tangibility of inert matter. Believe in that as you believe in the phenomena of electricity and magnetism with which mediumship has a lot in common, and in a certain way its consecration and development. As for the disbelievers, I have better things to do instead of trying to convince them and I have no time for that. One day they will believe by the sheer force of things, since it is necessary that they acknowledge the unanimous testimony of spiritist facts, as they were forced to do before so many other previously rejected phenomena.

To summarize: if the cases of tangibility are frequent those of apportionment are comparatively very rare because the required conditions are difficult and not a single medium can say: 'at such time, at any given moment, I will produce an apportionment', because often even the spirit is prevented from doing it. I must add that such phenomena are twice as more difficult in public because we almost always encounter the presence of energetically refractory elements that paralyze the efforts of the spirit and even more so the action of the medium.

On the contrary, rest assured that in the majority of the cases these phenomena are spontaneously produced, by default without the medium's awareness and without premeditation, almost always in private, and finally, very rarely when the mediums are aware. From all the above you must conclude that there is a legitimate reason for suspicion whenever a given medium boasts about being able to produce them at will, that is, being able to command the spirits as if they were anyone's servants, which is simply absurd. You must also consider as a general rule that the spiritist phenomena are not events for exhibitions in spectacles and for the entertainment of curiosity. There could be some spirits that lend themselves to that type of activity, but then it is for the production of simple phenomena and not those like apportionments which require special conditions.

Remember, spiritists, that if it is absurd to systematically reject all phenomena from beyond the grave, it is not wise to blindly accept all of them either. When phenomenon of tangibility, apparition, visibility or apportionment manifests itself spontaneously and instantaneously, accept it; but I strongly repeat, do not accept anything blindly. Every fact must undergo a scrutiny, thorough and severe.. Believe me that Spiritism, so rich in sublime and grand phenomena, has nothing to gain with these insignificant manifestations that can be imitated by skillful conjurers. I know what you are going to say: the phenomena are useful to convince the disbelievers. However, know this, that if you were not given other means of persuading them, you would not have even a fraction of the spiritists that you can count today. Speak to their hearts. That is how you are going to attain serious conviction. If you find it useful to convince certain people by material phenomena, at least have them presented in such a way that they may not give rise to false interpretations, and especially, do not move away from the normal conditions of these facts because when they are presented inappropriately they offer arguments to the disbelievers instead of convincing them.

Erastus

August 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

About animal mediums
Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, medium Mr. D'Ambel

Today I want to discuss the subject of mediumship among animals, brought up and supported by one of your most devout members. Based on the maxim *the one that can do the most can do the least*, he believes that we can pass mediumship to birds and other animals, using them in our communications with humans. This is what in Philosophy, or better said, in Logic, you simply call sophism.

He has said: "*We know already, you can animate the inert matter, such as a table, a chair, a piano; more so, you should then be able to animalize matter that is already animated, especially in birds.*" Well, according to the principles of Spiritism this does not exist.

To begin with let us be clear about the facts. What is a medium? It is an individual who serves as the intermediary to the spirits so that they can easily communicate with people; incarnated spirits. Therefore, without the medium there is no tangible, mental, written, physical or any other type of communication. There is a principle that I am sure is accepted by every spiritist: those who are similar act with their peers and as their peers act. Well then, who are the peers of the spirits if not the spirits themselves, incarnated or not? Do we need to repeat it again? I will tell you once more: Your perispirit and ours are both extracted from the same environment; they have an identical nature. In one word they are similar. Both have the property of assimilation and magnetization more or less developed which enable us, discarnate and incarnate, to promptly communicate with one another. Finally, there is something that is truly part of the medium, a special affinity, the very essence of the medium, and that at the same time is a power of expansion that removes any deflection from occurring, establishing something similar to an electric current between the medium and us; like a fusion which facilitates our communications. In fact it is exactly this deviated property of matter that opposes the development of mediumship in most people who are not mediums. It is this same rejection of property that one must attribute the fact that certain individuals who are not mediums may develop mediumship by the mere contact with novice or somewhat passive mediums, that is to say, if they are lacking some mediumistic skills.

People are always willing to exaggerate everything. Some – I am not talking about the materialists – refuse to believe that animals even have a soul and others want to give animals a soul similar to ours. Why would they want to confuse the perfectible with the non-perfectible? No, no. Rest assured that the fire that animates animals, the breath that gives them life, that makes them move and communicate through their own language, has at present, no ability to blend, to unite, to merge with the divine breath, the ethereal soul, in a word, the spirit, that animates the essentially perfectible being, man, the king of creation. Now, isn't this character of perfectibility exactly what marks the superiority of the human race above other Earthly species? Well Then! You must acknowledge that it is not possible to attribute to any other living species on Earth the inherent perfectibility of human beings.

Take the dog whose superior intelligence has made him a friend and companion of humans; is the dog perfect by itself through its own personal initiative? Nobody would accept that since dogs do not enable other dogs to advance and the best trained dog is always trained by its human trainer. The otter has always built its home on the water following the same proportions and an unchanged rule since the world began. The nightingales and the swallows have never built their nests differently from their parents. A nest of a sparrow from before the floods is the same as the one built in modern day, built in the same way and using the same system of intertwining straws and debris of vegetation collected during the spring, the season of love. The bees and ants in their little domestic republics have never changed their habits of catering and provisioning, both in their attitudes, customs and ways of production. Finally, the spider has always weaved its web in the same way.

On another hand, if you are searching for the tents and huts built with barks and leaves from man's earlier times on Earth, you will find castles and palaces of modern civilization in their places. The outfits made of brute animal skin were replaced by fine fabrics of gold and silk. You can find proof of the advancement of human society in every step of the way.

There is a constant, invincible, undeniable progress of the human race and an indefinite standstill of other animal species, therefore you will acknowledge that while there are common principles uniting every living creature on Earth, the breath of life and matter, it is not less true that only you, the incarnate spirits are subjected to that unavoidable law of progress that always and relentlessly pushes you forward. God placed the animals by your side to feed you, dress and accompany you. They were given a certain level of intelligence because they must understand you in order to help you, and their intelligence is limited to the

type of service they are expected to do. God in his wisdom did not want them to follow the same law of progress. They shall remain as they are until the extinction of their species.

It has been said that the spirits mediumized and made inert matter move, chairs, tables and pianos. They make them move, that is correct, but the spirits don't turn them into mediums! That is for the very reason again, that none of those effects could have been produced without mediums. What is so extraordinary is the fact that we give motion to the inert and passive matter, when it is that very passivity that is adequate for us to determine the impulses and motions that we wish to give it? We need mediums for that, it is true. But there is no need to have them present or conscious since we can act with the elements provided by the medium, by default and even in their absence, particularly in cases of tangibility and apportations. Our fluidic envelope, more imponderable and subtle than the most imponderable and subtlest of your gases, mixing and combining with the heavier and more animalized envelope of the medium, whose properties of expansion and penetrability are not detected by your material senses, nearly inexplicable to you, enables us to move furniture and even break it in empty rooms.

The spirits can certainly become visible and tangible to animals, often taken by surprise by a fear that doesn't make sense to you and that can be caused by the sight of one or several bad spirits who appear unfriendly towards the individuals present or the animal's owner. Very often you will find horses that don't want to move, stalling before an imaginary obstacle. Well then! You can be certain that the imaginary obstacle is frequently a spirit or a group of spirits who are having fun by deterring them from moving forward. Remember the donkey of Balaam that saw an angel with its flaming sword and refused to move. Before making himself visible to Balaam the angel was first seen by the animal. But I repeat, we do not mediumize directly animals or inert matter. We always need the conscious or unconscious support of a human medium since we need the union of similar fluids, something that is not found in animals or in inert matter.

They say that Mr. Thiry magnetized his dog. What happened? He killed the dog; this unfortunate animal fell into a state of unresponsive lifelessness as a consequence of being magnetized. In effect, infusing the dog with a fluid of a superior essence to its nature, acted like a strike of lightning, although much slower. Thus we instantly kill an animal by trying to magnetize it for there is no feasible assimilation between our perispirit and theirs.

Having said that, I still fully recognize that animals have several abilities; that they may show certain feelings and passions similar to humans; that they are sensitive and grateful, vindictive and hateful depending on how they are treated. God, in doing nothing incomplete, has given domestic animals as companions and servants, the qualities of sociability that are missing entirely by the savage animals who live in the wilderness. To summarize: mediumistic acts cannot occur without the conscious or unconscious support of a medium, and it is only among humans that we can find those capable of serving us as mediums. As for training dogs, birds or other animals to perform this or that exercise, that is your business and not ours.

Erastus

OBSERVATION: Regarding the discussion that took place at the Society about animal mediumship Mr. Allan Kardec said that he had carefully observed experiments carried out lately with birds to which people were attributing mediumistic skills, adding that he was able to unequivocally identify conjurer's tricks employed with great ability to delude the spectator who is easily satisfied by the appearances, without investigating the bottom line. The birds in fact do things that could lead to the belief that they

have superior intelligence and that not even the most lucid somnambulist would be able to reproduce, from which one could conclude, contrary to the laws of nature, that these birds have intelligence superior to human beings.

What is really remarkable about these experiments is the art, the patience needed to train the animals, making them docile and attentive. In order to achieve these results one needs a lot of flexibility, typically found in domesticated animals where there is much more habit than deception. The proof is that if they are no longer trained for some time they soon forget what was learned previously. The appeal of such experiments, as with any other trickery, is in the secrecy behind the processes. Once the process is known, the attraction is over. That is what happened when the conjurers wanted to imitate lucid somnambulism with their double vision. There could not be any illusion to anybody who was familiar with somnambulism. The same happens here with the mediumship of birds that any experienced observer can easily demystify.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

August 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

People! Silence!
Sent by Mr. Sabò, from Bordeaux
Medium, Mrs. Cazemajoux

I

Where do those children dressed in white robes run to? Their hearts illuminating with joy; a playful swarm, frolicking in green meadows where they will make an ample harvest of flowers and chase the bright insects that feed out of their cups. Carefree and happy they do not see beyond the blue horizon around them. If you do not hurry and incite the spiritist teachings in their hearts, their demise shall be terrible. The spirits of the Lord have crossed through the clouds and preach to you; listen to their friendly voices. Listen carefully; people, be silent!

II

They have grown and become strong. The beauty of some, the grace and abandonment of others are still alive in the hearts of their parents, the sweet memories of a distant time, but the smile that still thrives on their withered lips disappears to make room for serious concerns. It is they too, who have also drunk deeply from the enchanted cup of illusions of their youth and its subtle poison has weakened their blood, irritated their strength, aged their faces and receded their foreheads; they wanted to prevent their children from having a taste from the same poisoned cup. Brothers! Spiritism shall be the antidote that will prevent new generations from its mortal devastations. The spirits of the Lord have crossed through the clouds and preach to you; listen to their friendly voices. Listen carefully; people, be silent!

III

They have reached the age of adulthood; they are serious and thoughtful but not happy. Their hearts are jaded and have only one sensitive fiber: ambition. All their efforts, all their energy is employed in the acquisition of earthly goods. They see no happiness without distinctions and fortune. Fools! The angel of deliverance will one day knock at your door and you shall be forced to leave all those illusions behind. You are like exiles that God may call back to the homeland at any moment. You must not build palaces or monuments; a tent, clothes and bread, that is all you need. Be happy with that and give the excess to your brothers who lack shelter, clothing and food. Spiritism is here to tell you that the real treasures you must acquire are the love of God and neighbor; that will make you eternally wealthy. The spirits of the Lord have crossed through the clouds and preach to you; listen to their friendly voices. Listen carefully; people, be silent!

IV

Their foreheads now lean over the edge of the grave. They are afraid and want to raise their heads, but time has hunched their shoulders, stiffened their nerves and muscles and they are powerless to look up. Oh! What anguishes assail them! They review, in the privacy of their inner soul their useless and often criminal lives; remorse gnaws at them like a hungry vulture. So many times they have denied their God and they will appear at the edge of the grave, like an inexorable avenger. Have no fear, brothers, but pray. God may punish you in his justice but he will take your regret into account for Spiritism comes to tell you that there is no eternal punishment and that you are reborn to atone and purify. Also, you who are weary of your exile on Earth, you must make every effort to improve yourself so that you don't have to return.

The spirits of the Lord have crossed through the clouds and preach to you; listen to their friendly voices.
Listen carefully; people, be silent!

Byron

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

August 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Jean-Jacques Rousseau
Medium, Mrs. Costel

NOTE: The medium was involved with matters that were external to Spiritism. She was prepared to write about personal issues when an invisible power forced her to write the text below, despite her wishes to continue something that she had already started. That explains the beginning of the message.

**

“I am here Madam, although you have not called me. I come to tell you things that are much different from your concerns. I am the spirit of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. I have waited a long time for this opportunity of communicating with you. Listen now.”

“I believe that Spiritism is a pure philosophical study of the secret causes of the inner struggles of the soul, little or not at all defined so far. It shows new horizons, even more so than it reveals them. Reincarnation and the trials endured before the supreme objective is reached are no revelations but an important confirmation. I am impressed by the truth that is illuminated by such an *instrument*. I say *instrument* on purpose because the way I see it, Spiritism is a lever that removes the barriers of blindness. The preoccupation with moral issues has still to be created; politics are discussed that stir the general interest; the private interests are also discussed; some are passionate about attacking or defending personalities; the systems have supporters and adversaries, but the moral truths that are the bread of the soul, the bread of life, those are left underneath the dust accumulated over the centuries.”

“All improvements are useful to the eyes of the crowd except that of the soul. Your education, your elevations are illusions good at most to occupy the leisure of priests, poets, women or the status quo.

If Spiritism can resuscitate Spiritualism it will then return to society the momentum that gives inner dignity to some, resignation to others, and to everyone the need to rise to the Supreme Being, forgotten and neglected by His ungrateful creatures.”

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

August 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Controversy
Sent by Mr. Sabò, from Bordeaux

“Oh! God! My Lord, my Father and my Creator, kindly provide your servant with a little bit of that human eloquence that used to speak to the hearts of our brothers, gathering around the pulpit to learn about the truths that you have taught them.

By sending His spirits to teach your true duties towards Him and your brothers God wishes above all that charity be the driving force in all of your actions, and your brothers who still wish to revive their days of regret remain on the path of pride. But these times are long gone for you, and always praise the Lord for allowing humanity to stop their religious disputes that have never produced anything positive and have been the cause of so much harm. Why would you want to discuss the texts of the Gospels, when you have already interpreted it in so many ways? Those comments were produced when Spiritism was not here to clarify it for you, and it tells you: The morality of the Gospels is the best that there is; follow it. However, if deep down in your conscience a voice cries out to you: For me there is still this or that obscure point that doesn't allow me to think differently from my brothers! Elohim, my brother, leave aside what disturbs you; love God and charity and you shall be on the right path. What served as the fruit of my long vigils when I lived in your world? Nothing. Many did not even read my texts that were not written by the hand of charity and even attracted persecution onto my brothers.

Controversy is always fueled by a feeling of intolerance that can become offensive and the stubbornness with which everyone sustains their positions and postpones the time when the great human family will respect all beliefs, acknowledging past mistakes and no longer raising their weapons for the destruction of fraternal bonds. To give you an example of what I have just said, open up the Gospel and you will find these words: *‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live’*.

Many of you condemn those who don't follow the religion that has the teachings of the *Incarnate Word*. Many of them, however, sit by our Lord's side for they were righteous and through that they worshiped and loved Him; they respected their brothers' beliefs; they sought the Lord when they saw the bloodthirsty fight of the people in their religious struggles; and yet they were unable to find the true meaning of Christ's words as blind instruments of their priests and ministers.

My God, I who lived in those days when our hearts stormed against our brothers from a different faith, had I been more tolerant; had I not condemned their interpretation of the Gospels, today they would be less belligerent towards their Catholic brothers, and everyone would have moved in strides towards the universal fraternity. However, the Protestants, the Jews, all religions that are in more evidence have their shrewd priests and doctors of the law and then, when a more disseminated Spiritism is studied by those enlightened brothers in good faith they will do as the Catholics did, and will bring the light to their brothers and appease their religious scruples.

Allow God to continue his work of moral reformation that must elevate all of you up to Him, all on the same level, and do not rebel against the teachings of the spirits who were sent by Him.”

Bossuet

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

August 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Poverty

Sent by Mr. Sabò, from Bordeaux

“The philanthropist of your world uselessly dream about something that will never happen. Remember Jesus’ words: ‘*You will always have poor people among you*’. Know that these words are the expression of truth. Now that you know Spiritism my friend, don’t you find it fair and equitable the inequality of conditions that raised your heart, full of grumbling against God who had not created everyone equally rich and happy?

Now that you understand that God’s doing is fair and perfect and that you know that poverty is a punishment or a trial, go and try to alleviate that misery but don’t show them utopias that may lead the unfortunate ones to believe in an impossible equality. It is certainly possible to mitigate a lot of suffering through a smart social organization, and that is what one must aim at, but pretending that poverty can be eliminated from the Earth is a hallucinatory idea.

Earth is a place of atonement hence, there will always be poor people making up for their previous abuse of their God given wealth, never realizing the kindness of doing good to their brothers; who hoarded piece by piece to accumulate unnecessary wealth that served nobody; who became rich off of the backs of widows and orphans. Oh! Those who are guilty along with their selfishness will have terrible return! Beware, however, to believe that all the poor suffer a punishment of being guilty. While poverty is a great atonement to some, it is also a trial to others, helping them to more rapidly achieve the sanctuary of the elected ones. Yes, there will always be the poor and the rich so that some may have the merit of resignation and others that of charity and devotion. Rich or poor you stand on a slippery slope that can push you off the cliff, like an incline where only your virtues can hold you back.

When I say that there will always be poor on the Earth, I mean that while there are vices that maintain Earth as a place of reparation to the perverse spirits that God will continue to send for their own punishment. It is through your virtues that you shall have the merit and God will only send good spirits and you will then create an earthly heaven out of an earthly hell.”

Adolph, bishop of Alger

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

August 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

Concord

Sent by Mr. Rodolphe, from Mulhouse

“My friends, be united. In unity you will find strength. Eliminate envy and the spirit of disagreement from your meetings. Do not envy the communications received by a particular medium, each one receives according to the disposition of their spirit and the perfection of their organs. Never forget that you are brothers and that fraternity is not illusory; it is a real fraternity; for he who may have been your brother in another existence, may be among you, belonging to another family. Be united in mind and heart; have the same communion of thoughts. Be worthy of yourselves, of the Doctrine that you profess and of the lessons that you were called upon to spread. Thus, be agreeable in your opinions, they do not have to be absolute.

Look to enlighten one another. Be worthy of your apostolic mission and give the world an example of good harmony. Be the living example of human fraternity, and show what can happen when men are sincerely devoted to the propagation of morality. With only one goal, you should have only one of the same thought and that is putting into practice what you teach. Your motto should be: Union and concord; peace and fraternity!”

Mardoqueu

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

August 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

The dawn of a new era
Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, medium Mrs. Costel

“I am here, the one that you did not evoke but who is willing to be useful to the Society whose objective is as serious as yours. I will speak about politics. Do not be afraid; I know the boundaries that must constrain me. The current situation in Europe offers a remarkable opportunity for study.

There has never been a time, and let us not forget the end of the last century, when the prejudices and abuses that have oppressed the human spirit; at no other time; has intellectual movement been bolder, more outspoken. I say this frankly because the European spirit walks alongside the truth.

Freedom is no longer a bloody phantom, but a beautiful and great goddess of public prosperity. Even in Germany, the country that I have described with so much love, the exciting breath of the times abates the last stronghold of prejudice.

Be happy, you who live in such a time; but even happier will be your descendants as the hour approaches; the hour announced by the Precursor; you will see the cleared horizon, but, as in the days of the Hebrews, you will remain on the threshold of the Promised Land but will not see the radiant Sun of new days.

Staël

Allan Kardec²⁸

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

September 1861

The style is the man – controversy among several spirits

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

The spirit Lamennais spontaneously gave the following dissertation at the Society on July 19th 1861, about Buffon's aphorism: *The style is the man*, received by the medium Mr. A. Didier. Considering that his point of view was being attacked, Buffon replied a few days later through Mr. d'Ambel. Then, in succession, the Viscount of Delaunay (by Mrs. Delphine de Girardin) and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, along with others, joined into the conversation. This is a curious and instructive controversy that we fully reproduced here. It must be noted that the controversy was neither premeditated nor provoked and that each spirit participated spontaneously. Lamennais started the discussion that was then followed by the others.

Lamennais' dissertation – medium Mr. A. Didier

There is a strange phenomenon in man, that's what I call the phenomenon of contrasts; we are speaking here of particularly elite natures; here is a fact: you will find in the spirit world that influential works strangely contrast with the private lives and habits of their authors. Mr. Buffon had said: *the style is the man*.

Unfortunately the master of style and elegance saw people through his own personal lenses. He saw what could be perfectly applied to him but hardly to other writers. The word style here is used in its broader sense and wider application. In our opinion the style is the more prominent and the purest form which man will present his ideas. All human genius is here before us and at a glance we can contemplate all the works of human intelligence: elegance in the Arts, Literature and Sciences. Far from stating like Buffon: The style is the man, we say perhaps a less concise less formulated way that man, due to his changing nature which can be vague, maddening and rebellious, often writes unlike his first nature and original inspirations; I would even say, contrary to his beliefs.

Often when we read the great works from one of the great geniuses of this century or another we say: What purity! What sensitivity! What a profound belief in progress! What greatness! We learn later that the author was not actually the moral author but the physical author, full of prejudice and preconceived ideas. That is an example of a grand phenomenon not only human but also spiritist. Hence, it is more common that man is not exactly the mirror image of his work. We also say: how many worn out poets, half-wits and disillusioned artists suddenly feel a divine spark illuminating their intelligence! Ah! Fact is that they hear another voice, not theirs. Man hears what the Prophet Isiah called the "*breath of the lips*", and that we call spirits. Yes, they hear that sacred voice but forget God and His light and attribute the merit to themselves. They receive grace in their art as others receive in their faith, and it sometimes affects those who want to deny it.

Lamennais

Buffon's replica Medium Mr. D'Ambel

You must know that I was a gentleman of letters, and that my style was one of prim and properness, and I smelled of gunpowder and Spanish tobacco. Isn't that the perfect confirmation of this truth: The style is the man? Although somewhat exaggerated they represented me with a sword on my side and a pen in my hand and I must confess that I enjoyed nice things, bright clothes with their laces and flamboyant jackets,

in a word everything that was elegant and delicate. Hence it is natural that I was always elegant and that is why my style carries with it, the stamp of good form, this fragrance of good company was equally found in our grand home of Sévigné. What would you want? I always preferred the alleyways and ladies bedrooms to the cabarets and low class crowds. Allow me, therefore, despite the opinion expressed by your contemporary Lamennais, to maintain my wise adage, supporting it with some examples collected from your modern authors and philosophers. One of the misfortunes of your time is that many people use the pen as their source for revenue; but let us forget these types of artisans that write aimlessly for or against an idea, according to the compensation they shall receive and who shouts the loudest, according to the moment: God save the King! God save the League (*the Holy League of the Duke of Guise - 1590*)! Leave them be, those to me are not serious authors.

So you see, Father, do not be offended if I use you as an example. Weren't your bad foundations always mirrored in your work? From your religious essay '*Indifference*' to your publication '*The words of a believer*', what a contrast as you say! Yet, your scholarly style is as sharp in one publication as it is in the other. You are ill-tempered, Father, you must agree, and you distil that anger in the bitter sorrow of every beautiful page you left us. With your button frock coat as well as your Priest's cassock, you remain downgraded, my poor Lamennais, now do not get angry, but agree with that *the style is the man*. From Lamennais I move on to Scribe, the happy man that is reflected in the calm and peaceful sitcoms. He is joyful, happy and sensible. He spreads usefulness, joy and happiness in his work. Neither drama nor blood is present in his works, just a few harmless duels to punish the traitor. Next comes Eugène Sue, the author of the *Mysteries of Paris*. He is as strong as his prince Rudolph, holding the callous hand of a worker in his worn out gloves. Like him, he is the advocate of popular causes. Look at your Dumas, a vagabond that dissipates his life and intelligence; he moves from the South Pole to the North as easily as his famous musketeers; with Garibaldi he is a conqueror; he enjoys the company of the Duke of Orleans and then to the intimacy of the Neapolitan beggars; creating romances with History and using History in his romances.

Look at the proud publications of Victor Hugo, with his embodied pride. '*I, me*' says Hugo the poet; '*I, me*', says Hugo on his Jersey rock. Look at Murger, that easy life singer, consciously playing his own role in the bohemia of his lyrics. Look at Gérard de Nerval with his strange and colorful style, fantasizing his life as he did in his writings. How many more have I left out that are even better! Like Soulié and Balzac, whose lives and work follow parallel paths! However, I believe these examples are enough for you not to deny in such absolute terms my maxim: the style is the man!

Dear Father, haven't you confused the form with the substance, the style with the thought? In any case it is all interconnected.

Buffon

Questions to Buffon regarding his communication

Q – Thank you for the spiritual communication you have kindly given us. There is one thing that really surprises us, is that you are so aware of every detail of our literature, enjoying with remarkable accuracy, the works and the authors.. Do you still read everything that is published? Kindly give us an explanation that will certainly be useful to our instruction.

A – We don't need much time to read and enjoy, at one glance we can perceive all the works that attract our attention. We are all involved with matters of your interest and look forward to your dear little group,

and you would not believe how many of those that you call notable men, that follow with benevolence the progresses of Spiritism. So, you have to think how happy I was to have my name mentioned by one of your faithful spirits, Lamennais, and also my pleasure in having the opportunity to communicate with you. In fact, when I was questioned during your last session I received something similar to the after-effects or repercussions from your thoughts; and not wanting the truth that I proclaimed in my writing to be reversed without being defended, I then prayed that Erastus would lend me his medium so that I could respond to Lamennais' argumentation. On another hand you must understand that each one of us remains loyal to his Earthly preferences. That is why we are attentive to the progress achieved by the incarnate writers the same as other incarnated authors are; or to what they intend to achieve with their works. Like Jouffroy, Laroque and la Romiguière are concerned with what happens to Philosophy, and Lavoisier, Berzelius and Thenard with Chemistry, each one cultivating their pastime and cherishing the memories of their own works, attentively following what their successors are doing.

Q – You provided in a few words an assessment of contemporary authors, dead and alive. We would really appreciate if you elaborate on your appreciation of some of them. It would be a methodic and very useful work to us. To begin with, we would like you to comment on the work of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, in particular his Paul and Virginia, condemned by you but that became one of the most popular works.

A – I cannot develop here a critical analysis of the works by Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. Nonetheless, with respect to my previous assessment of the past I must now confess: Like Mr. Josse, I was a little too much of a craftsman; in short, I was faithful to the spirit of literary fraternity, thus criticizing my most unwelcome and best competitor. Later I will give you my true appreciation of this renowned author if a really critique spirit like Merle or Geoffrey do not offer so.

Buffon

Lamennais' defense
by the Viscount de Launay
Medium Mr. D'Ambel

NOTE: Mrs. Girardin's name was mentioned in the conversations that took place at the Society about the current issue, although it was not mentioned by the spirits. This explains the intervention of a new responder in the communication below.

- You invited me, spiritists ladies and gentlemen, to the subject in your last sessions and I believe I have the right to intervene, as they say in the Palace. It was not without pleasure that I heard the profound dissertation by Lamennais and the lively response given by Mr. Buffon. There is, however, the need for a conclusion of the debate. Hence, I intervene and nominate myself the referee, in my own right. As a matter of fact, you requested a critic. I respond: '*prenez mon ours*'³⁰ since you may remember I was famed and feared for my confrontational criticism. I am really pleased to be able to go back to that much loved terrain. Thus, once upon a time... no, no, let us leave aside the trivialities and go directly to the matter at hand. Mr. Buffon, you wielded the maxims very well. It is obvious that you had value from a great century. Nevertheless, however a good a writer you may be, a Viscount of my likes is not afraid of taking the gloves on and crossing the pen with you. Now, my good man! You were very hard on our poor Lamennais,

30 An expression from the vaudeville style comedy, *L'Ours et le Pacha* by Eugene SCRIBE, meaning: to press somebody to get rid of something or somebody annoying (or cumbersome.)

treating him as a downgraded man! Is it his fault of this misled genius, that after masterfully writing his splendid study that you criticized, he turned to other fields and changed his beliefs? In terms of religion the pages of '*Indifference*' would have been signed by the best scholars of the Church. However, if those pages stood while the priest fell wouldn't you recognize the cause, you who are so strict? Ah! Look at Rome and remember its degenerate habits and you will find the key to that turnaround. Now! Rome is so far away from Paris!

The Philosophers, the scientists of thoughts, all these harsh diggers of my psychological state must never be confused with the writers of pure form; they write to entertain the public, the latter, write to push the barriers of Science. These are concerned with the truth; the others don't care about logic, they flee from consistency. In short what they want is what you were looking for yourself, my handsome Sir, that is, fame, popularity, and success, which can be summarized as a good tottering shield. As a matter of fact, with this exception, your witty response is very true and I applaud it with all my heart. The only difference is that you point to the individual while I point to the social. Finally I had to defend my contemporary who, you know well, has never been of habit to frequent cabarets, *alleyways or dressing rooms of the ladies*, or even suspicious gatherings of low level. From his mansard roof all he did was to feed the noisy sparrows that came to visit him in his cell at *Rue de Rivoli*. His supreme happiness was to sit at his modest table with a pencil and a notebook at hand with its blank pages. Oh! The sorrow and regrets of that great soul were justifiable since he married the Catholic Church to run away from the filthiness of a materialistic century, just to find it again sitting at the steps of the altar. Is it his fault if he could not probe the depth of the abyss to which he was thrown by the hands of the clergy? Yes, he is right in his bitter cries, as you say. Isn't he the living image of a misguided education and an imposed vocation?

Renegade Father! Do you know how many inept bourgeois threw such scorn on his face because he obeyed his conscience and convictions? Ah! Believe me happy naturalist; while you sought the beauties and the pen, praised by lovely sinners and applauded by perfumed hands, he painfully climbed his own Calvary! Like Christ, he drank his chalice to the end and hideously carried his cross! And you, lord of Buffon, don't you offer your own face to criticism, just a little? Let us see! Your style is flashy, like you, all dressed in tacky attire! And also, what an intrepid traveler you were! Have you visited countries... no, unknown libraries? What a tireless pioneer! Have you crossed forests!... no, unreleased and unpublished manuscripts! I agree that you covered your opulent body of works with a glaring varnish, very much like your. But from all those bulky volumes what is it that is actually yours, from your own study, your own contribution? The story of the dog, the cat or perhaps the horse? Ah! Lamennais wrote less than you did but it is all his, lord of Buffon: the form and the bottom line. The other day you were accused of not recognizing the works of the good Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. You excused yourself a little bit '*Jesuitically*' (hypocritical) but you did not say if you had denied vitality to *Paul and Virginia*, that is this kind of work, being that you remain still at the great Scudery, or at the great Cyrus, or the land of Tendre³¹, and finally in all that sentimental rubbish that sells so well today at all the *bouquinistes* (booksellers at rail stations), the clothing shops of literature!. Ah! Mr. Buffon, those gentlemen no longer think much of you while the utopist Bernardin kept his prestige.

Universal peace, a utopia! Paul and Virginia, a utopia! Your judgment was crushed by public opinion. Let us not talk about it anymore, well, too bad!. You put the pen in my hand, I use it and abuse it. This will teach you, dear spiritists, to be concerned with a retired soldier of the pen like

31 From the works by Madeline de Scudery.

myself, asking for news about me. That Mr. Scribe was stunned with his latest half-successes; he wanted us to establish him at the Academy; but he still lacked the *palme verte* (*Academy recognition award-NT*) he was so happy on Earth that he still hesitates to take his new position. Bah! He will be comforted by watching the continuation of his plays and in a few weeks, it will be gone..

Not long ago you were given a charming fantasy not yet finished by Gérard de Nerval. Will that whimsical spirit finish it? Who knows! He wanted to conclude, however, that since the truth of the scholar is not in the true, the beauty of the painter is not in the beautiful and that the courage of the child is hardly rewarded, he did well by following the deviations of his dear fantasy.

Viscount de Launay (Delphine de Girardin)

NOTE: See *Fantasia* by Gérard de Nerval below

Buffon's response to the Viscount de Launay

You invite me back to a debate in which I had a short participation in order to avoid repeating myself. I confess that I would rather stay in the peaceful environment where I was than to be exposed to this kind of agitation. In my day, we used to exchange some pleasantries like Athenians but today, nuisance! You are bludgeoned with whipping blows. Thank you! I retire. I've had more than enough for me; because I am stilled marked by the blows from the Viscount. You must agree that although applied by the kind hand of a lady, they are not less painful. Ah! Madam, you remind me of charity in a not much charitable way. Viscount! You are too strong. I lay my weapons and humbly acknowledge my mistakes. I agree that Bernardin de Saint-Pierre was a great Philosopher. What am I saying? He found the philosophical stone and I am as I have been an indigestible compiler! Are you happier now? Now, be kind and no longer humiliate me like that or you will force a kind-man, friend of our Parisian group, to leave his post, something that he would do with great sadness for he insists on learning from the spiritist teachings and to follow with interest what happens here.

And look: Today I heard the report of phenomena that was so strange, that in my time the players or even the reporters of the events would have been burnt at the stake. Between us, are they really spiritist phenomena? How about the influence of their imagination on one side and some interests on the other? I would not bet on it. What is the opinion of the witty Viscount? As for myself, I wash my hands. In fact, if I believe in my sense of Naturalist, regardless of how much I am called an office of Naturalist, phenomena of that kind may only occur very rarely. Do you want my opinion about the Havana case? Well! There is a gang of bad guys there interested in discrediting the property so that it can be sold for nothing, and also some coward and shy owners who are scared of a well plotted phantasmagoria. Regarding the lizard, I remember well having written about it but I must confess that I have never found any of them graduating at the medical school. That is a weak medium influenced by his imagination about events that were not real.

Buffon

NOTE: This last paragraph refers to two events that were reported during the same session, to be published in another issue of the Review for lack of space. Buffon gave his spontaneous opinion about them.

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's answer

Medium Mrs. Costel

I, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, come to take part in a debate in which my name was cited, discussed and defended. I cannot agree with my witty defender. Buffon is more than just an eloquent compiler. Never mind the literary and subtle mistakes about things of nature lost in the rivalry and professional jealousy. Yet, my views are very much opposed to his and as Lamennais said: 'No, the style is not the man'. I am an eloquent proof of that, me whose sensibility was entirely mental and who invented what others felt. Earthly things are analyzed without emotions from the other side of life. I do not deserve the literary reputation that was granted to me. Had Paul and Virginia been published today and it would be washed out by so many other delightful productions that go unnoticed. It is because progress of your time is big, bigger than you can assess. Everything evolves: Science, Literature, Social Arts; they all rise like the ocean tides that are not noticed by the seaman that is offshore. You are offshore.

I return to Mr. de Buffon whose talent I acknowledge and whose criticism I forget, and also to my witty defender that can uncover the spiritual meanings of all truths, giving them a paradoxical color. Hoping to have demonstrated to you that we the dead scholars do not keep any hard feelings, I thank you and remain available to help in any way I can be useful to you.

Bernardin de Saint-Pierre

Lamennais to Buffon

Medium Mr. A. Didier

One must be careful Mr. de Buffon. My conclusion was not absolutely human and literary. I looked at the issue in a very different way and here is what I inferred: 'Human inspiration is often divine inspiration'. There was nothing controversial about that. I no longer write with that intent as you can readily see from my reflections about the influence of art upon our hearts and brains. I avoided the world and personalities. Let us not go back to the past. Let us look forward to the future. It is up to people to judge and to discuss our work. It is up to us to provide them with new work, all stemming out from this fundamental principle: Spiritism. As for ourselves, good-bye to the world!

Lamennais

Fantasia

by Gérard de Nerval
Medium Mr. A. Didier

NOTE: We must remember that when Buffon spoke about the contemporary writers he said: *Look at Gérard de Nerval with his strange and colorful style, fantasizing his life as he did in his writings*. Instead of arguing he spontaneously dictated the following article that he called *Fantasia*. The text was written in two sessions and in the interim Viscount de Launay responded to Buffon. That is why he said that he did not know if that capricious spirit would finish the work, then offering the likely conclusion. This message

was purposely left out of the chronological order to avoid interruption in the series of comments and replicas since Gérard de Nerval did not take part in the debates but by this Philosophical allegory.

- One day in one of my fantasies I was near the sea, not knowing how I ended up there by this small and unknown harbor. Never mind! I got separated from my traveling companions for a few hours so that I could indulge myself in the most turbulent Fantasia, the term used in my mental appreciations.

One must not believe, however, that every fantasy is like a crazy girl surrendered to the eccentricities of her own thoughts. It is common to see the poor little one smiling to hide her tears and dreaming to avoid her deception. Her heart is sometimes taken by love and curiosity, lost in her clouded thoughts. It might be perhaps an excess of love, lack of imagination.

Leave her alone with her love and contemplation. That is how one day I had her by my side, looking at the sea surrounded by the horizon when in our own solitude I saw this old honorable man, my word! He seemed worn out but fortunately he had had his time; his exhausted nerves and muscles replaced by the wisdom and harmony visible in his gestures; he showed a very positive attitude. He sat down and examined the terrain around, checking to make sure that he would not be stung by one of the little creatures that thrive under the sand of the sea; his walking stick with its golden handle was left aside. You can only imagine my surprise when he put his glasses on. Glasses! To see the vastness!

Fantasia stood up in astonishment, wishing to throw herself at him. I was hardly able to calm her down. I sneaked from behind a rock and listened to him saying: *'There you are, the mirror image of our lives! The great whole, there you are! Profound truth! There you have our lives, superior and inferior, profound and petty, troubled and calm! Oh! Waves! Waves! Great universal journey!'*

The little old man then murmured the words to himself only. Up until that moment Fantasia was quiet and listening respectfully, but she couldn't help it anymore and then she laughed out loud! All I could do was to take her in my arms and leave the man behind.

'In reality', said Fantasia, *'he must be a member of some scholarly society.'* After running for some time we saw a canvas with a painting showing the tip of a rock kissed by the first waters of the ocean. We both observed it. The painter would certainly be looking around, trying to find another site. I looked at the painting and to the sea, and again to the painting and to the sea, alternatively. Fantasia wanted to tear off the painting into pieces. It was hard to hold her back. – *'How come!'* she said. *'It is 7 am and I see in this painting an anonymous effect!'* I understood perfectly well what Fantasia was telling me.

It does really make sense, that crazy girl, I told myself, and I wanted to get away. Alas! The hidden artist had followed every single subtlety of my facial expression; when his eyes met mine there was a terrible shock, an electrical shock. He gave me one of those looks as if saying: *'You little worm.'* This time Fantasia was stunned by such an insolence, watching him returning to his palette. *'You do not have one of Lorrain's palettes'*, she said with a smile on her face. She then turned to me and said: *'We have seen the true and the beautiful. Let us now try to find the good.'*

Then, climbing the rocks I saw the child of a fisherman, about thirteen or fourteen years old; he was playing with a dog, one running after the other, the dog barking, the boy laughing. All of a sudden I heard some screams that seemed to have come from the bottom of the cliff; the boy then

dashed through a trail that led to the beach; Fantasia could hardly follow him, despite her energy; when I got to the bottom of the cliff I saw a terrifying scene; the boy struggling against the waves and bringing ashore a wretched man who was resisting the rescue; I tried to rush in support but the child shouted back asking me not to do that; bruised, trembling and tired, the boy successfully took the man out of the water after some time. Apparently it was a swimmer who had ventured too far, falling into and dragged by a current.

I will continue another time.

Gérard de Nerval

NOTE: The communication of Viscount de Launay given above was produced in this interval.

Continuation

A little while later the wretched came gradually back to life, but just to say: *‘That is incredible! How could it be since I swim so well!’* He knew perfectly well who had saved him and yet he looked at me and said: *‘Wow! That was close! You know, there are times when we lose it. It is not our strength that fails us but...but...’* I knew he could not go on hence I quickly said: ‘Fortunately thanks to this brave young man you are safe.’ He looked at the boy who observed him indifferently and resting his hands on his waist he added: ‘True, really.’ He then said farewell. Fantasia wanted to go after him. ‘Now, then!’ she said holding her horses, ‘in fact it is very natural.’ The boy saw him leaving and returned to his dog. This time Fantasia cried.

Gérard de Nerval

Following a remark from a member of the Society indicating that the conclusion was still missing Gérard added the following words: ‘I am prepared with all my heart to write another essay. Regarding this one, Fantasia tells me to stop here. She might be wrong. She is so whimsical!’

The conclusion had been given in anticipation by the Viscount de Launay.

Erastus’ conclusion

After the literary and philosophical tournament that took place over the last sessions of your Society, followed with satisfaction by us, I find it necessary to give you some thoughts from a purely spiritist point of view, and that came to mind after that interesting debate in which I didn’t want to intervene by no means. Before anything else you must know that your animated sessions were nothing compared to the animation that surrounded the large groups of eminent spirits attracted by the academic debates. Ah! If you were a clairvoyant medium you would have been surprised and confused by that superior entourage! However, my intention today is not to unveil what took place among us. My only objective is to bring you a few words about the benefit that can be taken away from the discussion from the point of view of your spiritist instruction.

You know Lamennais very well and you certainly appreciate how much that Philosopher remains attached to abstract ideas. You know how closely and with which talent and persistence – I must say – he has been following your philosophical and religious theories. From that you must deduce

that the thinking individual even beyond the grave, his studies and works, and that means that that awareness is the special prerogative of the spirits, he must remove every material element that used to obfuscate him when comparing his spiritual to his human thoughts. Behold, what is true to Lamennais is equally true to the others, each one keeping their own skills and originality in the vast domain of the spiritual world. Buffon, Gérard de Nerval, the Viscount de Launay, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, they all keep their remarkable tastes and literary styles as Lamennais does. It seems proper to call your attention to the fact that in our world beyond the grave, the spirits do not abandon their inclinations, tendencies and passions just because they left their human layer behind.

The spirits are like prisoners on Earth to be freed by death but similarly to someone in jail that keeps the same individuality and tendencies when freed. It is the same with the spirits regarding their personality and skills on arriving here among us, with the only exception of those who did not lead a life of work and trials but one of punishment, like the mentally challenged. For those, their intelligent faculties are kept in a latent state, awakening when they leave their Earthly prison. This, as you know, applies to the inferior or to the intermediate spiritual world but not to the more elevated spirits that are free from the influence of matter.

Take your vacation, dear members of the Society. Allow me a few friendly words before we go our own ways. I do believe that the reassuring Doctrine that we came to teach you counts on serious followers. Since it is of the essence that each and everyone be submitted to the law of progress, I advise you to search in the bottom of your hearts and inquire about the actual benefit that you personally found in our spiritist works and what kind of moral improvement has resulted from that. You must understand that it is not enough to say: '*I am spiritist*', keeping that belief to yourself. All that you need to know, is if your actions comply with the prescriptions of your new faith that is, which can never be repeated enough: *love and charity*. May God be with you!

Erastus

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

September 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Talion's law³²

Society, August 9th, 1861. Medium Mr. d'Ambel

The Society receives the following note from a corresponding member:

“One of my relatives, Mr. Antonio B... a renowned writer much appreciated by his contemporaries and who used to work as a government official in the Lombardy region, where he completed positions of distinction and integrity; about ten years ago and as a consequence of a stroke, he fell into a state of apparent death that unfortunately and as it sometimes occurs, was mistaken for the actual death. In this case the error was even easier to be made since signs of physical decomposition were observed. Fifteen days after the burial a fortuity led the family to make a request to have the body exhumed. The reason was a medallion mistakenly left inside the casket. During the procedure the witnesses were stunned by the observation that the body had changed position inside the coffin; he was turned and an even more terrifying thing: he had partially eaten one of his own hands. It was then attested that the unfortunate Antonio B... had been buried alive; he must have definitely died of desperation and hunger. Nevertheless, and after this sad event with its moral and emotional consequences, wouldn't it be interesting, from a spiritist and psychological point of view, to enquire the spiritual world about it?”

1. (Evocation of Antonio B...) – A. What do you want from me?
2. One of your relatives asked us to have you evoked. We gladly do so and would feel happy if you could kindly answer our questions. – A. Yes, I want to respond really.
3. Do you remember the circumstances of your death? – Ah! Of course I do. I remember. Why do you want to bring back that memory of punishment?
4. Is it true that you were buried alive? – A. That is how it should be since the apparent death had all signs of real death. I was very feeble. Nobody is to blame for something that was predicted from before my birth.
5. Should we stop since these questions bring you painful memories? – A. No, go on.
6. You had the reputation of a good man and we would like to see you happy. – A. Thank you so much. I know you will pray for me. I will do my best to respond but if I fail I will be replaced by one of your guides.
7. Could you describe to us the sensation that you experienced at that terrible moment? – A. Alas! What a painful ordeal! Feeling imprisoned inside the four wooden walls, incapable of moving or changing position! One cannot scream since there isn't enough air. Oh! What a torture to try to breathe in an environment where there is no Oxygen! I felt like a condemned prisoner sent to the gorges of an oven but without the heat. Oh! I wish such tortures to no one. No, I wish no one will have such a fate like mine. A cruel punishment for a cruel and ferocious existence! Don't ask me

32 An eye for an eye (NT)

about my thoughts at that time. I dove deep into the past and only vaguely could I foresee the future.

8. You say a cruel punishment for a cruel and ferocious life but so far your spotless reputation would never suggest such situation. Can you explain that? – A. What is the duration of an existence before eternity? It is true that I behaved well in my last incarnation but I had agreed to that before returning to humanity. Ah! Why do you question me about that painful past only known by me and by the spirits, the ministers of the Almighty? You must know that in a previous existence I buried a woman alive, my wife, in a crypt! It was talion's law that I had to apply to myself! An eye for an eye.
9. We thank you for your kindness in responding to our questions and we pray that God may forgive your past given the merit of your latest existence. – A. I will return later; indeed. The spirit of Erastus would like to complete the learnings.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

September 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Lamennais' thoughts about the previous message

God is good! However, mankind must endure the hardest trials before achieving perfection. This unfortunate lived several centuries under desperate agony, and although he had led an honorable life this event was to take place, since he had chosen it.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

September 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Erastus' thoughts about the previous message

The lesson to be learned from the above is that all existences are interconnected and there is not a single one that is independent from the others. The worries, troubles and great pains that hurt people are always consequences of a badly lived life or a criminal one. I must tell you, however, that experiences like that endured by Antonio B... are rare and that the man whose last existence was a blameless life, chose that trial to reduce his time in errativity, to more quickly reach the higher spheres. Indeed, after a period of confusion and mental distress, to still atone for his horrible crime, he shall be forgiven and move on to a more advanced world where he is going to meet his victim who awaits him and who has forgiven him long ago. Therefore you must learn from this cruel example, my dear spiritists, and patiently withstand the physical and moral sufferings as well as the small miseries of life.

Q – How can humanity benefit from such punishments? – A. The punishment is not made to better humanity, but to punish the guilty individual. As a matter of fact humanity has no interest in seeing the suffering of one of its own. Here, the punishment was appropriate to the fault. Why do we see mad people? How about the mentally challenged? The paraplegic? Why do some die in a fire? Why the long years of agony to some who can neither live nor die? Ah! Believe me! Respect the sovereign, will and do not try to fathom the reasons of providential order. You must know that God is just and he knows well what he is doing.

Erastus

OBSERVATION: Isn't there a great and terrible lesson in this case? God's justice always reaches the guilty one and although it may seem late, it is not less just. Isn't that essentially moral to know that even when culprits finish their lives in peace and sometimes even surrounded by abundance of material means, sooner or later their time will come? Such penalties are then understood not just for being close to us but for being logical. We believe because it is admitted by reason. Now, we ask this: isn't the picture drawn by Spiritism better to hold near death than that of the eternal flames dismissed by Spiritism? Let us just read again the evocations published in this Review and we will see that there isn't a single vice that does not carry its corresponding punishment, as there isn't a single virtue that does not carry its reward, both in proportion to the level of culpability or to the merit of each one because God takes into account all the circumstances that may mitigate harm or increase the compensation of good.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

September 1861

Correspondence

Letter from Mr. Mathieu about the mediumship of birds

“Paris, August 11th, 1861

Dear Sir,

It is me again writing to you with your permission to pay another tribute to the truth.

It was only today that I read in the latest issue of your Review your excellent observation about the alleged mediumship of birds and I am fast to thank you for the service that you have done to a cause defended by both of us. Several exhibitions of wonderful birds have taken place over the last few years, and since I knew the principal tricks employed to get the desired results out of those flying creatures I was sad to hear certain spiritualists or spiritists attributing those feats to a mediumistic action, certainly provoking hidden smiles on the lips of the birds owners. There is something, however, that those owners are in no hurry to belie and I come to do so in their place since you give me the occasion; I don't do so to harm their business, I am not angry, but to prevent a deplorable confusion between the effects that ingenious patience and some skilled hands, produced on these birds versus the intervention produced by the spirits on us.

You are perfectly right when you say: *‘Those birds do things that not even the most intelligent person, not even the most lucid somnambulist could do, from what one must conclude that their intelligence is superior to human's, something that is contrary to the laws of nature.’* Your consideration should have caught the attention of some very enthusiastic persons who are not afraid of reaching out to mediumship to explain things that they cannot explain at first sight. However, judicious and coldblooded observers are still very rare and among the honest people who follow our studies there are those that cannot always defend themselves against the overexcitement of imagination and the dangers of illusion. Well, do you want me to tell you what I learned about those wonderful birds that we had the occasion of observing together one evening, if you remember?

One of my friends, attracted to any curiosity that shows up, one day showed me a long wooden shelf where there were a large number of small cards, placed side by side. The cards contained words, numbers, images of card games, etc. He told me that he had acquired them from a man that held shows with smart birds which had also sold him their method of utilization. He then showed me that certain cards had the superior and inferior borders constructed differently, some solid and others formed by two sheets, yielding an almost imperceptible slit between the two, invisible at a distance. He then said that the cards should be placed on the shelf sometimes with the slid pointing upwards, sometimes downwards according to the desire to have them removed from the shelf with their beaks or not touched by them at all. The bird was previously taught to pull every card that had a slit showing upwards. It seems that the preliminary lessons were given with tiny grains of corn or any other treat placed inside the slit. The bird ended up by learning that when there was a slit it should be touched, even retrieved, walking backwards.

There you have, Sir, the ingenious trick that my friend taught me. I am led to believe that a similar deception is used by all others who exploit the business of smart birds. All they have to do is to train the birds with a lot of patience and creating hunger on the birds' side of course. They must also learn to hide their tricks with their accomplices or through skillful conjuring in handling the cards and the accessories that are used in their experiments.

I am sorry to reveal the most important of their secrets. Nonetheless, the public will not enjoy less the smart birds regardless of the impossibility of the things they produce. On the other hand, I could not let people accept the opinion that leads to not less than the desecration of our studies. Given such a sacred interest I believe that my silence would be an exaggerated scruple. In case you agree Sir, please share this letter with your readers.

Yours sincerely, etc.

Mathieu”

There is no doubt that we agree with Mr. Mathieu and I am glad for sharing the same ideas about this issue. We thank him for the details that he kindly sent us and whose reading will certainly satisfy our readers. Spiritism is very rich of remarkable and authentic facts, not admitting those that touch the marvelous or impossible. It is only a very serious and deep study of this Science that can put the most doubtful persons on guard because that study gives them the key to the phenomena and shows them the boundaries within which they can be produced.

We said that if the birds operated their prodigies with knowledge and through their own intelligence then they would be doing what the most intelligent person cannot do or the most lucid somnambulist. This reminds us of the renowned *Munito* that we saw 25 or 30 years ago to beat his card game partner, adding up his totals before we could start the calculation. Without any vanity we have stronger skills in Arithmetic than that dog. They certainly used prepared cards in that game like in the case of the birds. As for the somnambulists, there is no doubt that some are lucid enough to produce effects as remarkable as those of the animals, a fact that does not invalidate our proposition. It is well known that lucid somnambulism, even the most developed, is essentially variable and intermittent by default; that it is subordinated to a number of circumstances, particularly the influence of the environment; that very rarely the somnambulist can see instantaneously; that it is frequently the case when the somnambulist does not see something at a given point in time, just to see it an hour later or even a day later; that what the somnambulist sees with one person is not seen with another. Supposing that the animals may have an analogous faculty, we would be forced to admit that they are not susceptible to be disturbed and that they may always utilize it and even twenty times a day if needed, without any alteration. Here is where we pointed out the fact that they could do things that even the most lucid somnambulist could not and this is what characterizes the maneuvers of conjuring like accuracy, punctuality, timeless, repeatability according to the will, and all that are contrary to the purely psychological phenomena of somnambulism and Spiritism, whose effects must always be patiently waited and may only rarely be provoked.

Even if the effects of what we have just discussed were due to artificial processes, that would not be strong enough to prove that there is no animal mediumship in general. Hence one needs to establish if the animals have the capability of serving as intermediaries between people and the spirits. Well, the impossibility is confirmed in Erastus' dissertation published in our August issue and another from the same spirit about the role of the mediums in the communications, published in July.

Letter from Mr. Jobard about the spiritists of Metz

“Brussels, August 18th, 1861

My dear master,

I have just returned from visiting the spiritists in Metz, as you did in Lyon last year. Instead of poor, simple and illiterate workers I found Counts, Barons, Colonels, military engineers, former students of the Polytechnic Institute and scholars renowned for their great works. They also offered me a banquet but it was a pagan banquet that had nothing in common with the modest feast of the early Christians. The spirit of Lamennais also reprimanded such arrogance in the following terms:

‘Poor humanity! Always picking up the debris from the environment of which you live; you materialize everything, a proof that the mud still stains your being. This is no criticism but a simple observation. Since your objectives are covered in the ornament of excellent intentions your chosen paths are not to be condemned. If you place side by side with your almost animal satisfaction the firm desire to sanctify and honor it, the purity of your pleasures will certainly multiply that a hundred times. The good words will also strengthen your friendship; together with the memories of this great day thanks to Spiritism which plays a great part,, do not leave the table without a thought addressed to your teachers, the good spirits, who deserve acknowledgement.’

May that serve as a lesson to those like Lucullus, to the Parisian Trimalchios, that devours in a single dinner what could feed a hundred families, pretending that it was God given pleasure for their enjoyment. To enjoy, yes, but not to abuse to the point of harming the health of one’s body and spirit. What are, I ask you, the need of those double, triple and quadruple services; that growing super fluidity of the most delicate wines from which God seems to have removed the taste, by a reverse miracle at the marriage of Cana, where it changes into poison for those who lose their reasoning to the point of becoming impervious to the warnings of their animal instincts? If Spiritism were spread among the high social classes and had the only effect of stopping gluttonous behaviors and the orgies on the tables of the riches, it would have done a great service to society, a service that conventional medicine itself could not do since the doctors themselves willingly share in the excesses that only render more disease, more stomachs to fix, more spleens to clear, more gout patients to console because they do not know how to heal them.

I must say, dear Master, that I found houses of former nobility in Metz that were very religious, who’s grandmothers, mothers, daughters and grandchildren and even their church officials obtained by a theological classification beautifully dictated, considering that they are inferior to the wise mediums of the Society that I am talking about. Having asked two spirits whether they had read a certain book; one said that he had read it and thought about it and spoke highly of the book. The other confessed not having read it but had heard a lot about it; a good book but offered some vagueness. Judged, exactly as among us here on Earth.

Another provided us with an attractive theory of cosmology, swearing it to be the purest truth, and since he went to the extent of unveiling God’s secrets about the future I then asked him if he was not God himself or if his theory was only hypothetical. He mumbled a few words and acknowledged that he had gone too far but that he was positive about these ideas. Thank goodness!

In a few days you will receive the first publication from the Spiritists of Metz, they have kindly asked me to oversee it; you will be happy, because it’s very good. You will find two dissertations by Lamennais about prayer that were read by a Catholic priest during the mass, declaring that it could only be the work of one man. Mrs. de Girardin visits them and like you, will recognize his spirit, feelings and style. (the

male form of 'his' is used here because Mrs. de Girardin went under the male pen name of Vicomte Delaunay to compete with the male authors of her time. - NT.)

The Society in Metz asked that I introduce them to the Belgian Society that consists of only two mediums, one French and one English. The Belgians are infinitely more reasonable. They feel sorry from the bottom of their heart that someone with as big a heart and intelligence as mine, covering all matters of sciences and technologies, believes in a crazy thing such as the existence and even immortality of the soul. They turned away with pity, saying 'What does that have to do with us!' That's what happened to me last night when I was reading your Spiritist Review, thinking that it could be of their interest, but they took it as a collection of false news for their own amusement.

Jobard"

OBSERVATION: We knew long ago that the city of Metz walks in strides on the path of the spiritist progress and that its officials are not the last ones to follow it. We are happy to have that confirmation from our honorable colleague Mr. Jobard. Thus, we will gladly publicize the works of that center established on serious foundations. We are sure that given the social position of their members, the works will certainly have a great influence. We shall soon speak of those from Bordeaux, sponsored by the Parisian Society, with already many members, elements and conditions to soon place it among one of the centers in the forefront.. We know Mr. Jobard's principles well enough to be sure that he did not want to make any offensive comparison between the spiritists of Metz, given their titles and positions, and the modest workers of Lyon that we visited last year. His only objective was to attest that Spiritism counts on followers in all social classes. It is a well-known fact that the first ones to be recruited were in the most enlightened ranks of society in order to prove to the adversaries that it is not a privilege of fools and ignorant, and also to get to the masses only after having cleaned and cleared every superstitious ideas. It was only recently that it entered among the working class but it made rapid progress there too because it brings supreme consolations to material sufferings, teaching courage and resignation to endure the trials of life.

Mr. Jobard is mistaken if he thinks that we only find the working class among the spiritists of Lyon. Their contingency also included those from high level business, large commercial businesses, the arts and sciences.. It is true that the working class is the majority there and mostly due to local circumstances. Those workers are poor, as Mr. Jobard said. That is a reason to reach out to them. However, they have plenty of courage, eagerness and devotion. If they have only a piece of bread they know well how to share it with their brothers. They are also simple, that is true, and they don't bear the pride or the presumptuous of knowledge; they are relatively illiterate, it is true, but not in the absolute sense. Although they may lack science, they have a lot of reason and common sense to evaluate what is fair, and to be able to distinguish between the rational and the absurd in what they are taught. We were able to assess it ourselves. That is why we take the opportunity to pay a fair tribute to them. The letter below, inviting us to visit them again this year, reflects the happy influence of spiritist ideas and the results we should expect when they will be widespread.

“Lyon, August 20th 1861

My good Mr. Allan Kardec,

If it has been a long time since my last correspondence, please do not take it as an air of indifference on my part. Knowing the large amount of correspondence that you receive, I only write when there is something important to tell you. I shall then tell you, that we are counting on you to visit us again this year and to kindly let us know the time and place of your arrival as precisely as possible since this year the number of spiritist has grown significantly, particularly in the working class. Everyone wants to see and hear you and although they know that it is the spirits that dictate the work they are eager to see the man chosen by God for this great mission. They want to tell you about their great happiness for being able to read your works and compliment you for their own moral progress, thanks to your instructions, they endeavor to become kind, patient and resigned in their own miseries, of which there is so much in Lyon, particularly in the silk weaving industry. Those who still moan and groan are the beginners. The instructed ones tell them: Courage! Our penalties and sufferings are trials or consequence of our previous lives; God who is good and just will make us happier and will reward us in new incarnations. Allan Kardec told us so and he demonstrates that in his writings.

We chose a place that is more spacious than the previous time considering that we shall have more than a hundred people. Our meal will be modest, as there will be many with small purses; it will be the pleasure of our reunion more than anything else. I will make sure that there will be spiritists from all classes and all walks of life so that everyone can understand that we are all brothers. Mr. Déjou is in charge and highly dedicated to this matter. He will bring his large group along.

Yours sincerely,

C. Rey”

We were also honored by another invitation from Bordeaux, as follows:

“Bordeaux, August 7th, 1861

My dear Mr. Kardec,

Your latest Spiritist Review announced that the Society will be on vacation from August 15th to October 1st. Can the spiritists of Bordeaux expect to be honored by your visit during that break? That would make us very happy. The most enthusiastic followers of the Doctrine, whose members’ increases daily, would like to organize a society subordinated to that of Paris in terms of the works. We have created rules and bylaws based on those of the Parisian Society and would like to submit it to you. Besides the main Society there will be groups of ten to twelve people in several areas of town, particularly in the working class areas where from time to time there will be members of the Society to give advice as needed. All of our spiritual guides are in agreement that Bordeaux must be a society of studies since this town will be the center of propagation of the Doctrine in the South. We happily await you with confidence that you will join us on the memorable inauguration day and we hope you will be satisfied with our eagerness and mode of operation. We are ready to submit ourselves to the wise advice of your experience. Come then to see our work. The server is known by his work.

Your dedicated servant,

A. Sabò”

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

September 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

A spirit to his fellow Israelites

For the readers that remember the beautiful communication published in our last March issue about Moses' Law and Christ's Law, signed by Mardoqueu and received by Mr. R..., from Mulhouse; that gentleman received another equally remarkable message from the same spirit and it will be published. The message below is from another deceased relative who died a few months ago. It was given on three different occasions.

To all those who I met

I

My friends,

Be spiritists, I beg this of all of you. Spiritism is the law of God, which is the law of Moses, applied to the present. When Moses gave the law to the Israelites, he had done what God had given to him, and God had appropriated it to the people of that time. Mankind then progressed in all fields; in science as in morality. Today everyone knows how to proceed; everyone knows how to pay respect to the Creator, to their neighbors and to themselves. We must now broaden the base of education. What Moses taught you is no longer sufficient to help the progress of humanity and God does not want you to stay at the same point; what was good 5,000 years ago is not good today. When you want to see the progress of your children do you always send them to the same school where they would only learn the same thing? No. You send them to a superior school. Well, my friends! The time has arrived where God wants you to expand the scope of your knowledge. Even Christ, although he did make a step forward to the Mosaic law, did not say everything since he would not have been understood but he sowed the seeds that should be harvested and utilized to the benefit of future generations. God in his infinite goodness sends us Spiritism today whose foundations are entirely found in the Bible and in the Gospels, to elevate you and to teach you to love to one another.

Yes, my friends, the mission of Spiritism is the extinction of any hatred among men, among nations, it is the dawn of universal brotherhood that arises; with Spiritism you can only reach a broad and lasting peace. Arise then, peoples! Stand up because God who is the Creator of all things sends you the spirits of your relatives to open up a new path to you, a path greater and wider than the one you still follow. Oh! My friends, don't be the last ones to surrender before the evidence since God will raise his hand against

the non-believers and stiff-hearted who must disappear from Earth so that the forthcoming kingdom of good is not disturbed. Believe in the warning of this one who was and is always your relative and friend.

May the Israelites take the lead! May they quickly and without delay hold the flag sent by God to mankind to unite everyone like in a single family! Take the weapons of courage and resolution. Show no hesitation. Don't allow the stragglers to keep you behind by talking about sacrileges. No, my friends, there is no sacrilege. Be sorry for those who wish to keep you behind based on such pretexts. Doesn't reason tell you that there is nothing immutable in this world? Only God is immutable but everything that was created by God must follow an inexorable progressive course because that is his design. So don't try to stop the Earth from turning!

The institutions that were magnificent 5,000 years ago are ancient today. Their objective has been overtaken. They are not sufficient to today's society as what was once called the old regimen in France can no longer serve today's France. A new progress emerges without which all other improvements would lose their solid foundation. Such progress is the universal fraternity whose seeds were sown by Christ and now sprout with Spiritism. Would you then be the last ones to take that route? Don't you see that the old world is in an infantile stage of work seeking renovation? Look at the map, not the European but the world map and see that every archaic institution falls one after the other not to stand up ever again. Why? It is the dawn of freedom that rises up expelling despotism of all kinds, like the first rays of Sun light expelling the darkness of night. People are tired of animosity; they understand that their happiness depends on fraternity and want to be free, since they cannot improve and embrace one another while they are not free. Don't you see ahead of a great nation an eminent man with a God given mission to prepare the way? Don't you hear the somber cracks of the old world giving birth to a new era? You will soon see on St. Peter's chair a pontiff who will proclaim the new values, whose belief will permeate all peoples uniting all dissident beliefs in a single family. Be ready. I tell you this; raise the flag of such a great and sacred lesson so that you are not the last.

Israelites of Bordeaux and Bayonne, you are the vanguard of progress, stand up and embrace Spiritism for that is the law of our Lord and praise God for having so promptly brought to you the means of reaching eternal happiness, the destiny of the elected ones.

II

My friends,

Don't be surprised when you read this communication. It comes from me, Edouard Pereyre, your relative, friend and fellow countryman. I dictated it to my nephew Rudolph whose hand I hold to make him write with my own writing. I make that effort to give you conviction, although it is tiresome to me and to the medium since he is forced to follow movements that are not his. Yes, my friends, Spiritism is a new revelation; you must understand the thorough reach of this word since it reveals to you a new force of nature, an unsuspected force that nonetheless is as old as the world. It was known by the enlightened men of our past during Moses' time, and in such a way that you received the first teachings about man's duties towards his Creator, but he only gave what was compatible with the humanity of that time. Now that there is progress and the masses are illuminated; the stupidity and ignorance of the early ages begin to give way to reason and moral sense; now that the idea of God is understood by all, or at least by the majority, there is a new revelation simultaneously given to every educated people, although modified according to their degree of advancement. The new revelation tells you that people don't die; that the soul outlives the body and inhabits the spaces between you and around you. Yes, my friends. Rest assured when you lose a

beloved one. You only lost the physical body for they live among you, guiding, instructing and inspiring you. Hold your tears, particularly if that person was good, charitable and humble because then she is surely happy in this world where all religions confound in one and in the same worship, where there is no place for any religious hatred and jealousy.

Yes, we are also happy when we can inspire these feelings to those who we are in charge of instructing, a happiness that is even greater when we see them taking the good path since they open the door through which they must pass when coming to join us.

Ask the medium about the sublime lessons that he receives from his grandfather Mordecai. If he follows the designed path he will build himself a happy future but also if he fails his duties after those lessons he will bear the whole responsibility and will have to start again until he has adequately fulfilled his last task. Yes, my friends, we have already lived a corporeal life and will live others. The happiness that we enjoy is only relative. There are states more superior to the ones we experience now and that can only be achieved through successive and progressive incarnations in other worlds. You must not believe that Earth is the only inhabited planet from all those globes in the universe. Poor human pride of which thinks that all the stars are for only his delights! You must know that every globe is inhabited and if you only knew the rank occupied by Earth amongst these worlds, you would have no reason to glorify yourself! If we were not assigned with the mission to inspire and instruct you we would like to visit these worlds and learn ourselves! However, we are still attached to Earth by our missions and our bonds. Later on we will be replaced by others and we will then be able to go to those better worlds and learn from their experiences, thus gradually purifying ourselves until we get to God, our Creator! That is Spiritism. That is what is taught by Spiritism and that is the truth that you can understand today and that should help you regenerate. You must understand that you are all brothers, regardless if black or white, rich or poor, Muslims, Jews or Christians. Now, since everyone needs to be born again several times in order to advance, according to the very revelation made by Jesus, God allows that those who were united by blood or friendship in preceding existences meet again on Earth, not knowing one another, but in relative positions to one another according to the required atonement to clear their previous faults, so that the one who is your servant today could have been your master in a previous life, and the unfortunate one to whom you deny assistance to today, may perhaps be one of your ancestors that makes you so proud or a former dear friend. Can you now understand the reach of the commandment: *'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'*? That is, my friends, the revelation that will lead to universal fraternity when understood by everybody. That is why you must not remain stuck in your principles but follow the progress delineated by God, never stopping. That is why I have called upon you to hold the flag of Spiritism. Yes, be spiritists since that is the law of God and remember that happiness is in that path that will lead you to perfection. I will support you; me and all others that like me and as you know do the same.

May each family study Spiritism! May each family bear mediums so as to multiply the interpreters of God's will! Do not allow yourselves to be discouraged by the obstacles of the first trials. They are often surrounded by difficulties and not always free from danger, since there is no reward where there is no effort. Everyone can acquire that faculty but before you try to obtain it, you must study so that you can be forearmed against the hurdles. Throw your impurities away; enrich your thoughts and your heart so that you can keep the bad spirits away from you; pray, particularly for those who try to obsess you, for prayer can convert them and set you free. May the vanguard experience of your predecessors be beneficial to you, precluding you from falling in the same faults! I will continue these instructions.

Judaism was the first religion to inspire in man the idea of a spiritual God. Until then some people used to worship the Sun, others the Moon; here the fire, there the animals, but the idea of an immaterial essence of God was not presented anywhere. Then Moses arrived. He brought a new law that overturned all ideas received before him. He had to struggle against Egyptian priests who entertained their people in the most absolute ignorance, in the most sordid slavery. The priests who then enjoyed unlimited power could not see but with horror the propagation of a new faith, destroying the scaffolding of their organization, threatening their powerful status. That faith had in itself the light, the intelligence and the freedom of thoughts. It was a moral and social revolution. Hence every follower of that new faith, recruited in all social classes of Egypt, and not exclusively among the descendants of Jacob as mistakenly thought, were persecuted, oppressed and submitted to the harshest humiliations until finally expelled from the country, since they were contaminating the population with subversive and anti-social ideas. It is always the same when a progressive idea shows up in the horizon, reaching out to mankind. The same persecution and mistreatment follows the innovators who cast upon the soil of the new generation the fertile seeds of morality and progress; because any progressive innovation leads to the destruction of certain abuses and necessarily has by enemies all those who are interested in maintaining these abuses.

But God Almighty, who wisely leads every event that must stimulate progress, inspired Moses. He gave him powers that had never been seen before, and through the irradiation of that power whose effects reached the eyes of the most incredulous, Moses conquered a huge influence upon the population who blindly trusted their destiny, performing a miracle whose impression would remain from generation to generation, as permanent reminder of God's power and his prophet.

The passage of the Red Sea was the first act of liberation of the people. Nevertheless, they needed instruction. It was necessary to tame them through the power of reason and through the sometimes renovated miracles; it was necessary to give them faith and moralize them; they needed to trust the power and have faith in a God Creator, infinite Being, infinitely good and just. The trying forty years in the desert, among deprivations, suffering and circumstances of all sorts; the examples of insubordination severely reprimanded by a providential justice, all that contributed to the development of a faith in the Almighty Being whose benevolent hand they felt every day, sometimes a severe hand that punishes those who are brave.

The first revelation took place at Mount Sinai, the brilliant mystery that astonished the world, it captivated and spread on the Earth the first benefits of a moral that freed man from the claws of flesh and from a brute despotism; that placed mankind above the spheres of the animals, making them superior, capable of elevating to the supreme intelligence through their own progress.

The first steps of these people who had entrusted their destiny to the *man of God* were hindered by wars whose effect were to be the fertile seeds of a social renovation among the fighting tribes. Judaism became the focus of light, of intelligence and freedom and irradiated a remarkable light upon all neighboring nations, then provoking hatred and hostility. That immediate result was in God's plans, without which progress would have been very slow. While the wars disseminated the germs of progress, they were also a lesson to the Jews whose faith they revived.

These people, freed from another people, who had blindly entrusted the power of a single man, these people, had a mission, it was a predestined people. That is why it was said that the people were unknowingly on a mission, not noticed by the other peoples either. That tough mission was rich in gall and bitterness. Their apostles endured all possible sufferings. They were persecuted, imprisoned, stoned and dispersed and wherever they were, they carried that lively and intelligent faith; the trust in their God, whose power they had felt, whose goodness they had experienced, accepting the trials that should bring to humanity the benefits of civilization.

Here you have the obscure, scorned and despised apostles; the first pioneers of freedom; have they suffered enough since they left Egypt until now? The time of their rehabilitation is not far and in a not too distant day, we will salute those pioneer soldiers of modern civilization with acknowledgment and veneration, and justice will be made to the descendants of those families whose unbreakable faith was taken as assets to every nation where God allowed them to disperse. When Jesus Christ came he was still a messenger of God. He was a new shining star on Earth, like Moses, whose mission he took over to continue, develop and adapt to the progress that was already realized. He himself was destined to suffer that shameful death whose paths had been prepared by the Jews, creating the convenient circumstances of a Roman crime. Stop thinking of the history of nations and men as you have done so far. Your pride makes you believe that they were the ones that brought forward the events that transformed the face of the globe, forgetting that there is a God in the universe that drives this remarkable harmony, with whose laws you comply thinking that they were imposed by you. Look at the history of humanity from a more elevated standpoint. Embrace a wider horizon and you will see that everything follows a unique system. It is the law of progress that makes you move on one step every century and not every day.

Jesus Christ came then in the second phase, the second revelation, and it took his teachings eighteen centuries to spread out, to popularize. From that you see how slow progress is and what men must have been when Moses brought to the astonished world the idea of an Almighty God, an infinite and immaterial God, whose power became visible to that people, whose mission brought so much suffering and difficulties. Hence, there is no progress without suffering. One comes after the other; it is through suffering and its cruel circumstances that humanity understands the objective of its destiny and the power of God by whom humanity must exist.

Christianity was then the result of the second revelation. But was this Doctrine whose sublime morality which Christ had brought and developed understood in its remarkable simplicity? And how is it practiced by the majority of those who profess it? Has it never been veered off from its objective? Has it never been abused, serving as an instrument of despotism, ambition and greed? In a word, all of those who name themselves Christians, do they live according to the precepts of its founder? No. That is why they also had to go through the alembic of unhappiness that cleanses everything. History of Christianity is too recent to say everything; but, nevertheless, the objective is about to be reached and a new dawn will rise. Through different ways it will make us progress faster on the path that took us six thousand years to arrive to.

Spiritism marks the arrival of an era that will see a revolution in people's ideas. It will destroy those incomprehensible pretensions, the prejudices that have followed and still follow the Jews in their long and painful pilgrimage. People will understand that they were submitted to a providential destiny, serving as its instrument, like those who persecuted them with their hatred were also pushed by the same power whose secret designs should come true through mysterious and unknown ways.

Yes, Spiritism is the third revelation. It is unveiled to a generation of more advanced people, of noble aspirations, generous and humanitarians who must concur to the universal fraternity. That is the new objective indicated by God to your endeavors. However, those results like the ones achieved so far, will not be reached without pain and suffering. May those who have the courage to take this on as the apostles of the new era to stand up, raise their voices, speak out loud and expose the Doctrine, attack the abuses and show its objective. Such objective is not a shiny mirage that you seek uselessly. That objective is real and you shall reach it at the time indicated by God. It might be a distant time but it is determined. Don't be afraid. Go, apostles of progress. Walk boldly, with your heads held high and your hearts resigned. You have a pure Doctrine as your support, free from any mystery, which appeals to the most beautiful virtues of the soul, offering that consoling certainty that the soul lives forever, outliving death and pain. That is the unveiled objective, my friends. You will ask who are the apostles, how can we recognize them. God is

in charge of revealing them through missions that will be accomplished. You will recognize them by their works and their attributes. The ones who have missions assigned from above accomplish them but do not glorify themselves since God chooses the humble ones to propagate his word and not the ambitions and proud ones. That is how you will recognize the prophets.

Edouard Pereyre”

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

September 1861

Varieties

False news

A certain newspaper from an unknown country published an article, followed by other periodicals, with respect to a formal conference to be held regarding Spiritism and with the participation of Mr. Home, Mr. Marcillet, Mr. Squire, Mr. Delaage, Mr. Saudou, and Mr. Allan Kardec among others. The readers who might have heard about it should be informed that not everything printed is Gospel, even if it's in a newspaper, and in this case it is just a *canard* (duck, but also meaning hoax-NT), dressed with coarse salt and without the seasoning of the spirit. We would not be surprised one day by reading the conclusions of this convention and even with the citation of statements allegedly uttered. This would not cost them a thing and in the absence of anything better, it would fill out the columns of the newspaper.

Allan Kardec³³

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Spiritism in Lyon

This year we returned to Lyon again following their pressing invitation, and although we were aware of the evolution of Spiritism there only by correspondence, the reality exceeded our expectations. Our readers will certainly appreciate the report of the situation given here. They will see an indication of the irresistible advancement of the Doctrine and a clear demonstration of its moral consequences. Before we speak about the spiritists of Lyon we need to mention those of Sens and Mâcon that we visited in-passing, taking the opportunity here to thank them for their warm welcome. We also identified there a remarkable progress both in the number of followers and in their general opinion about Spiritism. Those who once laughed, have now become enlightened and those who do not yet believe observe a prudent reserve, imposed by the character and the social position of many who no longer fear today the public acknowledgment of their faith and the promotion of the new ideas. Given the pronounced and generalizing opinion the doubters tell themselves that there could be something there besides the fact that everyone is free to choose their beliefs. Now, before they say something they want to know what it is about, whereas before they spoke of something that they did not know. To many people one cannot deny the fact that this is already progress. Later we will return to those two centers that are still young and numerically small while Lyon has already achieved maturity. In fact the spiritists are no longer counted in the hundreds; as we considered a year ago, but now in the thousands, or rather, that we can no longer count how many and estimate that if the progression remains as it is today, in a year or two there will be more than thirty thousand.

Spiritism recruits in all classes but it is particularly in the working class that it propagates faster and that is not a surprise given that it is the class that suffers the most and turns to the side where one finds more consolation. You that scream against Spiritism, why don't you offer them the same? They would turn to you. Instead, you want to take away something that helps them to carry their burden of miseries. You are doing the best possible thing to keep them away from you and to broaden the ranks of your adversaries. What we have seen with our own eyes is so characteristic, and contains a great lesson that we chose to dedicate the majority of our report to the workers.

Last year there was a single center for the meetings, the one in Botteaux, led by Mr. Dijoud, as the group leader and his wife. Others were formed later at different locations like the one in Guillotière, in Perrache, in Croix-Rousse, in Vaise, in Saint-Juste, and etc. and not counting a large number of private gatherings.

Last year there were only two or three fairly novice mediums. Now there are mediums in all centers and several are first rate. In one group alone we saw five and writing simultaneously. We met a young clairvoyant lady whose faculty was developed at a very high level. We also saw a remarkable collection of drawings done by a medium that cannot draw and they compete with the performance and complication with the drawings of Jupiter, although in a different style. We must not forget a healing medium as much commended for his devotion as for his powerful mediumship.

There is no doubt that the number of followers multiplies but what is even more important is their quality. We declare openly that we have not seen anywhere spiritist meetings as edifying than those of Lyon and that is for the order, the reverence and the attention given to the instructions received from their spiritual guides. There we saw, men, elderly persons, ladies, young men and even children whose respectful attitude and seriousness contrast with their age. They never disturbed the silence of our gatherings which sometimes were for very long durations. They seemed as much eager to learn from us as their parents. That is not all. The number of changes in the moral behavior of the workers is as much significant as that of the followers. Reformed vices, appeased hatred, pacified relationships, in one word the most Christian virtues developed, and all that for their unbreakable trust in the spiritist communications about the future, something in which they did not believe before. To them it is a reason for joy to take part in those meetings and learn from the instructions of the spirits, coming out refreshed against adversity. There are some who have to walk for miles and they do that irrespective of the weather and so as not to miss a single session. Theirs is not a vulgar, blind faith, but that based on a reasoned and profound conviction.

The spirits who assist them know remarkably well to position themselves at the level of the audience. Their essays are not pieces of eloquence but are good familiar instructions, unpretentious that for that reason reach their hearts. Conversations with deceased relatives and friends, plays a significant role from where they almost always take away useful lessons. Often the whole family gathers and the evening goes by in a delightful conversation with those who are gone. They want news from their uncles, aunts, cousins; they want to know if they are happy. Nobody is forgotten. Everyone wants to hear something from grandpa and he gives advice to each and every one.

- How about me grandpa, a young man asked the other day, won't you say a word?
- Yes, my dear, I will tell you something: I am not happy with you. The other day instead of going to work you had an altercation for some silly reason. That is not good.
- How do you know that, grandpa?
- I certainly know. Aren't we the spirits around you? Can't we see everything that you do?
- Forgive me grandpa. I promise not to do that again.

Isn't there something touching about such communications between the living ones and the dead? Future life is right there, pulsating before our eyes; there is no more death and no more eternal separation and no void; heavens is closer to Earth and it is better understood. If that is a superstition, will to God that there shouldn't ever be another one!

A remarkable fact confirmed by us and that must be mentioned is the ease with which these men mostly illiterate and hardened by the harshest work, understand the scope of the Doctrine. We can say that they do not see its serious side. During the instructions that we gave to several groups, we unsuccessfully tried to excite their curiosity through the report of physical manifestations however none of them had ever seen a single table moving, while everything that was related to moral teachings captivated their interest in the highest degree. The speech below was addressed to us during our visit with the Saint-Just group. We report on it, not to satisfy a foolish and childish vanity but as a testimony of the feelings that dominated in workshops penetrated by Spiritism and also because we knew it would please those who wanted to give

us demonstrations of sympathy. The text is the full transcription since we would have been a misgiving in adding a single word. We only revised the spelling.

**

“Mr. Allan Kardec, disciple of Jesus, interpreter of the Spirit of Truth, you are our brother in God. We are united in a single heart, under the protection of John the Baptist, guardian of humanity and precursor of our great Master Jesus, our Savior.”

“We beg you, our dear master, to probe deep into our hearts so that you can feel our sympathy towards you. We are poor workers, without artifices. A thick curtain was cast upon us, since our childhood, to suppress our intelligence but you, dear master, by the will of the Almighty, you tear that curtain off. The curtain that was considered impenetrable could not resist your honorable courage. Oh! Yes, brother, you took the heavy pickaxe to find the seed of Spiritism that was hidden in a granite terrain. You sow it on the four corners of the globe and even onto the poor ignorant neighborhoods that begin to enjoy the bread of life.”

“We all say from the bottom of our hearts; we are animated by the same fire and we all repeat: Praise Allan Kardec and the good spirits who inspired him! And you, good brother and good sister Mr. and Mrs. Dijoud, blessed by God, by Jesus and by Mary, you are kept in our hearts and you shall never leave because you have sacrificed your own interests and material pleasures for us. God knows; we thank God for having chosen you for this mission and thank also our superior guardian St. John the Baptist.”

“Thank you Mr. Allan Kardec; a thousand times thank you in the name of the Saint-Just group for being among us, simple workers and still too imperfect in matters of Spiritism. Your presence brings us great joy amidst our tribulations that are significant at this moment of commercial crisis. You bring us the healing balm which is called hope and that appeases hatred and rekindles love and charity in one’s heart.”

“We will do our best, dear master, to follow your advice and those of the superior spirits that have kindly helped and instructed us, so that all of us can become true and good spiritists. Dear master, rest assured that you will carry the sympathy of our hearts for eternity, we promise you that. We are and will always be your sincere and reverent followers. Allow me and the medium to give you the kiss of fraternal love in the name of all brothers and sisters present here. We would also be very happy if you raised a toast with us.”

**

We have come from far away, climbed the heights of Saint-Just in a scorching hot day. They had prepared some refreshments around their instruments of work: bread, cheese, fruits, a glass of wine; a true feast offered with the old times simplicity and sincere heart. A glass of wine! Ah! For us, and considering that that good people don’t have that every day; but it was a celebration for them: we would talk about Spiritism. Oh! Our heart was full of joy in our salute and their modest lunch was worth a hundred times more than the most splendid feasts to our eyes. May they have here the assurance of that!

Someone in Lyon said: “Spiritism penetrates the working class through reason; wouldn’t it be better to have it done through the heart?” That person certainly does not know the workers; it would be desirable to find so much heart in everyone. If such a language is not inspired by the heart; if the heart means nothing to the one who finds strength in Spiritism to fight bad inclinations; to fight with resignation against misery; to subdue their grudges and animosities; to share a slice of bread with someone who is even unhappier, we must confess that we don’t know where the heart is.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Banquet to Allan Kardec

Banquet offered to Allan Kardec by the several spiritist groups of Lyon
on September 19th, 1861

Another banquet this year gathered a number of spiritists in Lyon with the difference that last year there was about thirty guests whereas this year there was one hundred and sixty persons, representing the several groups that consider themselves as members of the same family and among which there isn't a shadow of jealousy and rivalry, something that we observed with pleasure. The majority of the guests were formed by workers and everyone noticed the perfect order of the event which was not broken for a single moment; that is because true spiritists find satisfaction in the joys of the heart and not in noisy pleasures. Several speeches were made and we will report them here since they summarize the situation and characterize a phase of movement in Spiritism. Besides, they show the true spirit of this population, once regarded with a certain dread having been perhaps misjudged and poorly guided morally. Unfortunately one of the main speeches will not be published and that is something that we sincerely regret. It is the speech given by Mr. Renaud, a remarkable speech in his appreciations and where there is nothing out of place with the exception of the praises directed to us. The somewhat lengthy transcript was not given to us before we left, precluding us from its publication. That does not make us less thankful to the author for his testimonies of sympathy towards us. It was noted that and by an unforeseen coincidence, since it depended on the schedule of our arrival, that the banquet this year occurred on the same day as last year on September 19th.

**

**Speech by Mr. Dijoud, worship Supervisor,
President of the Brotteaux Spiritist Group, thanking the good spirits**

My dear friends,

I want to thank the good spirits in the name of all of us for having gathered and initiated us in the divine laws through their manifestations, laws to which we are all submitted, reason for an immense satisfaction to us considering that the generous consolations that we are given help us to withstand the trials and sufferings of this transient life with patience and resignation, once we no longer ignore the objective of our incarnations of hard work and the rewards that awaits us, if we endure them with courage and submission. We also learned through them that if we listen to their advice and practice their sublime moral we will build ourselves the kingdom of happiness promised by God through his son. Then egotism, malice and slander will disappear from around us for we are all brothers and must love, help and forgive one another like brothers do. Hence we are responding to the invisible appeal of the superior spiritist coming here to give them the testimony of our acknowledgement with the unison of our hearts. Let us pray that they keep us under their protection and love and continue with their so generous, so consoling and so vivifying teachings that have done us so much good from the very moment when we were fortunate to receive their communications. Oh! My friends! How beautiful was the day when God invited us! Let us all make the resolution to be good and sincere spiritists and never forget this Doctrine that shall bring happiness to mankind towards good. Thanks to the good spirits who assist us and bring us light and thanks to God for having sent them to us!

Toast proposed by Mr. Courtet, businessman

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a member of the Spiritist Group of Brotteaux I would like to propose a toast in its name to honor Mr. and Mrs. Dijoud.

Madam! I have the pleasant duty of serving as interpreter to our Society that thanks you for everything you have done in our favor! How many times you brought consolation to us! How many tears of kindness and joy you brought to our eyes! Your kind and modest heart was not proud of your successes which only made you more charitable. We know well madam that you are just an interpreter of the superior spirits who are linked to you, but we are also aware of your devotion in carrying out that task! It was through you that we were initiated in those elevated matters of moral and philosophy whose solution must bring the kingdom of God and consequently happiness to Earth. We also thank you ma'am for the assistance you give to those of us who are ill. Your faith and devotion are rewarded by the satisfaction you have to do good and alleviate the suffering of others. We beg you to continue your good service. You must rest assured of all our gratitude and our eternal recognition.

Mr. Dijoud, we thank you for your intelligence, for the firmness and complacency that you bring to our meetings. We count on you to continue this great undertaking with the help of the good spirits.

Toast proposed by Mr. Bouillant, Professor

I have the honor of proposing a toast to Mr. Allan Kardec, a toast with our whole gratitude and acknowledgment, on behalf of his followers, his apostles present here. Ah! How happy we are the volunteers of our great valiant, our beloved leader! If we experience so much happiness, it must be said, for this special favor done to us today and this cannot ever be forgotten. Which soldier would not remember with the warmest feeling the very day when the general came to meet him and sat at the same table and shared bread with him?

Well then! We are your soldiers, dear master, your voluntary workers and regardless of how high you have plunged your flag it is not our duty to defend it because there is no need but it is our duty to make it triumph through a cautious and devoted propagation. This cause is in reality such a beautiful and reassuring truth! You demonstrated that so well in your books so full of erudition, knowledge, and eloquence! Ah! We all recognize it, those pages of a man inspired by the pure spirit; we have all realized it when drinking from the fountain of your thoughtful work that all of your thoughts were emanations of the Almighty!

Besides, dear master, if we add that your mission here is sacred and blessed it is because we have felt that more than once and were helped by your enlightenment, the gentle spark that interconnects the visible and invisible worlds that gravitate the infinity! Hence, our heart beats are in unison with the same love towards you. Please receive from us the lively, sincere and profound expression of that love. To you, with all our heart, to you with all our spirit!

Speech given by Mr. Allan Kardec

Ladies and gentlemen, all of you, my dear good brothers in Spiritism,

If there are circumstances when one can regret the insufficiency of our poor human language is when one does need to express certain feelings, and that is my position at this very moment. What I feel now is at the same time a very pleasant surprise when I see the immense terrain that the Doctrine has gained among you in just one year, and I am also impressed by the works of the Providence; it is an indescribable joy given the good produced here and the consolations cast upon so much disclosed or hidden sufferings from which I can foresee the future that lies ahead; I cannot express my happiness for being amidst this family that in a short time became so large and that still grows on a daily basis; finally and more importantly, it is with a profound and sincere gratitude that I receive your touching demonstrations of sympathy.

This gathering has a special character. I believe we are all good spiritists here, thank God, so that we don't see but the pleasure of being together and not that of the good table. By the way, I should add in passing that a spiritist party would be contradictory. I also presume that when you invited me with such grace and persistence to come here nobody thought that I would be attracted by the feast. That was what I promptly clarified with my good friends Mr. Rey and Mr. Dijoud, at the time when they apologized for the simplicity of the reception. You must rest assured that what is a real honor to me in this event and something that I can rightly be proud of is the warmth and sincerity of your reception, something that is not easily found in the pageantry of the feasts, since here faces are not covered by masks.

If there is something that can diminish my happiness for being here with you, is the fact that I can only stay for such a short time. It would really please me to be able to stay longer in one of the largest and most dedicated centers of Spiritism; nevertheless, considering that you were willing to receive instructions from me you will certainly understand that I will utilize every moment and stay away from the common banalities of similar events and that my discourse will show certain gravity given the seriousness of the matter that brings us together. It would certainly be uncalled for to speak about souls, death and future life if this were a wedding or a ceremony of baptism. But, I insist, we are here more to learn than to eat and for sure not to have fun. Make no mistake, ladies and gentlemen, the spontaneity that brought you together here is not just a purely personal matter. Have no doubt about it, this meeting is special and providential. It was motivated by a superior plan. Invisible hands have guided you here and they shall perhaps one day take part in the celebrations of Spiritism.

May our future brothers remember this remarkable day in which the spiritists of Lyon, giving an example of union and concord, planted the first milestone of allegiance in this banquet that must exist among all spiritists of the world for Spiritism, by reestablishing the true role of the spirit in the Creation and attesting the superiority of intelligence against matter, naturally suppresses any distinction established among human beings due to material and mundane advantages of classes and the stupid prejudices of color, all founded on pride. By enlarging the circle of family through the plurality of the existences Spiritism establishes a more rational human fraternity than the one only founded on the fragile bonds of matter since those bonds are perishable while the spirit is eternal.

Once well understood such bonds shall influence social relationships by the force of things and later on influence social legislation that shall be founded on the immutable laws of love and charity. The anomalies that today shock people of common sense will then disappear like the laws of the Middle Ages which shock us today. But that is the work of time. Let God take care of it and each thing will come at the appropriate time.

We can expect all that from God's wisdom and let us praise God for having allowed us to witness the rising dawn of humanity and for having chosen us as the pioneers of the great work that is in preparation. May this assembly have God's blessings, the first one in which the followers of Spiritism are gathered in such large numbers with a true feeling of fraternity. I say that because I am positive that nobody here carries a different feeling. But make no mistake there are flocks of spirits among us that hear us right now; that come from all nations; that probe each one of our thoughts and each one of our strengths or moral weaknesses. Their feelings and motivations are very disparate. If some are very happy with this gathering there are others I assure you that are incredibly envious. Leaving this place they will try to spread discord and dissension. It is up to all of us, good and sincere spiritists, to prove to them that they waste their time and that they are mistaken in believing that they will find here minds that are accessible to their perfidious suggestions. You must then eagerly invoke the assistance of your guardian angels to keep every bad thought away from you. Now, since good cannot be sourced out of evil the simple common sense indicates that every bad thought cannot come from a good spirit; a thought is necessarily bad when it is contrary to the law of love and charity; when it is driven by envy or jealousy, by a pride that is hurt or even by a puerile susceptibility of self-love, the twin brother of pride, making people look down on their brothers with disdain. Love and charity to all, Spiritism says; you shall love your brother like thyself, says Jesus. Aren't these synonym expressions?

My friends, I have commended you for the progress of Spiritism among you and I could not be happier than I am now by witnessing it. Besides, you must also congratulate yourselves because the same progress takes place everywhere. Yes, this past year we saw Spiritism growing in every country in a proportion beyond expectations. It is in the air, in everybody's aspirations, finding echo and a mouth that relays it everywhere. Here is a demonstration of what we were waiting for; here is what a hidden voice led me to foresee.

Progress now shows another phase, though: it is the phase of courage that did not exist some time ago. One would only speak about it through whispers and in secrecy. Today we confess to be spiritist as openly as one confesses to be Catholic, Jew or Protestant. Mockery is confronted with courage, courage that is imposed upon the deriders who are like little yappy dogs that chase people when people run away and in turn, run away when chased by people. That mockery gives courage to the timid and in many places it reveals spiritists who did not know one another. Can such a movement stop? Can they stop it? I say that out loud: No! They tried it with everything: sarcasm, mockery, science, and anathemas. Spiritism outshined them all and was not delayed a single second in its stride. Blind is the one who cannot see God's finger on it. They may be able to hinder but never stop Spiritism, for if it cannot run its course on the right it will find its way on the left.

Observing the moral benefits, the consolations, and the crimes avoided by Spiritism we ask ourselves: who is interested in combating it? To begin with we have the unbelievers that try to ridicule Spiritism. Those are not to be feared for they have seen their sharpened spears breaking against their own armors. The ignorant that fight against it without knowing it are in larger numbers but the truth of Spiritism has never been afraid of ignorance for the ignorant combat themselves unwillingly as we gather from the testimony of Mr. Louis Figuier in his "*Histoire du Merveilleux*". The third category of adversaries is more dangerous since it is tenacious and deceitful. It is formed by all those whose material interests may be harmed. They fight in the shadow and have no lack of poisonous darts. These are the true enemies of Spiritism as they have been of every progressive idea at all times, and found in all ranks and echelons of society. Will they win? No, because it is not up to us to oppose the march of nature and Spiritism is in the natural order of things. Sooner or later they will have to change sides and follow what is accepted by everybody else. No, they shall not win. They shall be defeated.

A new element now comes to join forces with the legion of spiritists: the working class. One must notice the wisdom of the Providence in this. Spiritism started its propagation in the educated classes, at the highest social echelons. This was necessary in the beginning to give credibility to Spiritism and to have it elaborated and stripped from the superstitious ideas that could be introduced by a lack of education and then be confused with superstition. Just after been established, if that can be said of a new science, it touched the working classes and now quickly spreading among them. Ah! That is why there is so much consolation to give, so much courage to reestablish, so many tears to dry, so much resignation to inspire that it was welcomed like an anchor of salvation, like an aegis against the temptations of need.

Wherever I saw it penetrating in the working classes I saw its moralizing effects. Cheer up workers of Lyon who hear me now for you have spiritist brothers in other cities like Sens, Lille and Bordeaux, brothers that like yourselves that have abandoned their shameful hope for disorder and their criminal desires for vengeance. You must continue to demonstrate through your example the constructive results of this Doctrine. To those who ask you what is to be expected of such a Doctrine you must answer: *In my desperation I thought of killing myself, but that was curtailed by Spiritism since now I know the cost of voluntarily abbreviating one's life and the God chosen trials to mankind. I used to get drunk to become numb but I understood how despicable it was to voluntarily erase my reason, precluding me from winning the family bread. I was divorced from all religious feelings. Today I pray to God and rest my hope on God's mercy. My only belief was the nothingness as the supreme remedy to all my miseries. My father came back to me and said: Son, have courage! God sees you. A little bit more effort and you shall be saved! I kneeled before God and asked for God's forgiveness. I used to accuse Providence when I saw the rich and the poor, people with everything and others with nothing. Today I know that God balances everything in the scale of justice and I wait for God's judgment. If it is in God's design that I must succumb to suffering, I will then succumb but with a pure conscience and without the remorse of having stolen the alms of someone that could have saved my life. Tell them: That is what Spiritism is good for, that madness, that chimera as you call it.*

Yes, my friends, continue to preach Spiritism through the example. Make it understood by its healthy consequences and when it is finally understood it will no longer be feared by them. Much to the contrary, it will be received as a guarantor of the social order and the unbelievers themselves will be forced to treat it with respect.

I mentioned the progresses of Spiritism. In fact there is no example of a doctrine, whatever it may be, that has propagated with such a speed, including Christianity itself. Does it mean that Spiritism is superior? No. But this is the place to establish its true character so as to destroy a much generalized prevention among those who don't know it.

Christianity had to fight a terrible force since its inception: Paganism that was universally spread in those days. There wasn't any possible alliance between them as there isn't between light and darkness. In one word, Christianity could not propagate but through the destruction of what was there before. Thus, the fight was long and dreadful and the persecutions are a proof of that. Spiritism, on the contrary, has nothing to destroy since it sits on the foundations of Christianity and on the Gospels of which Spiritism is a simple application. You must understand the circumstantial advantage and not superiority. Hence, it is not a new religion as some people pretend it to be because they don't know it, or a new sect that is formed by taking advantage of older ones. It is a purely moral Doctrine with no dogmas and that allows each person the entire freedom of religion since it imposes none. A demonstration of that is the fact that its most enthusiastic followers are among the most devoted Catholics as among Protestant, Jews and Muslims.

Spiritism is based on the possibility of communication with the invisible world that is with the souls. Well, since the Jews, the Protestant, the Muslims they all have souls like we do, it follows that the souls can communicate with them as they do with us and that consequently they can be spiritists as we are. It is not a political sect as it is not a religious. It is the verification of a fact that does not belong more to a particular party than electricity or the railroads do. It is, I repeat, a moral doctrine and as such it is in all parties and in all religions. Is such moral good or bad? Is it subversive? That is the question. One must study to learn about it. Now, since it is the development and application of the moral of the Gospels its condemnation would be the condemnation of the Gospels.

Has it done good or bad? Study it and it shall be unveiled. What has it done? It has precluded innumerable suicides; it has reestablished peace and harmony in a large number of homes; it has tamed and taught patience to many violent and raged people; it has given resignation to those who lacked it and consolation to the ones in suffering; it has led to God those who did not know him, destroying their materialistic ideas, a true social ulcer that annihilates the moral responsibility of a person. That is what Spiritism has done and does every day and will do even more in the future as it spreads out.

Could that be the result of a bad doctrine? I am not aware of anyone who has attacked the moral of Spiritism. The only thing they say is that religion can produce it all. I agree perfectly with that. But then why hasn't religion always produce that? The reason is that not everyone understands it. Well, since Spiritism makes it clear and intelligible to all what is not clear and intelligible and turns obvious what was doubtful, it then leads to the application, whereas nobody feels compelled to doing something that is not understood. Therefore, far from being antagonistic to religion, Spiritism supports it. A proof of that is that it leads people to religious ideas, people who had repelled those ideas. In summary, Spiritism has never advised anyone to change religion or sacrifice their beliefs. It does not really belong to any religion or better still, it is present in all of them.

Ladies and gentlemen, still a few words, please, about an absolutely practical question. The growing number of spiritists in Lyon shows the utility of the advice I gave you last year with respect to the formation of the groups. Gathering every follower in a single society today would be something physically impossible given the distances to cover, the size of the cities, as well as the differences in habits given the different social positions. For those reasons and many others that would take long to develop here, a single society is an impracticable chimera. You must multiply the groups as much as possible. Let there be a hundred if needed and rest assured that you will get there faster and safer.

There would still be here important things to be said about the unity of principles; about the divergence that there could be among them with respect to some points but I stop here to avoid abusing your patience in listening to me, patience that has already been tested at length. If you wish I can prepare a special instruction about it and send that to you soon.

I conclude, ladies and gentlemen, this speech which I allowed myself to be carried away given the rarity of this occasion and that I am fortunate enough to share that with you. I will carry with me the memory of your benevolent welcome, a memory that I will never forget, you must be assured. Still once more, my friends, thank you so much from the bottom of my heart for the signs of sympathy that you have demonstrated to me; thank you for the kind words addressed to me by your interpreters and from which I only accept those that refer to the duty imposed upon me and that I still have to accomplish but not the praises. May this ceremony be the landmark of the union that must exist among all true spiritists!

I propose a toast to the spiritists of Lyon and to all of those distinguished persons among you for their dedication, their devotion and their abnegation, those who were pointed out by you yourselves without the need of my indication.

To the spiritists of Lyon, without distinction of opinion, those present and those absent!

Ladies and gentlemen, the spirits also wish to participate in this family like gathering and have a say. Erastus that you know from his remarkable dissertations published in our Review has spontaneously dictated in your intention and before my departure the following communication, putting me in charge of reading it to you in his name. I accomplish that mission with pleasure. You will then have the proof that the spirits who communicate with you, are not the only ones concerned with you and with your problems. Such certainty must reinforce your faith and trust seeing that the watchful eyes of the superior spirits reach everyone and that without any shadow of doubt you are also the object of their solicitude.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Communication from Erastus to the spiritists of Lyon

Read at the banquet on September 19th, 1861

It is not without the warmest emotion that I come to join you, dear spiritists of Lyon. In an environment like this where all layers are mixed, where all social conditions hold hand in hand, I am filled with tenderness and sympathy and happy to be able to announce to you that all of us, the initiators of Spiritism in France, will joyfully watch your fraternal banquet, to which we were invited by John and Irenaeus, your eminent spiritual guides. Ah! Such gatherings awaken in my heart the memories of those in which we all gathered a thousand and eight hundred years ago when we fought the dissolute customs of the Roman Paganism already commenting the teachings and parables of the Son of the Man who died on the disgraceful cross for the propagation of the sacred idea.

My friends, if the Almighty out of his infinite mercy allowed the reminiscence of the past to spark for a single moment in your numb memory you would remember that time illustrated by the saint martyrs of the phalanx of Lyon: Sanctus, Alexander, Episode, the sweet, and Blandine the courageous, Irenaeus the audacious bishop whose entourage many of you applauded for his heroism, praising the Lord. You would also remember that several of you who hear me now watered Lyon's soil with your blood, this fertile land that Eucherius and Gregory of Tours called the homeland of the martyrs. I will not name them but you may consider those who in your centers carry out a mission, an apostolic work, as martyrs of the propagation of the egalitarian idea taught from the top of the Golgotha by our beloved Christ! Today, dear disciples, the one who was made sacred by St. Paul comes to tell you that your mission is the same, for the always living and standing Roman Paganism still looms around the world, like the ivy that entangles the oak tree. You must then spread among your unfortunate brothers, enslaved by their own passions or by the passions of others, the sacred and reassuring Doctrine that, my friends and I came to reveal to you through our mediums from all countries. Yet we notice that the times have evolved; customs have changed and humanity matured; if we were victims of persecution today it would no longer come from a tyrannical and envious power like in the early days of the primitive Church, but from interests organized against us, the apostles of the idea.

I have just mentioned the word egalitarian. I believe it to be useful to elaborate a little bit since we are not here to preach impracticable utopias; on the contrary we energetically repel everything that seems to be related to the prescriptions of an antisocial communism. Before anything else we are promoters of individual liberties, indispensable to the development of the incarnate individuals. Hence we are the declared enemies of everything that approaches monastic legislations that ruthlessly annihilate individual liberties.

Although I am addressing an audience that is partially composed of workers and artisans I know that your consciences, enlightened by the radiations of the spiritist truth, have already rejected any contact with the antisocial theories supported by the use of the word *equality*. Nevertheless, I must take that word back to its true Christian meaning according to the one who said: “*Give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s*.” There you have it spiritists! The equality proclaimed by Jesus and that we ourselves profess in your beloved groups is the equality before God’s justice, that is, our own right after doing our duties to climb the hierarchy of the spirits and hopefully one day reach the more advanced worlds where there is perfect happiness.

One’s birth or fortune is not taken into account for that. The poor and the weak can reach it as well as the rich and powerful since these don’t carry more material weight than the others, and nobody can buy their place or their forgiveness with money, whereby we all have the same rights. Equality before God, such is the true equality. You will not be asked about your possessions but about the use you made of your possessions. Therefore, the more you have possessed the longer and more difficult the accountability of your management of such possessions. Hence, and according to your missions, trials or punishments in your worldly lives, each one of you, according to your good or bad deeds, will progress more or less in the scale of beings or sooner or later will restart your existence in case you have veered off course.

As a consequence, I repeat, by proclaiming the sacred dogma of equality, we have not come here to teach you that you must all have the same wealth, knowledge and happiness down here, but that you will all reach happiness at the right time and according to your own merits, the happiness of the elected ones, sharing that with the souls that have accomplished their duties. My dear spiritists, that is the equality in your own right, at which the liberation of Spiritism will lead you to, and to which I invite you with all my heart. What do you need to do to reach it? Obey these two sublime words: love and charity that summarizes remarkably well the whole law and the prophets. Love and charity! Ah! The one that has followed this divine maxim according to one’s conscience will be certain to quickly climb the steps of Jacob’s ladder and soon reach the elevated spheres from where one will be able to worship, contemplate and understand the magnificence of the Eternal.

You would not believe how kind and pleasant it is to us to preside over your banquet where the wealth and the worker are shoulder to shoulder proposing a toast to fraternity; where the Jew, the Catholic and the Protestant may sit at the same table of the Paschal communion. You cannot believe how proud I am to share with you all and with each one of you the praise and the words of encouragement that the Spirit of Truth, our beloved Master, has commanded me to pass on to your devout entourages. To you, Dijoud, and your honorable partner; to all of you the sincere missionaries, that spread the benefits of Spiritism, thank you for your support and dedication.

However, “*noblesse oblige*”³⁴, my friends, particularly those from the heart. You would be very guilty, even criminal if in the future you fail your sacred missions. But you will not fail. I have the guarantee of what you have already realized and what is still to be done. But it is to you, my beloved brothers in the daily work, that I reserve my sincerest congratulations because, and I do know that, you painfully climb

34 sense of nobility – N.T.

your Golgotha carrying your aching cross as Jesus did. How could I praise you more than by reminding you of your courage and resignation to support unspeakable disasters that fight against fraternity but are necessary for the two Americas and the consequences among you? Ah! Nobody can deny the positive influence of Spiritism that has already been felt. Such hope has penetrated the heart of your workgroups. When we think of the period of the last kingdom when there was no work and the workers would riot from the *Croix-Rousse* to the *Terreaux*, giving rise to mutinies and entailing a terrible repression, we must then thank God for the new revelation. In fact according to that vulgar image that you use in your picturesque language sometimes one has to *dance before the buffet*.³⁵ And you say that while tightening your belt: Well! We will eat tomorrow!!

I know well that public as well as private charity are concerned and act but that is not the true remedy. Humanity needs something better. That is why if Christianity advocated equality and egalitarian laws, Spiritism holds in its womb, fraternity and its laws, a grandiose and lasting work to be praised by future generations. Keep in mind my friends that Christ chose his apostles amongst the little ones and that those, stronger than Caesars, conquered the world with the Christian idea.

You then have the sacred task of enlightening your fellow co-workers, of propagating this sublime Doctrine that strengthens us before adversity, so that the spirit of evil and rebellion may not excite hatred and vengeance onto the hearts of your brothers who are not yet touched by the spiritist grace. This work is entirely yours, my dear friends. I know you will carry that out with love and enthusiasm and with the consciousness of a duty to be performed. History will one day acknowledge in their archives that the workers of Lyon, enlightened by Spiritism, deserved a lot from their homeland in the years 1861 and 1862 for the courage and resignation with which they withstood the sad consequences of the struggles of slavery between the disunited States of America. Never mind! These times of fights and trials, my sons, are blessed by God, sent to develop courage, patience and the energy to speed up the elevation and improvement of the planet and the spirits who are imprisoned in their bodily links to matter! Go now. The trench is dug up in the Old World and you will acclaim the spiritist era of fraternity over its ruins that shows you the objective and purpose of every human misery, consoling and strengthening your hearts in your struggles and against adversity. You will not distinguish between the unbelievers and the impious, thanking God for your share of misfortune and trials since they will take you closer to eternal happiness.

It still remains to be heard, the advice already given to you many times by your friendly guides but my personal position and the current circumstance ask me to remind you. My good friends, I speak to all spiritists here, to all groups so that there will be no division, no dissidence, no dissidence among you, but on the contrary that a united belief may drive you and bring you all together for this is necessary for the development of our beneficent Doctrine. I feel like there is a power beyond me that forces me to preach to you concord and union, since here as in everything else, union is power and you have the need to be strong and united to face the forthcoming storms. And that is not only among you but also towards your brothers of all religions. That is why I invite you to follow the example given by the spiritists of Bordeaux whose private groups operate like satellites of a central group and this central group requested to be in contact with the precursor group of Paris, the first to receive the elements of a body of doctrine and build the serious foundations for serious studies of Spiritism, followed by spiritists all over the world.

I know that what I am telling you here will not be lost; as a matter of fact I am entirely referring to advice that you have already received and that you will still receive from your outstanding spiritual guides who will drive you on that healthy path, for it is necessary that light shines from the center to the boundaries and from there to the center so that everybody can benefit from the works of each and every one. In fact it is incontestable that submitting all data and all communications from the spirits to the crucible of reason,

35 Meaning that there isn't enough to eat – N.T.

it will be easy to reject the absurd and the mistakes. A medium may be fascinated; a group may be deceived but the strict control of the other groups, the acquired knowledge and the great moral authority of the leaders of groups; the communications received by the main mediums with the logic and authenticity from our best spirits will quickly unveil the false and astute dissertations that may come from a swarm of deceiving, imperfect or evil spirits. Reject them ruthlessly, all of those spirits who give exclusive advices, preaching division and isolation. They are almost always mediocre and inferior spirits who tend to impose themselves upon weak and credulous people, offering exaggerated praises in order to dominate and fascinate them. These are generally power- hungry spirits, true tyrants in public or in private when alive, and still want to tyrannize victims after their death.

My friends, be generally suspicious of communications that show a mystic or strange character or those that prescribe bizarre actions or ceremonies. In such cases there is always a legitimate reason for suspicion. On the other hand, believe when a truth must be revealed to humanity, it is so to say, instantaneously communicated to all serious groups where there are serious mediums. Finally, I believe it to be useful to repeat here that an obsessed cannot be perfect. Obsession is one of the greatest hurdles and there is clear obsession when a medium cannot receive communications but from a special spirit, whatever the elevation that the spirit may try to show. As a consequence, any medium and any group that judges themselves privileged for communications, that they are the only ones capable of receiving, and on the other hand, are submitted to practices that near superstition, these are undoubtedly under the domination of a very well characterized obsession. I say all that my friends, because there are in the world, mediums that are fascinated by deceitful spirits. I will mercilessly unmask those spirits, particularly if they dare to desecrate honorable names that they steal like thieves and proudly decorate themselves like the servants using the outfits of their masters.

I will fight them ruthlessly if they insist on veering off good and honest Christians from the straight path, dedicated spiritists whose good faith they abuse. In one word let me tell you what I have already told the Parisian spiritists: It is better to momentarily deny ten truths than accept a single lie, a single false theory, because a whole system may be built on the foundations of that false idea, a system that would be shattered by the first blow of truth, like a monument erected on quicksand, whereas if you reject certain truths today, certain principles, because they have not been logically demonstrated to you, soon an impressive event or an irrefutable demonstration will come to show you its authenticity.

It is up to John, to Irenaeus, to Blandine, as well as all of your guardian spirits, the task of forewarning you from now on against the false prophets of the spiritual world. The Great Liberating spirit that presides over our work under the sponsorship of the Almighty will provide for that, believe me. As for myself, although more closely connected to the Parisian groups, I will come from time to time to be among you and always follow with great interest your work here.

We have great expectations on the province of Lyon and we know that you will not fail us or one another with your respective missions. Remember that Christianity, brought by the legions of Caesar, about two thousand years ago sowed the first seeds of the Christian renovation in Vienne and Lyon from where they spread rapidly to the northern Gals. Today, progress must take place with a new radiation from the North to the South. Onto work then people of Lyon! Truth must triumph and it is not without some legitimate impatience that we wait the time when we will hear the sound of the silver trumpet announcing your first combat and your first victory. Let me now thank you for the reverence with which you heard me and your warm welcome. May our Almighty God, our Lord, show us his benevolence and spread upon you and his very humble servant the treasures of his infinite mercy! Goodbye friends of Lyon. I bless you!

Erastus

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Family conversations from beyond the grave

Eugene Scribe

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

During the discussion among the spirits regarding Buffon's aphorism: "The style is the man", published in our previous number, Mr. Scribe's name was cited and that has certainly given him reason to come to us although he had not been invited. Without participating in the debate he spontaneously gave the following dissertation which in turn motivated the dialogue that follows his message.

"It would be desirable that the theater where great and small go to learn, was a little bit less concerned with flattering the taste for the easy customs and the exaltation of venial aspects of an enthusiastic youth, and instead that the social betterment would be sought through moral and elevated plays where a fine jest would replace the coarse cooking salt served up by the vaudeville act of the day. But no; according to the theater and the public, human passions are flattered. Here they promote worker's coat instead of the traditional black tie transformed into the scapegoat of all social miseries; over there the worker's coat are hated and stained because it hides both the scoundrel and the murderer. Lies on both sides.

Some authors even began to take the bull by the horns and like Émile Augier, pinning down money dealers in the pillory of public opinion. Bah! Who cares! That does not stop the public from swarming into the theaters where a shameless figure and without any decency, covers the costs of the spectacle. Ah! It is time to have the spiritist ideas promoted in all social layers and then the theatre will be moralized itself and the presentation of women will be replaced by conscious plays, consciously represented by talented artists. Everyone will benefit from that.

Let us hope that a dramatic writer may soon show up, capable of expelling from the theater and from the enthusiasm of the public, all these imposters and immoral pimps of "*The ladies of the camellias*" of all sorts. Your work is to spread Spiritism that will produce such memorable result.

E. Scribe

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Spiritist teachings and dissertations

The mentally challenged - cretinism

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies, medium Mrs. Costel

One of our colleagues, Mrs. Costel, travelled to a region in the Alps where cretinism seems to have established itself as a main health issue and while there, she received the following communication from one of her familiar spirits:

"The mentally challenged with cretinism are punished on Earth for the bad use they made of their once given powerful faculties. Their soul is imprisoned in a body whose powerless organs cannot express their thoughts. Such moral and physical muteness is one of the cruelest punishments on the planet. It is frequently chosen by regretful spirits who want to make up for their faults. Such trial is not in vain because the spirit is not stationary in the bodily prison. The blurred eyes can see; the foggy brain can think but nothing can be translated into words or body language and with the exception of their movement they are morally in the same situation as the lethargic and the cataleptic that see and hear what goes on around them but cannot express themselves. When you have terrible nightmares in your sleep and you want to run away from danger; when you scream for help while your tongue remains static in your mouth and your feet stuck to the ground you briefly experience what always happens to a person with cretinism: paralysis of the body that is linked to the life of the spirit. Hence almost every disease has a reason for its occurrence. There is nothing without a cause and what you call injustice in someone's fate is the application of the sternest justice. Insanity is also a punishment for the abuse of the faculties.

An insane person has two personalities, one that is flamboyant and the other that is cognizant, without the ability of controlling the actions. In the case of cretinism, the contemplative life, isolated from the body, can be as hectic as those lives that are complicated by events. Some revolt against their voluntary punishment; they become sorry for having chosen that and then experience a fierce desire to return to another life, a desire that leads them to forget the resignation in their present life and the remorse for their past life, from which they are aware of since those who suffer cretinism know better than you do and in their physical limitation there is a hidden moral strength that you cannot even imagine.

The acts of fury or stupidity of their bodies are judged by their inner self that suffers and feels ashamed. Thus the ridicule, harm or mistreatment that they sometimes face increases their suffering since it makes them feel even worse for their weakness and misery. If they could, they would accuse those who act this way as being cowardliness since they know that their victims cannot defend themselves.

Cretinism is not a law of God and science may make it disappear since it is the material result of ignorance, misery and filthiness. The new procedures of hygiene made widely available and of more practical use to everyone by science tends to eliminate that. Besides, since progress is the fate of humanity the imposed trials will also modify, following the progress of the centuries; they will all become moral and when the still young Earth has accomplished all phases of its existence it will become a place of happiness like other more advanced planets.

Pierre Jouty, medium's father

OBSERVATION: There was a time when people had doubts about the soul of those with cretinism and there was the question if in reality they belonged to mankind. Isn't the manner in which Spiritism sees them not of a high moral character and of a great lesson? Don't we find subject for serious reflection when we think that those miserable bodies have souls that may have already shone in the world; that they are as much lucid and active in their minds as we are, under the thick cover that muffles their manifestations and that one day the same can happen to us if we abuse our God given faculties?

How else can one explain cretinism? How to reconcile it with God's justice and benevolence without admitting the plurality of the existences that is reincarnation? If the soul had not lived yet, it means that it was created at the same time as the body. In that case how can one justify the creation of souls as disinherited, as those who suffer cretinism from the part of a just and good God? Here we are not talking about one of those incidents of insanity that can be treated and cured. Those creatures are born and die in the same state. Since there is no notion of good and evil what is their fate in eternity? Will they be happy like the hard working and intelligent people? But then why this favor since they have not done anything good? Will they be in a state called limbo or in a mixed state that is not happiness or unhappiness? We challenge anyone who denies the doctrine of reincarnation to find a solution to this stalemate. With reincarnation, on the contrary, what seems to be an injustice becomes a remarkable justice; what is inexplicable is explained in the most rational way. As a matter of fact we don't know if those who deny this doctrine have ever presented any more peremptory argumentation than their personal rejection to return to Earth. Are they so certain of having enough virtues to achieve heavens immediately? Good luck to them. But those with cretinism? How about the children who die during infancy? What shall be the titles that they will hold?

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Spiritist teachings and conversations

A good man would have died
Spiritist Society of Sens

You often say this about a bad man that escapes danger: '*If he were a good man he would have died*'. Well, you are right by saying so since it often happens that God gives a longer life to a spirit still young on the path of progress than to a good spirit whose merit is awarded with a trial as short as possible. Hence you must know that it is a blasphemy when a good neighbor dies and there is a bad person near his house and you say: '*it should have been the other one!*' It is a big mistake for the one that passes has finished his task whereas the one that stays might not have even started his. Why would you like that he did not have time to complete it and that the other who left should stay longer attached to the Earthly glebe?

What would you say about a prisoner that had finished his time and continued in prison while someone else who did not conquer the right of freedom was set free? You must understand that the true freedom is in the liberation from the bodily links and that you shall be in captivity while you are on Earth.

You should get used to not condemning what you cannot understand and trust that God is just in all things. Often what seems bad to you is good but your faculties are so very limited that the big picture escapes your biased senses. Do your best to get out of your narrow sphere through your thoughts and as you elevate, the importance of this material life will diminish before your eyes as just an incident in your endless spiritual life, the only true existence.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Spiritist teachings and conversations

Rich and poor

Spiritist Society of Lyon

NOTE: Although the spiritists of Lyon are divided into several groups that gather separately, we consider them as forming a single society that we call by the generic name *Spiritist Society of Lyon*. The two communications below were received in our presence.

“Jealousy is the companion of pride and envy. It leads you to wish everything that others have without realizing it, in envying their position you do not do this to yourself, but you present a viper that you reheat against your chest. You are always jealous and envious of the rich. Your ambition and egotism make you desire someone else’s gold. You say: *‘If I were rich I would make a much different use of my wealth than this or that person.’* Are you sure that if you had that money you would not make an even worse use of it? You respond by saying: ‘Someone that is protected from the daily needs of life has minor sufferings compared to mine.’ What do you know about that? You must learn that the rich are just a commissary of God. If he uses his fortune badly he will be highly accountable. The God given fortune that the rich takes advantage of is his own punishment, his trial, his atonement. How many troubles one has to go through in order to keep all that gold to which one is so much attached! When his time comes, the time of accountability, he almost always realizes at that supreme moment how he should have behaved, and he then fears! A lot of fear! He starts to understand that he failed on his mission; that he was an unfaithful

official and that his accounts will be thoroughly investigated. The poor workers, on the contrary, those who suffered all of their lives attached to the anvil or to the plough, they see death coming, the liberation of all sufferings, and they see that with acknowledgement, particularly when misery was withstood with resignation and without complaints.

Believe me, my friends, if you could just see the tough pillory on which the rich is tied by his fortune, you who have a good heart since you went through all sieves of disgrace, you would say with Christ when your ego was hurt by the luxury of the worldly opulence: 'Forgive them, my God, because they don't know what they are doing' and you would rest on your hard pillow adding: 'My God, bless me and may thy will be done!'

Guardian spirit of the medium"

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Spiritist teachings and conversations

Spiritist Society of Lyon

NOTE: The following communication was received in our presence at the group of Perrache:

"Yes, my friends, I shall always come to you whenever I am invited. Yesterday I was very happy with you when I saw the author of the books that have opened your eyes witnessing your desire to be together, learning from his benevolent words. It is both a great teaching and a strong memory for all of you. When he spoke of love and charity I noticed several of you asking yourselves: 'How can I do charity? I often don't even have necessities for myself.'

Charity, my friends, can be done in several ways. You can do it through your thoughts, words and works. In your thoughts by praying for the abandoned poor ones who died without having been able to see the light. A prayer from your heart alleviates them. You can address words of good advice to your daily companions. To the bitter ones by despair and deprivation who say blasphemy using the name of the Almighty you say: *'I was like you. I was suffering and I was unhappy but I believed in Spiritism and look, I am joyful now.'* To the elderly who say: *'It is useless; this is the end of the line for me; I will die as I lived'*. You will respond: *'God has the same justice to all. Remember the workers of the last hour.'* To the already contaminated children by their environments, wandering around, ready to succumb to all sorts of temptations you say: *'God sees you my dear children'* and don't be afraid of repeating these kind words

many times. They will end up by germinating in their young minds and instead of little vagabonds you will have good adults. That is also charity.

Several among you also say: *'Come on! We are too many on Earth for God to see us all.'* Listen well, my friends. When you reach the pinnacle of a mountain do your eyes not embrace the billions of sand grains that form the mountain? There you go! That is how God sees us. He gives you free-will in the same way that those grains of sand are given the freedom of coming and going, following the dispersing winds. The difference is that God in his infinite mercy planted on the bottom of your heart a vigilant sentinel called conscience. Listen to that. It will only give you good advice. You sometimes muffle it, opposing it with an evil spirit and the conscience then silences. Rest assured though that the poor and abandoned conscience will be heard again as soon as you reveal a shadow of remorse. Listen to that voice; question it and you will often find consolation in the advice.

My friends, every new regiment receives a flag from its general. I give you this maxim from Jesus: *'Love one another'*. Practice this maxim. Unite around that flag and you will receive happiness and consolation.

Your guardian spirit"

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Spiritist teachings and conversations

Rome

Sent by Mr. Sabò from Bordeaux

City of Romulus and Caesars, the cradle of Christianity, tomb of the apostles, you are the eternal city and God wishes to finally stop your long lasting lethargy. The time of your return will come. Shake your numb limbs out and stand up courageously and valiant to obey the destiny that waits for you since you have not been but a desert city for long centuries. The multiple ruins of your vast arenas that hardly held the waves of eager spectators are only visited by the rare foreigners that from time to time visit your solitary streets. The catacombs where the remains of so many brave soldiers rest, soldiers who died for the faith, only touch their indifference. Your current crises will be the last one and from this difficult and painful work you shall come out great, strong, powerful, transformed by God's will. From the top of your old basilica, the voice of Peter's successor will be heard, his hands reaching out to you with the blessings of heaven invoking the spirits of the Lord to his supreme council. He will submit to their orders and give the signs of progress, openly holding the flag of Spiritism. Then, submitted to its lessons, the Catholic universe shall flock in masses standing around the walking stick of their great pastor, and that will drive every heart to you. You shall be the shining light to illuminate the world and its inhabitants, in the joy and happiness of providing the nations with the example of betterment and progress, chanting in your songs: Yes, Rome is the eternal city.

Massillon"

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Spiritist teachings and conversations

The Coliseum

Sent by Count X..., from Rome and translated from the Italian

“What do you feel when you see the Coliseum? The feeling produced by any ruin: sadness. Its vast and beautiful proportions remind the whole world of greatness but its decrepitude involuntarily drives our thoughts to the fragility of human things. There is a time for everything and the monuments that seemed to defy the test of times fall apart as if demonstrating that only God’s works are durable and when the debris spread everywhere protesting against the eternity of man’s works, you dare call eternal a city littered with the remains of the past! Where are you Babylon? Where are you Nineveh? Where are your huge and splendid palaces? The traveler hopelessly searches under the sand of the desert. Don’t you see that God has erased it from the surface of the Earth? Rome, do you expect to defy the laws of nature? You say you are Christian and Babylon was Pagan. Yes, but you are stones, as she is also, and God’s breath may disperse the stacked rocks. Isn’t the trembling earth around you a warning that your cradle under your feet may become your grave? You say: ‘I am Christian and God protects me.’ However, how dare you compare yourself to the first Christians who died for their faith and whose thoughts were no longer from this world, you who live the pleasures, luxury and indolence? Cast your eyes upon those arenas when you go by with indifference. Ask those still standing stones and they shall respond and the shadow of the martyrs will come to tell you: What have you done to the simplicity turned into law by our divine Master; to the humility and charity that he gave us as an example? Did the first propagators of the Gospel live in palaces, and were they dressed in silk and gold? Were their tables overflowing with the

superfluous? Were they surrounded by useless entourages of servants flattering their pride? What is it in common between you and them? They only wanted the treasures of heaven while you seek the Earthly treasures! Oh! Men who call yourselves Christians! Looking at your attachment to the perishable things of this world one would say that you don't really count on those things of eternity. Rome, self-proclaimed to be immortal, when the future centuries will not be able to find your location as it is today when we seek Babylon!

Dante”

OBSERVATION: Out of an incredible coincidence these two messages came to us on the same day. Although they deal with the same subject it is clear that the spirits see it from their own personal point of view. The first sees a religious Rome and eternal in his opinion because it shall always be the capital of the Christian world. The second sees the material Rome and says that nothing constructed by man can be eternal. It is a fact that the spirits have their own opinions and may disagree among themselves when still influenced by their worldly ideas. It is only the purer spirits that are exempt from prejudices. But leaving aside the opinion that may be controversial, it is not possible to deny the fact that the two communications show great elevation in style and thought and we believe that they would not be denied by the authors whose names they bear.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Spiritist teachings and conversations

The Promised Land

Sent by Mr. Rodolphe, from Mulhouse

“Spiritism rises and soon its fertile light will illuminate the world. Shining magnificently it will protest against the attacks of those interested in keeping up with the abuse and against the incredulity of materialism. The doubters will feel happy for finding in this new, beautiful and pure doctrine the consoling balm that will heal their skepticism, thus facilitating their betterment and progress as with everybody else. Privileged will be those who take off rapidly flying towards the pinnacles of the purest ideas, seeking their complete dematerialization. People! Stand up to watch the dawn of this new regenerating era; sent by God to have you all united in a sacred and fraternal communion. Oh! The happiness of those who listen to this blessed voice of Spiritism, following its flag and accomplishing their apostolic mission that will recover the brothers lost on the path of doubt and ignorance, or blinded by vices!

Come back, wondering sheep, come back to the pen. Raise your head, look at your Creator and you will pay tribute to God's love for you. Promptly remove the veil hiding the Spirit of Divinity from you; admire its great beauty; kneel down, bring your face to the ground and repent. Repentance will open the doors of

happiness to you, the doors of a better world where you will find the purest love, the real fraternity where each person finds joy and in their neighbor's joy.

Don't you feel that the time has come for the advent of new things? Don't you feel that Earth seems to be giving birth? What do all these people want with their agitation, their hurry to fight? Why are they going to fight? To break the chains that preclude the advancement of their intelligences; that absorb their energies; that sow mistrust and discord; that forearm the son against his father and brother against brother; that corrupt noble aspirations and kill the genius. Oh! Freedom! Oh! Independence! Noble attributes of God's children, growing hearts and elevating souls; you are the reason why men become good, great and generous; you drag our aspirations to good; you eliminate injustice and hatred, and discord flees in shame with its dying trail projecting sinister flashes of light. Brothers! Listen to the voice that tells you: March! March towards that shining goal before you! March towards that shining ray of light ahead of you, as in the past when the column illuminated before the people of Israel. You shall be led to the true Promised Land, the kingdom of eternal happiness reserved to the pure spirits! Arm yourself with virtues; purify yourself from impurities and your path will seem easy, escorted by flowers. You will walk it with ineffable joy for on each step of the way you will feel that your goal is closer, a place where you will win the eternal palms.

Mardoqueu"

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Spiritist teachings and conversations

Selfishness and Pride

Spiritist Society of Sens

"If people loved one another with mutual love, charity would be better practiced. For that you would have to struggle to get rid of that armor around your hearts to become more sensitive to the suffering of others. Rigidity kills good feelings. Christ was never discouraged. He never rejected anyone that came to him, whoever that person might have been. The adulterous woman, the criminal were rescued by him. He was never afraid of hurting his own reputation. When will take him as the example of all of your actions? If charity were reigning on Earth, evil would not have its domain; it would flee ashamed; it would hide and feel awkward everywhere. Evil would then disappear from the face of Earth, rest assured. Start by giving the example yourselves. Be charitable to everyone, irrespectively; strive to create the habit of not noticing those who look at you with disdain; always believe that they deserve your sympathy and leave it to God to take care of all the righteousness, for everyday God separates the weed from the wheat in his kingdom. Selfishness is the negation of charity, or, without charity there is no social peace. I say again, from a point of safety; when selfishness and pride walk hand in hand it is always a race in favor of the most capable, a

struggle of interests where the most sacred affections are knocked to the ground; where not even the sacred bonds of family are respected.

Pascal

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

October 1861

Spiritist teachings and conversations

Spiritist Society of Metz

On our way back from our travels we found a letter from the honorable President of the Spiritist Society of Metz as well as the first publication of that Society. We will publish it in the next issue of the Review since the current one is already composed and ready to go to press. All we have is space and time to send our sincere congratulations to that Society and its honorable President.

Allan Kardec³⁶

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

The remains of the Middle Ages
Act of faith³⁷ of Barcelona

We are not telling our readers anything that they have not already seen through the press. What is remarkable is that newspapers that are apparently well informed have doubted it. The doubt does not surprise us as the fact itself seems so much strange in the contemporary world; it is so distant from our time that however much blindness we admit in fanaticism, it boggles our minds hearing that the burning fires of the Inquisition are still lighting up in 1861, just at the door of France. Under these circumstances, the doubt is a tribute to the European civilization, to the Catholic clergy itself. Today, in the presence of an incontestable reality, what is truly remarkable is the fact that a serious newspaper, one that daily bashes the abuse and invasion of the sacerdotal power, has found for reporting this fact, a few mocking

37 Refers to the original phrase “*Auto de Fé*” ritual of public penance of condemned heretics and apostates that took place in the Spanish or Portuguese Inquisition – in the present case it refers to the public burning of many spiritist books that were legally sent to Barcelona

words, adding: *‘In any case, it would not be us at this moment who would be amusing ourselves t by making tables turn in Spain (Le Siècle, October 14th 1861).’* Is it that the Siècle still sees Spiritism as only turning tables? Also, it is therefore quite blinded by skepticism to ignore that a whole philosophical doctrine, eminently progressive, has come out of those tables that they have so ridiculed? They still don’t know that this idea is fermenting everywhere; that everywhere, in the large cities as well as in small towns, in high or low social echelons, in France and abroad, this idea spreads with an extraordinary speed; that everywhere it shakes the crowds that greet it in the dawn of a social reform? Isn’t the blow against it, that some judged to have hurt it, isn’t that an indication of its importance? Nobody throws such a blow against something infantile and without consequences and Don Quixote has not gone back to Spain to fight the windmills.

What is not less exorbitant, and we are surprised that there has been no strong protest against it, is the strange pretension that the Bishop of Barcelona self-embodies to police France. The request for returning the books was answered with a denial justified as follows: ‘The Catholic Church is universal and as these books are against the Catholic faith, the government must not allow them to be perverted by the moral and religions of other countries’. So, this is a foreign Bishop that entitled himself judge of what is convenient or not convenient to France! Then the sentence was maintained and executed, without even exempting the addressee of customs taxes that were duly charged. Here is the report that was addressed to us personally:

“Today, October ninth of eighteen sixty one, at 10 am, in the esplanade of Barcelona, in the place where criminals condemned to capital punishment are executed, and by the order of the Bishop of this city, three hundred books and brochures about Spiritism were burned, as follows:

The Spiritist Magazine, Editor Allan Kardec;

The Spiritualist Magazine, Editor Piérard;

The Spirits’ Book, by Allan Kardec;

The MEDIUMS’ BOOK, by same;

What is Spiritism, by the same;

Fragments of the sonata dictated by the spirit of Mozart;

Letter of a Catholic about Spiritism, by Dr. Grand;

The story of Joana of Arc, dictated by herself to Ms. Ermance Dufaux;

The reality of the spirits, demonstrated by direct writing, by Baron of Goldenstubbe.

Witnesses at the burning:

A clergy man wearing religious garments, with a cross in one hand and a torch in the other;

A notary in charge of writing the minutes of the event;

The assistant to the notary;

A high ranking official of the Customs administration;

Three agents of Customs, in charge of tending the fire;

A Customs' agent, in charge of representing the owner of the books condemned by the bishop;

A huge crowd on the sidewalks and covering the immense esplanade where the bonfire was lit.

When the fire destroyed the three hundred spiritist books or brochures, the priest and his helpers left, followed by the booing and cursing of numerous persons present, who shouted: Down with the Inquisition!

Then, several people approached the fire and collected the ashes”.

Part of those ashes were sent to us where there is a fragment of a half burned *The Spirits' Book* that we preciousely keep as a witness to this authentic act of senselessness. Despite any opinion, this fact raises grave concern regarding international law. We acknowledge that the Spanish government has the right to refuse entry into its territory of books that are not convenient, as it does with any prohibited merchandise. Were the books clandestine or had they entered fraudulently, there would be nothing to say, but they were clearly expedited and presented to Customs Officials. There was permission, legally requested. Customs felt obliged to report to the Episcopal authority that, without any form of legal process, condemn the books to the fire, by the hands of an executioner. Then the addressee requests that the books be returned to the place of origin and finally he hears that his request was denied. We ask if the destruction of this property, under such circumstances, isn't an arbitrary act and outside the law?

Having the case examined from the point of view of its consequences, we shall first say that there is no doubt that nothing could be more favorable to Spiritism. The persecution has always been useful to the idea that one is willing to banish. Its importance is exalted by persecution, it attracts the attention of those who ignored it and made known by those who did not. Thanks to this imprudent fervor everybody in Spain will hear about Spiritism and will wish to know what it is. This is all we want. One can burn books but one cannot burn ideas. The flames of the fire excite them rather than muffle them. When an idea is great and generous it finds thousands of hearts ready to aspire for it. Despite what has been done, Spiritism already has profound and numerous roots in Spain. The ashes of that bonfire will produce fruits. But it is not only in Spain that such results will take place. The whole world will feel its consequences. Several newspapers in Spain stigmatized the retrograde act, as it deserves to be. The periodical *Las Novedades de Madrid*, from October 19th, carries a remarkable article about it, which shall be reproduced in our next issue of the Review.

Spiritists of all countries! Don't forget the date October 9th, 1861. It shall be marked in the calendar of Spiritism. May it be a day of festivity and not sorrow to all of you, since it is the guarantor of your forthcoming triumph! Among the multiple communications regarding the subject, dictated by the spirits, we shall cite the two following ones that were spontaneously given in the Parisian Society. They summarize the causes and consequences of this act.

About the Act of Faith in Barcelona

“The love of the truth must always be heard. It pierces the clouds and simultaneously bursts through everywhere. Spiritism has become known by everybody. It will soon be taken into account and practiced. The more persecution there is, the faster this sublime Doctrine will arrive at its peak. Its harshest enemies, the enemies of Christ and progress, behave in such a way that nobody can ignore the fact that God allows the return of those who have left this Earth of exile to be close to their loved ones. Be assured that the bonfires will extinguish themselves, and even if books are cast into the fire their immortal thoughts will survive”.

Dollet

NOTE: This spirit who manifested spontaneously said that he was an former bookshop owner of the XVI century.

Another

“Something was needed to strike a violent blow against certain incarnate spirits to help them decide to engage with this great Doctrine that shall regenerate the world. Nothing is done uselessly on Earth and we who inspired the *Act of Faith of Barcelona*, we knew well that by so doing we contributed with a huge step forward. This brutal act, unheard of in today’s times, was accomplished in order to attract the attention of journalists who remained indifferent before the profound agitation taking place in cities and spiritist centers.

They were left with nothing more to say, nothing more to do, but they persisted in turning a deaf ear and responded with silence to the desire of propaganda from the followers of Spiritism. Willingly or not they need to speak up now. Some by attesting the historic case of Barcelona, and others by denying them, giving rise to a controversy that shall travel around the world and from which only Spiritism will take advantage. That is why today the past tradition of the Inquisition has practiced its last ‘*Auto de Fé*’, because we wanted it to be.”

Saint Dominic

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

A journalist's opinion about *The Spirits' Book*

It is a well-known that we don't get much attention from the press but that does not preclude Spiritism from advancing fast, a clear demonstration that it is strong enough to march alone. If the press is mute or hostile there is no reason to believe that all of its representatives are against Spiritism. Many, on the contrary, are sympathetic but hold back their positions out of personal considerations since nobody wants to take the initiative. The general public is voicing their opinion on a growing scale these days. The idea is generalizing and when it has reached the masses the progressive press will be forced to follow suit or pay the price for staying behind with those who never advance. They will do it particularly when they understand that Spiritism is the most powerful instrument of propagation of a grandiose, humanitarian and

generous idea that it preaches endlessly. There is no doubt that its teachings are not lost but how many strikes are necessary to hit the rock of prejudices before breaking it down? Spiritism offers a fertile ground and flattens out the last barriers that prevent its movement. That is what will be learned by those who take the burden of studying it in-depth, assessing its reach and observing the consequences that already show their positive results. However, in order to achieve that there is the need for serious observers rather than superficial ones; people who don't write just for the sake of it but who turn their principles into a religion. Have no doubt that such people will be found and sooner than expected we will see some of those names heading the propagation of the spiritist ideas, people whose names bear authority and whose memories will remain in the future as having contributed to the true emancipation of humanity. The article below, published by the Akhbar journal from Algeria, on October 15th, 1861 is already a first step in that direction and it will have followers. Our readers may perhaps recognize the talent of one of our most eminent journalists under the modest pseudo name Ariel.

**

“The European press has given a lot of attention to this work. After reading it one can understand why, regardless of the opinion that one may have about the collaboration that the author admits to have had from extraterrestrial intelligences. In fact, suppressing some pages of the introduction that exposes the modes and means of such collaboration – the contestable part by the profanes – the remaining is a book of the highest philosophy, of an eminently pure moral, particularly having a very reassuring effect on a human soul, dazed between the sufferings of the present and the fears of the future. In addition, many readers may have exclaimed on reaching the last page: *I don't know if all this is true but I really wish it were!*”

“Who has not heard about the strange communications from a few years ago, that certain privileged persons were interpreters between the material and the invisible world? Everyone took sides on that issue and as is typical, the majority of those who sustained the banner of belief or the others who retreated to the field of unbelievers who did not bother to investigate the facts, whose reality some believed and others denied.”

“These are not matters for discussion in a newspaper like ours, though. Thus, neither contesting nor attesting the post-mortem signatures of Plato, Socrates, Saint Augustine, Julio Caesar, Charlemagne, Saint Louis, Napoleon, etc. found at the end of several paragraphs of Mr. Allan Kardec's book, we must say that if these great men were returning to the world to give us explanations about problems of the highest interest to humanity they would not express themselves with more lucidity, with a more profound moral sense, in a kinder way, with a greater elevation in the views and language than they do in the eccentric work which we are trying to give an idea. These are things that one cannot read without emotion and that cannot be forgotten immediately after they were read. In that sense *The Spirits' Book* will not suffer, like many others have, the indifference of the century. It will have eager adversaries, ruthless jesters, but we would not be surprised if it also found, on the other hand, very enthusiastic and sincere followers.”

“Since we cannot consciously take sides – given the lack of previous verification – we remain with our humble task of reporter by saying this: read that book which totally departs from more of the same contemporary banalities. If you are not going to be seduced, captivated, you will perhaps be irritated but, there is no doubt, you will not remain cold or indifferent.”

“We recommend in particular the passage about death. This is a subject that nobody likes to discuss, even those who consider themselves strong and courageous. Well then! After having read and given some thought to that we found ourselves surprised for no longer finding something horrifying in that supreme crisis. It leads us to a point where death is no longer feared or desired. Other not less important problems find equally unexpected and consoling solutions. In short, the time spent reading this book will be a time well spent for the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity and will not be lost in terms of moral betterment.”

Ariel

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

Spiritism in Bordeaux

If Lyon has made what could be called their announcement in terms of Spiritism, Bordeaux was not left behind for she also wants to take one of the first rows in the great family. This can be evaluated based on the report that we have just published about our visit with the spiritists of that city, following their invitation. It was not in a few years but in a few months that the Doctrine assumed impressive proportions there in all social classes. A fact of capital importance has been observed since the beginning. There, as in Lyon and in many other towns that we have visited, we saw the Doctrine looked at from a very serious point of view and from the moral consequences of its application. There, like elsewhere, we saw

innumerable transformations, true metamorphoses; characters that are no longer recognizable; people who believed nothing and were brought to the religious ideas by the certainty in the future that they can now feel. This gives a measure of the seriousness of the spiritist gatherings, already multiplied; in every session that we attended showing the most constructive reverence in an environment of mutual benevolence among the attendees. People feel that they are in a sympathetic environment that inspires trust.

The workers of Bordeaux owe nothing to those of Lyon. We find large numbers of eager followers there, whose number increases every day. We are happy to say that we left their meetings comforted by a pious sentiment that governs them, as well as for their skills in guarding them against the intrusion of deceiving spirits. Something that we noticed with satisfaction is that people, sometimes enjoying eminent social positions, mix with groups of common workers in the most fraternal cordiality, leaving their titles at the door, as groups of simple workers are welcomed with equal benevolence among groups of another social class. The rich and the worker shake hands with cordiality leaving their titles at the door. We were told that such approximation of the two extremes of the social scale has become habit in the region and we were congratulated for that. We acknowledge that Spiritism came to give this kind of thing a reason and a moral sanction, showing the meaning of true fraternity.

We found a large number of good mediums in Bordeaux in all social classes, from both sexes and all ages. Many write with great ease and receive communications of elevated reach, a fact that had been revealed to us by the spirits before we left. One can only praise them for the devotion that they show in the sessions. However, what is even more important is the abnegation that they show in every communication. Nobody believes to be a privileged and *exclusive* interpreter of the truth. Nobody tries to impose themselves or the spirits that assist them. Everyone submits with simplicity to the messages received for the assessment of the assembly and nobody feels offended or hurt by the criticism. The one who receives false communications finds consolation by taking advantage of the good ones received by others, showing no envy. Does it happen everywhere? We don't know. We state what we have seen; they are also convinced that every proud, jealous and susceptible medium cannot count on the assistance of the good spirits and that such caprice is reason for suspicion of that medium. Far from seeking such mediums and despite the high quality of their faculties, such mediums would be repelled by all serious groups that wish to obtain serious communications, before anything else and are not concerned about physical effects.

Among the mediums that we met there is one that deserves a special remark. It is a nineteen year old young lady who adds painting and musical abilities to her writing mediumship. She composes mechanically under the control of a spirit that she says is Mozart, pieces of music that he would not deny. The spirit signed the music score and several persons who had seen his autograph attested the perfect identity of the signature. But her most beautiful work is, no doubt, the drawing. It is a 4m² (13.1 ft²) planetary image of a very original and singular effect that would be impossible for us to give an idea by its description. The work is in black crayon, pastels of various colors and shades. The painting was started months ago and is not finished yet. The spirit is dedicating it to the Spiritist Society of Paris.

We saw the medium at work and were amazed by both the speed and accuracy.. At first, and as a warm-up, the spirit made her draw free-hand and in one single movement circles and spirals of one meter in diameter and of such regularity that it met the geometric center. We cannot say anything yet about the scientific value of the painting; but admitting that it is a creative impulse, it is still nonetheless a

remarkable mediumistic work. Since the original was supposed to be sent to Paris, the spirit advised to have it photographed in order to have several copies.

A fact that must be mentioned is that the medium's father is a painter. As an artist he thinks that the spirit disobeys the rules of Art and wanted to give advice. The spirit prohibited him from watching the work so that the medium would not be influenced. Up until recently the medium had not read our books yet. The spirit dictated to her a small draft of Spiritism to be delivered to us upon our arrival, with all points agreeing with *The Spirits' Book*.

It would be presumptuous to enumerate every testimony of sympathy that we received and the kind reception and attention addressed to us. It would certainly be enough to excite our pride if we were not certain that the tribute was paid to the Doctrine rather than to us personally. For the same reason we hesitated in publishing some speeches that were given and really confused us. When exposing our scruples to some friends and to several members of the Society, we were told that such speeches were an indication of the status of the Doctrine and from that point of view it would be instructive to all spiritists to get to know them; that, on the other hand, considering these words were the expression of a sincere feeling, those who uttered them could feel hurt if out of excessive modesty we refused to publish them. They could see indifference from our side. This last consideration was essential in our decision. We hope that the readers will judge us sufficiently good spiritist and as not betraying the very principles that we profess and making this report a matter of egotism.

Since we are reporting on the multiple speeches we don't want to omit, a special little speech was given with a charming grace and naive enthusiasm by a five year old boy, son of Mr. Sabò, at our arrival to the heart of this kind family upon which Spiritism has poured handfuls of nurturing consolations. If every starting generation were taken by such feelings we would then be able to foresee how close we are from the changes in social customs announced by the spirits. You must not think that the little boy delivered his little speech like a parrot! No, he understood its meaning very well. He was, so to say, cradled in Spiritism and for his young mind, which has not been an obstacle, as he already understands it very well and for that reason even more, will not be rejected as he develops. Here is the speech of our little friend, Joseph Sabò who would be very sad if he did not see it published:

"Mr. Allan Kardec, allow the youngest of your spiritist children to express our happiness with your presence among us, on this day that shall be forever recorded in our hearts. I am still a young child but my father taught me that the spirits communicate with us; that we must kindly follow their advice; about the penalties and rewards that they find; and a few years from now, God willing, I also want to become an honorable and eager apostle of Spiritism, with your sponsorship and always submitted to your knowledge and your experience. In exchange for these few words said from the bottom of my little heart, would you give me a kiss that I dare not ask?"

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

General Meeting of the Spiritists of Bordeaux
October 14th, 1861

Speech given by Mr. Sabò

“Ladies and gentlemen,

Let us pay tribute to God with our sincere acknowledgement for having cast upon us a paternal and benevolent glance, giving us the precious favor of receiving the teachings of the good spirits who, in turn,

come every day to help us to distinguish between the truth and the mistake; to give us assurance of future happiness; show us that the punishment is proportional to the offense, but not eternal, helping us to understand this fair and equitable law of reincarnation, the key to the vault of the spiritist building, serving our purification and helping our progress towards good.

I said reincarnation! But to make it more understandable, let us give in a moment to speak with one of our spiritual guides who out of pure kindness will give us instructions about this serious matter and interesting subject for our poor humanity. He says: *‘Reincarnation is hell; reincarnation is purgatory; reincarnation is atonement; reincarnation is progress. Finally, it is the sacred ladder that every man must climb. The steps are the phases of the several existences to cover to get to the top, for God has said that to get there one needs to be born, die and born again until the limits of perfection are reached and that nobody will reach it if not purified by reincarnation.’*

Spiritism, being still new to science, we had only good will and enthusiasm to propagate it. A pleased God blessed our efforts by germinating in the hearts of some of our brothers from Bordeaux the seed of the divine word. In fact we have been involved with the *practical science* since January and we have seen a number of brothers establishing a link with us, brothers who were doing it in isolation; others who heard about it through the voice of the press, or the fame, this far-reaching trumpet, which is responsible for knowing the arrival at all points of our city of this consoling faith, indisputable testimony of God’s benevolence towards his children.

Despite the difficulties we encountered on the way, strong of purity and righteousness of our convictions, supported by the advices of our beloved and venerable leader, Mr. Allan Kardec, we have the rewarding satisfaction after nine months of apostolate and with the help of some of our brothers to meet today in your presence to inaugurate this Society that, I hope, will continue to bear fruits abundantly and spread like a benevolent dew onto the hearts dried by materialism, hardened by selfishness, full of pride, and will take the balm of resignation to those in suffering and affliction, to the poor and disinherited of earthly goods, saying: *‘Have trust and courage! Earthly trials are a short duration compared to the eternity of happiness that God reserves for you.’*

Yes, I confess out loud that I am happy for being the interpreter of a large number of members of the Spiritist Society of Bordeaux, reaffirming our fidelity in following the road that is drawn to us by our dear missionary present here, since we understand that to be consistent, progress must take place gradually and that fighting certain ideas that come from centuries ago we would only send away our spiritual emancipation. It is possible that we may find divergent opinions about it among us. We respect them. In our opinion we must advance step by step following the wisdom of the nations: *chi va piano va sano*³⁸. It is possible, we will arrive later but we will have more certainty because we will not have broken from the faith of our ancestors, always sacred to us, whatever it may be. Let us use the light of Spiritism not to abate but for our own betterment, for our progress. Withstanding with courage and resignation the vicissitudes of this life in which we are only passing through and will merit the favor at the end of our trials, of being led by the Spirits of the Lord to enjoy immortality for which we were created.

38 Italian for: What goes slowly arrives safely (NT)

Allow me, dear master, in the name of the members of this Society who surround you, to thank you for the honor of having come in person to inaugurate this family reunion, that is a party to all of us and that will make history, no doubt, in the archives of Spiritism. Also, may you equally receive that this day remains stored in our hearts and in a very special way the most sincere expression of our recognition for the paternal kindness with which you have encouraged our feeble work. You were the one who drawn the path which we gladly followed, convinced beforehand that your mission is to make our beautiful France advance spiritually which at the same time will incite other nations of on the earth, helping them to reach happiness, little by little, through moral and intellectual progress.”

Some considerations about Spiritism

read at the general session on the occasion of the visit of Allan Kardec to Bordeaux

by Dr. Bouché de Vitray

There are certain times when an idea leads the world, preceding those cataclysms that transform people and nations. Even more than an idea that presides over the material interests, the religious idea also takes part in the big picture of the social movement. Frequently absorbed by material concerns, it happens suddenly or unnoticeably. Sometimes it is the lightning that escapes from the clouds, sometimes, the volcano that silently mines the mountain before crossing the crater. It affects another type of manifestation these days. After having shown up as an almost imperceptible point in the horizon of ideas, it ended up by invading the atmosphere. The air is impregnated by it. It crosses the spaces, fertilizes intelligences and touches the whole world. No, I am not using metaphors as an expression of reality. No. It is a phenomenon that one is aware of but that is difficult to translate into words. It is like a fluid that compresses us from all sides, something vague and fuzzy whose influence is felt by everyone, and that impregnates the brain and frequently comes out of the mind as if intuition, rarely formulated as a thought. The religious idea, I mean the spiritist idea, finds its place at the office of the businessman, of the doctor, of the lawyer, the general attorney, in the workshop of the worker, in the fields as in the barracks. The name of our great, our dear spiritist missionary is on everyone's lips, as his image is in every heart and all eyes are now staring at this pinnacle, honorable interpreter of our Lord's ministers. Wouldn't this idea that spreads all over the place, that excites all human brains, that exists even instinctively in the most obstinate incarnate spirits, wouldn't that be the work of this crowd of intelligences that surrounds us, preceding and facilitating our apostolic works?

We know that the testimony of legitimacy of our Doctrine goes back to the dawn of time; that the sacred books, fundamental basis of Christianity, report them and that several fathers of the Church like Tertullian and Saint Augustine, among others, attest its reality. The contemporary books themselves mention that and I cannot resist the temptation of citing a passage from a book published in 1843 that seems to publically expose the whole quintessence of Spiritism: *‘Some people doubt the existence of superior intelligences, incorporeal, the otherwise geniuses who preside over the administration of the world, and that entertain a private exchange with some privileged beings. The lines below are addressed to them. I hope it helps to convince them. In all kingdoms of nature there is a law that scales the species, from the infinitely small to the infinitely large. It is through imperceptible levels that one transitions from the insect to the elephant; from the grain of sand to the largest cosmic body. Such regular gradation is evident in every sensible work of the Creator; thus it must also be present in his masterpiece so that the*

scale is continual and leads to him! The prodigious distance between inert matter and rationality seems to be occupied by the organic world but deprived from the noble prerogative. In the infinite distance between people and the Creator there is the dwelling of the pure spirits. Their existence is indispensable for the accomplishment of creation in all senses. Thus, there is also the world of the spirits whose variety is as wide as the shining stars in the skies; there is also the universe of intelligences that through their subtleness, service and broadness, get gradually closer to the sovereign intelligence. His design, already manifested in the organization of the visible world, continues up until the final completion in the invisible world. Every religion proclaims the existence of these immaterial beings. They all represent them involved with human matters, as their secondary agents. Denying their intervention in the human's incidents is evidently denying the facts upon which the beliefs of all peoples rest, all philosophers and all wise people since ancient times.'

There is no doubt that the person who painted this image was a spiritist from the bottom of his soul. This incomplete drawing lacks the dogma of reincarnation as well as the moral consequences that the teaching of the spirits has brought to the followers of Spiritism. The Doctrine existed as intuition in the minds and hearts. You came, Sir, as the elected of God. The Almighty added righteousness and a privileged mediumship to a vast erudition, to an elevated spirit. All elements of the eternal truths were disseminated in space. It was necessary to establish the Science; take conviction to the still undecided minds; compile the inspirations coming from the Almighty into a substantial body of doctrine. The work progressed and the pollen escaping from that intellectual stem produced the fertilization. Your name is the flag under which we position ourselves. Today you come in support of the children of Spiritism who are only beginning to pronounce the principles of this Science but to whom a large number of benevolent spirits do not deny their favors with their celestial inspirations. Amidst the congress of intelligences from the two worlds – and we congratulate ourselves for that – the bad passions rebel before the works of regeneration. The false knowledge, pride, egotism and human interests stand up against Spiritism, in a demonstration of power, while God, the great engine of this ascending progress towards heavenly regions, hidden behind the clouds of hateful and chimeric theories, remains calm and continues his work.

The work is in progress and spiritist centers are formed in all corners of the planet. Young people abandon the illusions of infancy that entails so much deception at a later stage; more mature people learn to take life seriously; older people who spend their emotions in the frictions of life fulfill their immense emptiness with more realistic pleasures than those left behind; and from all these heterogeneous elements the groups are formed, radiating to infinity. Our beautiful city was not the last one to take part in this intellectual movement. One of those righteous and sensible men took the initiative. His appeal was heard by other intelligences in harmony with his; around this luminous center the many other Spiritist circles gravitated.

Multiple communications appear from everywhere with the seal of the author: it is the mother that communicates with her beloved son from glorious spheres and with a myriad of details out of her infinite kindness; it is the father, or the grandfather, that adds the severity of the form to the paternal love; it is Fénelon speaking about charity and showing the beautiful hallmark of former times in the melody and prose of his language; it is the touching spectacle of a son that becomes a happy spirit revealing the echo of his elevated teachings to the very one who brought him to life; it is the mother who reveals herself to her son with her head crowned by stars, leading him from trial to trial to the place that he must occupy by her side in God, through the eternities (sic); it is the Archbishop of Utrecht whispering his eloquent

inspirations to his protégé, submitting them to the impediments of orthodoxy; it is a certain angel Gabriel, homonymous of the great archangel, spontaneously taken upon him and with God's permission the mission of guiding his brother, following him step by step and adding to his fraternal love the divine love of a superior spirit; it is the pure spirits, the saints, the archangels covering their sublime instructions with the seal of divinity; and finally the physical manifestations after which anyone's doubt is just absurd if not profanation. After having raised our eyes to the superior levels of the scale of creatures, allow me dear colleagues, to look down to the infinitely small who will still give you lessons.

About ten years ago the clarity of Spiritism reached my eyes but it was Spiritism in its rudimentary state, stripped from the main documentation and without the characteristic know-how. It was a reflection, a few rays of fine radiation. It was not light yet. Instead of using the pencil to obtain quick communications through a simplified method, one was still resorting to rapping's at the table and indirect writing. The table was not but an appendix of the hand and such means of communication was generally rejected by superior spirits, keeping them away. Thus I only found mystification, trivial or obscene answers, and I therefore stayed away from those mysteries from beyond the grave, converted into things that were much below my expectations, or even better, into something that terrified me. Several trials were carried out leading to similar results. However, those apparent deceptions were not but temporary tests that had the definitive consequence of rooting my convictions. Despite all that, the positivism of my studies had affected my philosophical beliefs. I was skeptical but not 'pyrrhonic'³⁹ since I doubted with great sorrow, uselessly making efforts to repel the materialism that had unexpectedly taken over my soul and my heart. How impenetrable are God's designs! It was precisely that moral setting that served my transformation. I had the immortality of the soul before my eyes presenting itself like a material fact and to establish this new faith why bother if the manifestations would come from a superior or an inferior spirit, as long as coming from a spirit! Didn't I know already that an inert body like a table can be the instrument and not the cause of an intelligent manifestation? That it was not absolutely in the sphere of my own ideas and that no fluid theory was good enough to explain? Hence, I had shaken off those materialistic tendencies against which I fought unsuccessfully with a desperate energy and would have frankly explored those intellectual regions that were just envisaged had it not been for the devil phobia of Mr. de Mirville and the profound impression it had left in my soul. To counter that it was necessary to have this unbelieving luminous, substantial work, full of reassuring truths, dictated by celestial intelligences to an incarnated spirit, but an outstanding spirit to whom his mission on Earth has since been revealed. Today my recognition obliges me to write on this page the name of one of my good friends who opened my eyes to the light, Mr. Roustaing, a distinct and particularly conscientious attorney, destined to an important role in the history of Spiritism. I owe him this short tribute of acknowledgment and friendship. If I were not afraid of abusing the time in this ceremony I would certainly cite numerous communications of unquestionable interest. However, in this purely intellectual activity and above our unstoppable communications with the world of the spirits there are two facts that exceptionally protest against an absolute silence. The first one is about intimate and touching details that led us to tears; the second, given the strange nature of the phenomenon, belongs to the clairvoyant mediumship, constituting such a tangible proof that we would have to deny the good faith of the mediums if we wanted to deny the reality of that fact.

39 Pyrronism is the first Greek doctrine of skepticism that proposes the renunciation of certainty given the relativity of sensations and the discrepancy of opinions on which one intends to found the basis of reasoning. (NT)

I and some eager spiritists get together weekly to study and take broader advantage of the teachings given by the Doctrine of the spirits. Plentiful of faith and the similarity of studies and education of the majority of the group gave rise to a reciprocal sympathy and a communion of thoughts, therefore leading to the most favorable moral and intellectual dispositions to receive serious communications.

In one of those sessions someone endowed by a remarkable level of mediumship wanted to evoke the spirit of a little girl that had died of croup, I believe, when she was six years old. He served as the medium and I as the evoker. The evocation had just finished when we heard some percussion in a piece of furniture in an adjacent room; it excited our attention leading us to question if the uncommon noise was provoked by natural causes or if it was originated by a spiritist cause. The guides responded that it was caused by Estelle's (the girl's name) companions that came to introduce themselves to her friend. In our minds we followed that graceful entourage floating in space. We were given the name Antonia, a young lady among them who had just passed through Earth and whose life had been taken by a wrongly committed murder when she had just turned four. Predicting that they would complete their trials in a new existence, I prayed to my guardian angel, that good mother whose kindness never failed me, to take them under her care and to clearly show them their heavenly protection. It did not take long for the help to arrive but God allowed her to show up to one of them only and she chose Antonia:

- What do you see my little friend – I asked evoking the latter.
- Oh! What a beautiful lady! She is resplendent of lights!
- And what is the beautiful lady telling you?
- She says: 'Come to me, my dear, I love you!'

That is why I represented this kind mother with a head crowned by stars. If this touching story that belongs to the world of the spirits seems to be a chapter of a novel to you, then one must deny every communication.

The other fact may be summarized in two words: I was with one of my spiritist colleagues. It was eleven thirty at night and we were praying to God for the suffering spirits when I vaguely saw a shadow moving away from a corner of my office, following a diagonal line extending up to my bed in the adjacent room. When the path was covered we heard a very distinct crack and the shadow moved on to the library, forming an acute angle with the initial direction. I was taken by emotion but given that I was involved by emotions and mystery, I initially thought that it was hallucination or optical illusion and said to myself that I should keep quiet about the fantastic apparition when my companion of continuous studies looked at me and asked if I had not seen anything. I was confused but decided to wait for a better opportunity thus limiting myself to question him the reason for his question. He then described the strange phenomenon that he had also witnessed and with such accuracy that it was impossible for me to doubt it and to let go the confirmation of the reality of that apparition. Two days after that we had the presence of a great medium with us. Consulting with the guides they confirmed the fact adding that the spontaneous apparition was that of a spirit that when on Earth had the name Maria de los Angelles. We were allowed to evoke her and responding to our questions she said that she had been born in Spain where she was a nun; her life had been censored for a long time, but a serious mistake, that death had not given her a chance to atone was the cause of her suffering in the world of the spirits. A few days later by chance, or even rather, God's will, gave us a second observation of that strange event. A spiritist, a young mechanic of remarkable intelligence, had spent the latter part of the afternoon with me. While I was speaking with

him I noticed that his eyes were remarkably fixated. He did not wait for the question to explain the situation: *'While you were looking at me I clearly saw the silhouette of a woman moving from the window to the couch nearby, then kneeling. She had the appearance of twenty five years of age; she was dressed in black; her torso was covered by a cape; her head was covered by some sort of handkerchief or bonnet'*

The description matched perfectly well with the idea I had of the Spanish nun and the place where she kneeled was more or less the place where I usually pray to God for the dead. To me it was Maria des Anges. I have no doubt that the unbelievers and the false spiritists will laugh at my certainty and will identify three visionaries in the event, instead of one. As for the sincere spiritist those will believe me particularly when I give my word for that. I give nobody the right to doubt similar testimony.

The work of Spiritism in Bordeaux, regardless of how modest and reserved they may be, are not less subjected to public curiosity and not a single day goes by that I am not questioned about it. Every profane person impressed by the spiritist phenomena insistently demands the favor of a trial; his soul floats between his own doubts and the conviction of followers.

I introduced one person into a serious meeting of spiritists who showed profound worship and reverence, showing the seriousness of the circumstance. What would be the reaction? Will an experienced medium be able to make that person accept the message inspired by a superior spirit? I had one of those embarrassing experiences. If the message has the seal of a divine inspiration the person will attribute it to the merit of the medium. If the message of God's ministers takes the nuances of that of the medium to whom it is revealed, it will certainly look like something purely human.

In such a case here is my rule of conduct. It was previously outlined by this providential man, by this missionary of ideas that we momentarily have among us and who will from his habitual center of activities irradiate upon us the celestial treasures that a special grace has made him the source. To the curious one who comes to inquiry about the reality of the facts or request an audience as a distraction or an emotion that passes through the heart but does not stay, I limit myself to expose the seriousness of the subject. To the pseudo wise spirit that in my opinion represents well those of the 8th class, 3rd order of the spiritist scale, I answer with no intention of allowing that person in, but the one who may still be obsessed by doubts but who foresees the truth in its germinal state, showing a goodwill to have faith, I then advise the theoretical studies which will soon lead to the practical studies or experimentation. Hence, as soon as a new fact stems out of a new idea that person keeps that side by side with the fact; then the spiritist science gradually penetrates his mind and his heart; these are works and trials that alternate in the two existences in a shiny eternity that takes place before the eyes of God, the source of life and happiness!

Bouché de Vitray, doctor in Medicine

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

General Meeting of the Spiritists of Bordeaux
October 14th, 1861

Speech by Mr. Allan Kardec

“Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with pleasure to have accepted your invitation and the warm welcome that I have received from you is one of those moral satisfactions that leave a deep and unforgettable impression in the heart. If I feel happy with this cordial reception it is because I see in it a tribute to the Doctrine that we profess and to the good spirits that teach it to us much more than to me personally who is only a mere, simple instrument in the hands of Providence. Convinced about the truth of this Doctrine and the good that it is destined to do, I worked towards the coordination of its components; striving to make it clear and understandable to all. That is all I am supposed to do and I have never considered myself its author. The honor is entirely due to the spirits. You must then address your testimonies of gratitude to them. I don't accept the praises that you in good faith address to me but only as encouragement to continue my task with perseverance.

I was certainly helped by the spirits to do the work I had to do to achieve the previously established objective, as they had told me themselves several times, but without any signs outside of mediumship. Thus, I am not a medium in the vulgar sense of the word and today I see that as reason for celebration that it is so. With an effective mediumship, I would have written under the same influence; I would have been led to accept as true only what had been given to me and perhaps mistakenly, whereas in my position it was convenient that I had absolute freedom to learn what was good wherever it came from and regardless of its source. Therefore I was able to make a selection among the many teachings without prevention and with complete impartiality. I saw a lot, I studied a lot, I observed many things but always with impassible eyes and my desire was nothing more than to see the experience that I was able to acquire working to the benefit of others to whom I am happy to help in avoiding the hurdles that are inseparable of any initiation.

If I worked a lot and if I still work daily I am rewarded by the fast advancement of the Doctrine whose progresses far beyond any expectation, by the moral results that it produces, and I feel happy for seeing the city of Bordeaux is not behind in this movement but prepares to progress at the head, given the number and the quality of its followers. If we consider the fact that Spiritism advances on its own strength without the support of any means that normally gives good results, and despite the struggles of a systematic opposition, or even better, due in reality to such efforts, I cannot help it but to see the finger of God in all that. If its enemies are dangerous but were not capable of paralyzing its development, one must realize that Spiritism is more powerful than those and like the serpent in the fable it is useless to apply their teeth against a steel plate.

If we say that the secret of its power rests on God's will those who don't believe in God will laugh. There are also many people who don't deny God but consider themselves more powerful than God. Those don't laugh but oppose barriers that they consider impassable; nonetheless Spiritism defeats them every day and before their eyes. Fact is that Spiritism takes an irresistible force from its very nature, its true essence. What is then the secret of such a force? Do we have to hide it for being afraid that once it is revealed its enemies can defeat Spiritism like what happened to Samson? Absolutely not. There are no mysteries in Spiritism. Everything is done outside in day light and can be fearlessly and openly revealed. Although I have already said that, it might not be inconvenient to repeat here so that everyone will know that if we reveal the secret of our strength to our adversaries it is because we also know their weak spot. The strength of Spiritism has two fundamental causes: the first one is that it makes people happy, those who get to know it, whom understand and practice it; now, since there are lots of people unhappy it recruits a

true army among those in suffering. Do they want to subtract Spiritism from such a means of propagation? They must then make people as much happy materially and morally and they will no longer wish anything else both in this world as well as in the next one. We don't ask for more since the objective would have been achieved. The second reason is the fact that Spiritism is not founded on the head of any person that may be knocked to the ground; that there isn't a single focal point to be extinguished; that its focus is everywhere for there are mediums all over the place that can communicate with the spirits; that there isn't a single family that could not have them in their heart and that may these words from Jesus become reality: *'Your sons and your daughters will prophesize and they will bear visions'*; finally because Spiritism is an idea and there is no impassible barrier to ideas and not even high enough so that they cannot be transposed. Christ was killed; his apostles and disciples were killed but Christ had issued the Christian idea to the world and such idea triumphed over the persecution of the omnipotent Caesars. Why then Spiritism that is no more than the development and application of the Christian idea would not triumph over some mockers and antagonists who, up until now and despite their efforts, were only able to oppose a sterile reaction? Is there a chimeric pretension on that? The dream of a reformer? There you have the facts to respond: despite everything and against everything Spiritism spreads everywhere. Like the fecund pollen of the flowers it is taken by the winds and set root in all corners of the world, because it finds fecund soil everywhere in the suffering and upon which it spreads its consoling balm.

Suppose, therefore, the most absolute imaginable state that recruits every possible means of stopping the spread of an idea; Does it prevent the spirits from entering the premises of a home and there manifesting spontaneously? Does it prevent the formation of mediums in the intimacy of the families? Suppose it to be strong enough to prevent any writing, to prohibit the reading of books; can it stop people from hearing, since there are hearing mediums? Does it prevent the father from receiving the consolations of his lost son? You then see that this is impossible and that I was right by saying that Spiritism can fearlessly reveal the secret of its strength to its enemies.

Be it, they will say. When something is unavoidable one must accept it. However, if it is a false and bad idea, isn't there reason to block it? To begin with one would need to prove that it is false. Well, up until now what do the adversaries oppose? Mockery and denial that, in good logic, have never been taken as arguments. But a serious and solid refutation; a categorical and evident demonstration, where can you find it? Nowhere. Not even in the criticism of Science or elsewhere.

On another hand when an idea propagates with the speed of light; when it finds a large number of echoes in the most educated classes of society; when it has roots in all peoples and since there is people on Earth; when the greatest philosophers, sacred and profane proclaim it then it is logical to suppose that it is not only founded on lies and illusions. Every sensible person or that is not blindfolded by passions or personal interests will say that there must be something true about it and that it is sensible to at least suspend one's judgment before the denial.

Is the idea bad? If it is true, or just the application of the laws of nature then it seems difficult that it is something bad unless one admits that God makes bad things in creation. How can it be a bad doctrine when it makes people who profess it better; that it consoles the afflicted, that it appeases the effervescence of passions and precludes suicide? Some say that it is contrary to religion. That is the big word they use to try to scare away the timid and those who don't know it. How can a doctrine that makes people better; that teaches the Christian moral; that only preaches charity, forgetfulness of offenses and submission to

God's will, how can that be contrary to religion? It would be nonsense. Affirming such a thing would be the same as condemning religion itself. That is why I say that those who say such things don't know the Doctrine. If that were the outcome why then it would lead those who believe in nothing to religious ideas? Why would it lead to prayer someone who had forgot it since their infancy?

In fact there is another peremptory answer: Spiritism opposes every dogmatic issue. To the materialistic it demonstrates the existence of the soul; to those who believe in nothing it demonstrates the eternal life; to those who believe that God does not get involved with people's businesses it demonstrates the future penalties and rewards. By destroying materialism Spiritism destroys the most important social ulcer. That is its very objective. With respect to particular beliefs Spiritism does not deal with that and gives total freedom for their individual choice. Materialism is the greatest enemy of religion. By leading people to spiritualism, Spiritism covers three quarter parts of the way to get to the heart of the Church. It is up to the Church to do the rest. But if people are rejected by their religion of choice then it is not strange that another one is sought. By saying these things, ladies and gentlemen, I am preaching to the choir and you know that, as well as I do. But there is another point about which is useful to say a few words.

If the external enemies cannot do anything against Spiritism, that is not the case with those inside. I refer to those who are more spiritist by name than in fact, not to mention those who just use the mask of spiritists. The most beautiful side of Spiritism is the moral side. It is through its moral consequences that it will triumph since that is the realm of its strength and invulnerability. Its banner reads: *Love and Charity* and before such palladium even more powerful than that of Minerva⁴⁰ since it comes from Jesus, even incredulity bends over. What can be opposed to a Doctrine that leads people to love one another like brothers? If the cause is not admitted one must at least respect the effect. Well, the best way to test the reality of the effect is by applying that to oneself; it is demonstrating to the enemies of the Doctrine, by example, that it has really made you better. But how can one convince that an instrument may produce harmonious sounds if its sounds are dissonant? Thus, how can one persuade others that Spiritism must lead to concord if those who profess it or supposedly profess it which to the adversaries is the same thing throw stones on one another? If a simple susceptibility of self-love, of hierarchy is enough to divide them? Isn't that a way of destroying ones' argument? The worst enemies of Spiritism are then those who lie to themselves, not practicing the law that they announce. It would be puerile to create dissidence based on nuances of opinion. Dissidence for personal reasons reveals evident malevolence by forgetting the first duty of a true spiritist, knowing that the exaltation of personality is the fruit of pride and selfishness.

We must not forget, ladies and gentlemen, that the enemies of Spiritism belong to two orders. From one side you have the jokers and the incredulous. These are contradicted daily by the facts. You must not be afraid of them. They unwillingly serve our cause and we must thank them for that. At the other end are those who have interest in combating the Doctrine. Don't expect to persuade them since they don't seek enlightenment. It is useless to unfold the evidence of the Sun before their eyes. They are blind because they don't want to see. They don't attack you because you are mistaken but because you are with the truth and right or wrong they believe that Spiritism is harmful to their material interests. If they were persuaded that it is a chimera they would leave it alone. Hence, their bloodthirsty behavior worsens in proportion to the progress of the Doctrine so that one can measure its importance by the violence of their attacks. While

40 Greek mythology (NT)

people only saw Spiritism as pass time of turning tables they said nothing and counted on the shortness of fashionable things. Now that they see the insufficiency of their mockery, despite their bad will, they try other means. Those means, whatever they are, have demonstrated their impotence. Nonetheless one cannot muffle the voice that becomes loud in all parts of the world and if they cannot stop this torrent that invades them from all sides they will do everything they can to create hurdles and if they are able to force progress to move backwards for a single day they will still say that the game is over in their favor.

You should then expect that the terrain will be disputed inch by inch since the material interest is the most tenacious. For that interest the most sacred rights of mankind are nothing. You have a proof of that in the American struggle. The union that was our glory may fall but not our interests! That is what the proslavery say. That is what the enemies of Spiritism say since the humanitarian question is the last of their concerns. What can we oppose them with? A flag that makes them pale once they know it comes from Jesus: *Love and Charity*, and these words are his ruling. May all spiritists unite around this flag and they will be strong for union is power. You will then recognize the true defenders of your cause not by words that cost nothing but by the practice of the law of love and charity; by the abnegation of personality. The best soldier is not the one who raises the sword higher but the one who has the courage to sacrifice his own life. Everyone who tries to spread among you the poison of discord is joining the ranks of the enemy and voluntarily or involuntarily is supplying them with weapons against you. In any case don't count on them more than on those bad soldiers who run away at the first shot.

However, you will say, if the opinions about some points of the Doctrine are divided how can we know on which side is the truth? This is the most difficult thing. To begin with have your judgment by weight and a healthy and inflexible logic by measure. Then you will have the support of the majority. Rest assured that the growing or decreasing number of followers of a given idea gives a measure of its value. If it were false it would not conquer more followers than the truth since God would not allow it to be. He may allow the mistake here or there in order to observe our attitudes and to teach us to recognize them. Without that where would our merit be if there were no choices to be made? Would you like another criterion of truth? Here you have an infallible one. Considering that the flag of Spiritism is love and charity, you will recognize the truth by the practice of that maxim, and be sure that the one who throws stones on someone else cannot be with the absolute truth. If there would be divergences among you – God forbid – I tell you with sadness that I would openly distance myself from those who had left behind the flag of fraternity because to my eyes they could not be seen as true spiritists.

In any case don't be concerned with some transient dissidence. You will soon have the proof that they don't have serious consequences. These are trials to your faith and to your judgment; they are often means allowed by God and the good spirits to check the right measure of sincerity and to get to know those that they can really count on if necessary, thus avoiding having them in the vanguard. These are little stones spread on our way so that you can create the habit of verifying your supports.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I still have to talk about the Society. Since you would like to take my advice I will tell you what I said in Lyon last year. The same reasons lead me to discourage you with all my strength from the project of forming a single society, comprising all spiritists in town, something that would not be practicable given the growing number of followers. It won't be long until you feel the limitations of the material obstacles and also the moral difficulties which are even greater, and all that would show you the actual impossibility. It is better not to initiate something that you would be forced to

renounce. Every consideration that support this opinion are thoroughly developed in the new edition of *The Mediums' Book* that I invite you to verify. I will only add a few words about that.

Something that is difficult to obtain in a session with a large number of members is much less difficult in private groups. These are formed by affinity of tastes, feelings and habits. Two separate groups may have different ways of seeing some details but that is not a reason to have disagreements whereas if they were all together the divergence of opinions would bring unavoidable disturbances.

The system of multiplication of groups still has the advantage of stopping the disputes for supremacy and presidency. Each group is naturally presided by the owner of the house or by designation and everything takes place in a family-like environment. If the high direction of Spiritism in a given city needs someone then that person will be called by the force of things and a tacit agreement will designate her very naturally as a consequence of personal merit; of her conciliatory qualities; of her enthusiasm and devotion that she must have given proof of; of the real services done in favor of the cause. That person even not seeking it will then acquire a moral strength that nobody will contest because it will be recognized by everyone, whereas someone that tried to impose herself based on a private authority or who were dragged by a lobby would find strong opposition from all of those who did not acknowledge such moral qualities in that person. There you have an avoidable cause of divisions. It is something really serious to trust someone with the direction of the Doctrine. Before doing that one must be really sure about that person from every point of view; with wrong ideas the Society could be dragged down onto a slippery ramp and even perhaps its ruin. In the private groups each one can demonstrate their skills and be designated later by peers' vote, if needed. But nobody can become a general without the experience of the soldier. Like the good general that is known for his courage and talents the true spiritist is recognized by his or her qualities. Well, the first quality that must be proven is the abnegation of personality. Hence it is more by acts than words that such a person will be recognized. What one needs for such direction is a true spiritist and the true spiritist is not moved by ambition or self-love. With that respect, ladies and gentlemen, I call your attention to the several categories of spirits whose distinctive characters are clearly defined in *The Mediums' Book* (#28).

In fact whatever the nature of the meeting, large or small, the conditions that must be fulfilled to reach the objective are the same. There is where we have to concentrate our attention and those who fulfill that will be strong because they will necessarily have the support of the good spirits. Such conditions are in *The Mediums' Book* (#341). A very frequent mistake made by the new followers is that of judging themselves masters after a few months of study. Spiritism is a great science, you know well, and experience in its practice cannot be acquired in a short time as with everything else. Such pretension of not needing advice and considering themselves above everybody else is a proof of insufficiency as it runs away from one of the first precepts of the Doctrine: modesty and humility.

When the bad spirits find similar dispositions in an individual they always stimulate and super-excite them, persuading that person that she is the only one with the truth. It is one of the hurdles that may be met and against which I thought convenient to forearm you, adding that it is not enough to be spiritist as it is not enough to call oneself Christian. It is necessary to prove that in practice.

If by the formation of groups individual rivalries are avoided couldn't such rivalry exist between the groups that walking a little bit divergent paths could produce dissent whereas in a unique society we would have the unity of principles? I respond that such inconvenient would not be avoided for those who

did not adopt the principles of the society would stay away from that and there would not be anything that would preclude them from spinning off, forming another group. The groups are other small societies that will certainly march on the same avenue if all adopt the same flag and the foundations of the Science, consolidated by experience. I also call your attention to item 348 of *The Mediums' Book*. As a matter of fact there is nothing precluding delegates from the several private groups to form a central group and a direct correspondent with the Parisian Society. Then, every year a general assembly could gather all followers and then rendering a true party of Spiritism. I have prepared a detailed instruction about those several points that I will have the honor of sending you later both about the organization and the order of the works. Those who follow it will naturally remain in the unity of principles.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are my advices to you since you were kind enough to request them from me. I am happy to add that I found here in Bordeaux excellent elements and a much greater progress than I expected. I found here a large number of true and sincere spiritists and I take away from my visit the founded hope that our Doctrine will develop on the most ample bases and in excellent conditions. I promise you that my support will never fail you in anything that I can do to help the efforts of those who are sincere and consciously devoted in their hearts to this noble cause that is the cause of humanity.

The spirit of Erastus that you already know, ladies and gentlemen, for his remarkable dissertations that you have already read, he also wants to give you the tribute of his advices. Before I left Paris he dictated through his habitual medium the following communication that I have the honor of reading to you.”

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

General Meeting of the Spiritists of Bordeaux

October 14th, 1861

First epistle of Erastus, humble servant of God,
to the spiritists of Bordeaux

“May the Lord’s peace be with you my dear friends, so that nothing may ever disturb the harmony that must rule in a center of sincere spiritists! I know how profound is your faith in God and how eager followers you are of the new revelation. That is why I tell you with my warmest affection towards you that I would be devastated, we would all be devastated if under the auspices of the Spirit of Truth and as initiators of Spiritism in France we saw harmony disappearing from your environment, a harmony that you have so far demonstrated so brilliantly. Had you not given examples of a solid fraternity and if you were not a serious and important center of the great spiritist communion in France I would have left this issue in the shadow of forgetfulness. However, if I have brought that issue up is for having plausible reasons to invite you to the maintenance of union, peace and unity of the Doctrine among your several groups. Yes, my dear disciples, I enthusiastically take this opportunity that we ourselves prepared to show you how dismal the news of a fissure would be for the development of Spiritism and the scandal that it would generate among your brothers of other regions, such news about a center that up until now has delightfully been used as an example of the spirit of fraternity to all other already formed centers or in formation. I don’t ignore the fact as you should not ignore either that everything will be done to spread division among you; that traps will be prepared; that you will find ambushes of all sorts along the way; that you will be incited one against the other to feed division thus entailing an always regrettable rupture. However, you can avoid all that by practicing the sublime precepts of the law of love and charity, first to yourselves and then to everybody else. I am convinced that you will not give the enemies of our sacred cause the satisfaction of saying: *‘Look at those spiritists from Bordeaux, who were presented to us as the vanguard of the march of the new believers! They cannot even agree with themselves!’* There you have it my friends; that is what is waiting for you and for all of us. Your excellent guides have already told you: ‘You will have to fight not only against the proud, selfish, materialistic and all of those unfortunate ones representing the spirit of the century, but also and more importantly against the flock of deceiving spirits that will find a group of mediums among you, since you have plenty of those, and soon will come to assault you, some with wisely prepared dissertations in which they will insinuate heresy or some acidic principle; other communications openly hostile to the teachings given by the true messengers of the *Spirit of Truth*. Ah! Believe me, don’t be afraid of unmasking the impostor that, like new Tartuffe, mingle with you covered by the mask of religion. Be also ruthless with the devouring wolves hidden under the skin of sheep. With the help of God, who you must never invoke in vain and with the assistance of the good spirits for their protection you will be unbreakable in your faith. The bad spirits will find you invulnerable and when they see their darts torn apart by the love and charity, the drivers of your hearts, they will leave in astonishment after a campaign that only unveiled their impotence and shame. You will be invariably united by looking at any doctrine contrary to the moral of the Gospels and the general principles of the Ten Commandments as subversive, all summarized by this concise law: *‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind and you must love your neighbor as yourself’*. In fact one must comply with the common law in everything: nobody is supposed to subtract or impose their opinion and feelings when they are not accepted by other members of the same spiritist family. For that reason I strongly recommend that you mirror the practice and regulations of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies where nobody, whatever his or her position, age, service rendered or acquired authority may utilize their own initiative in place of that of the Society to which they belong and with a greater reason engage the Society into something through maneuvers that were not approved. Having said that it is incontestable that the followers of the same group must show great respect towards the acquired wisdom and experience. Experience is not an exclusive attribute of the oldest or the wiser but of the one who has given more time and energy to our reassuring philosophy and with more benefit to all. As for the wisdom it is up to us to identify those among you that follow and practice the precepts and the laws in the best way.

However, my friends, before you follow your own inspirations don't forget your advices and do consult with your ethereal guardians who will never fail you whenever you invoke them with your heart and with an objective that is of general interest. For that you need good mediums and the ones I see here are excellent; it is just a matter of choice. I know well that Mrs. and Ms. Cazemajoux and some others have medianimic faculties of the highest degree and I repeat that there isn't any other region better equipped than Bordeaux in that regard. I had to make some tough comments given the great expectation that the *Spirit of Truth*, the master of all of us, has on you. Remember that you are part of the spiritist vanguard and that the vanguard, like the Joint Chiefs of Staff, owes everybody an absolute submission to the established discipline. Ah! Your work is not easy considering that you are assigned with the task of holding the axe with a strong hand and take it to the somber forests of materialism and move on to the last shelters of material interests. New *Jasons*⁴¹ march on to conquer the real brook of gold, the new and fecund ideas that must regenerate the world, but in that case you no longer march with the private interest and not even with that of the current generation but more importantly in the interest of future generations to whom you pave the way. There is a level of abnegation and greatness in this work that will be acknowledged by the centuries to come and believe me God will take that into account. I had to speak as I did because I talk to people who listen to reason; to persons who pursue an eminently useful objective: the betterment and emancipation of mankind; to spiritists that at the end of the day teach and preach through example and the best way to do that is by practicing the truly Christian virtues.

I had to tell you these things because it was necessary to show and forearm you against a danger. I am doing my duty. I can now look at the future with confidence because I am convinced that my words will have an effect on everyone and each one of you and that selfishness, pride or vanity from now on will have no power upon your hearts where there will only be true fraternity.

You will remember spiritists of Bordeaux that your union is the true path to a universal union and fraternity. I feel really happy to clearly see that Spiritism has pushed you a step forward on its own. Our congratulations to you and I speak here in the name of all spirits that preside over the great work of human regeneration since your initiative has opened up a new field of exploration and a new safe mode in the studies of the phenomena from beyond the grave, based on your request for membership, not as isolated individuals but as a group, to the pioneering Society of Paris. Given the importance of this step I acknowledge the great wisdom of your main guides and I thank our kind Fenelon and his loyal supporters Georges and Marius that together preside over your devoted study groups. I also take this opportunity to pay a sound tribute to the spirits Ferdinand and Felicia that you all know. Although these honorable co-workers have only done well for the good, you should know that it is due to these humble pioneers, seconded by the humble Marcelino that our sacred Doctrine has prospered so much in Bordeaux and in the South West of France. Yes, my loyal believers, your remarkable initiative will be followed; I know that well, by every seriously established spiritist group. Hence, it is a huge step forward. You understood, and others will do too, the advantages, the advancement and the propaganda that will result from the adoption of a uniform program for the works and studies of the Doctrine that we have revealed to you. Yet, it must be well understood that each group will preserve their originality and particular initiative, but outside their private works they will have to get involved with matters of general interest, submitting themselves to the exam of the central Society, thus resolving several difficulties whose solution have not yet been given by the spirits for reasons that would be useless to elaborate here.

I believe I would offend you by pointing out the consequences resulting from simultaneous work. Then, who would dare contest one truth when it is confirmed by unanimity or by the majority of the medianimic

41 Greek mythology (NT)

responses obtained simultaneously in Lyon, Bordeaux, Constantinople, Metz, Brussels, Sens, Mexico City, Marseille, Toulouse, Mâcon, Sétif, Alger, Oran, Cracow, Moscow, St. Petersburg and Paris?

I spoke to you with the same unpolished sincerity with which I do to your brothers from Paris. Yet, I will not leave you before attesting my sympathies legitimately conquered by this kind family where excellent spirits in charge of your spiritual direction have had their eloquent words heard. I mentioned the Sabò family which endured the painful trial that God brought upon them with stability and unchangeable benevolence to elevate them higher and bring them up to the level of their present mission. I must also mention the dedicated support of all those who have contributed to the propagation of our reassuring Doctrine, in their respective spheres of action. My friends, keep up with your resolute march on the open path. It will certainly lead you to the ethereal spheres of perfect happiness where I will certainly meet you. In the name of the Spirit of Truth that loves you I bless you all, spiritists of Bordeaux.

Erastus

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

General Meeting of the Spiritists of Bordeaux

Banquet offered to Mr. Allan Kardec
by the spiritists of Bordeaux

Speech and toast proposed by Mr. Lacoste, businessman

“Ladies and gentlemen,

I beg the youngsters in particular who hear me now to pay much attention to the few words of fraternal affection that I wrote specially to them. The lack of experience, the conformity of our ages and the communion of our ideas give me assurances of your indulgence.

Friends, none of us has received the revelation of this sacred Doctrine with indifference, Doctrine whose new elements were compiled by our venerable Master in a wise book. Never has such a vast field been open to our imaginations. Never has such grandiose horizon been unveiled to our intelligences. It is with the enthusiasm of youth and never looking backwards that we become followers of the faith in the future and the pioneers of future civilizations. God forbid that I may say any word of discouragement! I know your beliefs very well, ladies and gentlemen, and I know them to be very solid to be shaken by mockery or the reasoning of some adversaries. Youth is full of privileges; an easy access to noble emotions; eagerness in their undertakings. Youth also counts on the enthusiasm of faith, that moral lever that lifts worlds. But if imagination drags it beyond the obstacles it will sometimes take it beyond the objective as well. It is against such deviations that I exhort you to be forearmed. Attracted by the excitement of the novelty, lifting the veil that hid the unknown from you, almost touching the solution of the problem of the primary causes, be careful not to be overwhelmed by the joys of triumph. Few paths are free from cliffs. Greater confidence always follows easy paths, and there is nothing more difficult to have out of young soldiers and young intelligences than moderation in victory. That is what I am afraid in you as in myself also.

Fortunately the remedy stands side by side with the illness. There are some here among us that unite the maturity of age with talent, the fortunate advantage of having been the enlightened propagators of the spiritist teachings in our town. It is to those more settled and thoughtful spiritists that you must submit the direction of your studies and thanks to that continual reverence and moral subordination you will be given the opportunity of bringing an unshakable stone to the common edifice. Let us learn, ladies and gentlemen, to defeat the puerile issues of self-love. Isn't that nice the part that touches our youth? The future effectively belongs to us. When our parents in Spiritism are reborn in another world we will be able to watch the splendid irradiation of this truth, full of life and faith, a truth that they would have only foreseen in its mysterious dawn on Earth. Hence, ladies and gentlemen give me assurances that you can say with me from the bottom of your heart: To all our elders; to every known or unknown person; wealthy or simple worker from Bordeaux that became followers of the Spiritist Doctrine! To the prosperity of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies and of this Society here that strongly holds the flag before which we all aspire to align! May Mr. Allan Kardec, master of all of us, receive the assurance of a profound sympathy towards our Parisian brothers! May he tell them that our young hearts beat in unison with theirs and although we walk with a not so firm a stride we don't concur less to the universal regeneration, here encouraged by your examples and your accomplishments!

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

General Meeting of the Spiritists of Bordeaux

Banquet offered to Mr. Allan Kardec
by the spiritists of Bordeaux

Toast proposed by Mr. Sabò

“Dear Sir,

The spiritists also wanted to assure us once more that your sympathy has been conquered by us when we joined our wishes to yours regarding the prosperity of this sacred Doctrine, the result of your work. The spirit Ferdinand, one of our guardian spirits, spontaneously dictated the following teaching that I gladly transmit to you: *‘The great spiritist family to which you belong daily sees the number of its children grow and soon there will no longer be in your beautiful homeland cities or neighborhoods where there will not be a tent that has not been set up by the members of this God blessed tribe. It would be already impossible to determine the numerous centers gravitating around the luminous focus located in Paris since only the centers of the large cities are known by us. Among those the Spiritist Society of Metz deserves distinction for their knowledge, intelligence and fraternal union. That Society is destined to provide abundant fruits and seeking a friendly relationship with them based on a reciprocal respect you will fill with joy the paternal heart of their chief, present here today. The eminent spirit Erastus told you yesterday: - Be united, for union is power. You then must endeavor, all of you, to do it so that all French centers, united by the links of fraternity, stride at gigantic steps on the designed avenue.*

Ferdinand, spiritual guide of the medium.’

In conclusion and as a loyal interpreter of the feelings expressed by this good spirit, I propose a toast to our spiritist brothers of Metz in particular and to all French spiritists in general.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Persuaded that the kind words pronounced yesterday by our right honorable spiritist chief here have not fallen onto rocks and thorn bushes, but on your hearts now prepared to strengthen the links of fraternity, I would like to propose a toast to our spiritist brothers of Lyon. They started their tasks before we did and in order to organize themselves they also suffered the same attacks that made us suffer so much. However, thanks to the impulse that our beloved master gave them last year they moved a huge step forward on the blessed path delineated by the good spirits to humanity. Let us imitate them ladies and gentlemen. May a praiseworthy emulation unite the spiritists of Bordeaux and Lyon so that their communion of thoughts and feelings allow everyone to say that the spiritists of Bordeaux and Lyon are brothers! I propose a toast to the union of our brothers from Bordeaux and Lyon.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

General Meeting of the Spiritists of Bordeaux

Banquet offered to Mr. Allan Kardec
by the spiritists of Bordeaux

Speech by Mr. Desqueyroux, Mechanic, representing a group of workers

“Mr. Allan Kardec, our dear Master:

In the name of every spiritist worker of Bordeaux, my friends, my brothers, I allow myself to propose a toast to your prosperity. Although you have already an elevated perfection, may God help you to grow even more in the good feelings that have animated you so far and in particular help you grow to the eyes of the universe and in the hearts of those who follow your Doctrine thus getting closer to Him! We who take part in the group that professes it we praise you from the bottom of our hearts and pray to our divine Creator to allow you to stay much longer among us so that once your mission is over we are strong enough in our faith to stand up on our own feet and not to veer off from the good path. For us it is a reason for ineffable happiness the fact that we are able to be enlightened by Spiritism. However, our knowledge and satisfaction are not enough. With the Doctrine we take on four different duties, as follows: submission that makes us hear with meekness; affection that makes us love with tenderness; enthusiasm to eagerly defend its interests and practice that allows us to honor it with our work.

We are in the heart of Spiritism and Spiritism is for us a solid consolation in our penalties. Because – we need to confess – there are moments in life when reason might be able to sustain us but there are others when we have the need of all the faith that we can get from Spiritism, to avoid failure. It is useless that the Philosophers come to us preaching a stoic resilience, repeating their pompous maxims; it is useless to tell us that nothing can disturb the wise person and that people were built to own themselves and dominate the events of life. Sad consolation! Far from mitigating my pain you make it worse; we only find emptiness and dryness in your words. But Spiritism comes to rescue us demonstrating that our pain may contribute to our happiness. Yes, master. You must continue your august mission, showing us this Science that is brought to you by the will of God, our consolation during this life and that will sustain our thoughts at the time of death. Receive, dear Master, these few words from the bottom of the heart of your children, since you are this paternal figure to all of us, the father of the working class and the afflicted ones. You know that progress and pain walk side by side, but when our hearts were invaded by despair you brought us strength and courage. Yes, by bringing us Spiritism you said: Courage, brothers! Bear the trials that are sent to you with no complaints and God will bless you. You must then know that we are devoted apostles and that in this century as in future centuries your name will be praised by our children and by our workers friends.”

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

General Meeting of the Spiritists of Bordeaux

Banquet offered to Mr. Allan Kardec
by the spiritists of Bordeaux

Speech and Toast by Mr. Allan Kardec

“My dear brothers in Spiritism,

I have no words to express my emotions after your warm and benevolent reception. Allow me to say a few words and not long sentences which would not say more than I will place my first visit to Bordeaux among the happiest in my life and from which I will keep eternal memory. Nevertheless I will not forget either, ladies and gentlemen, that this reception imposes a great task on my shoulders that is to justify it, something that I intend to do with the help of God and the good spirits. It also imposes, in addition, important obligations not only towards you but also with the spiritists of all regions, represented by you, as members of the large family, as also with Spiritism in general, that you have just acclaimed in these two solemn meetings that, have no doubt, will recruit in your town a new force to fight against the obstacles that may stand on your way.

In my message yesterday I spoke about your irresistible force. Aren't you the evident proof of that? Isn't that something remarkable that the inauguration of a Spiritist Society like yours starting with the spontaneous gathering of three hundred persons, attracted not by a vain curiosity but by conviction and a unique desire to gather around a single focus? Yes, ladies and gentlemen, the fact is not only remarkable but providential. Here is what my spiritual guide, the Spirit of Truth, said yesterday about the subject and before the session:

‘God has stamped with the immutable seal of his resolve the time for the regeneration of the children of this great city. Hence, hands on with confidence and courage! Tonight the destinies of its inhabitants begin to leave behind the routine of passions that used to germinate from its wealth and luxury like the weed growing together with the good grain, then reaching the heights of its eternal destiny through the moral progress entailed by Spiritism. You can see that Bordeaux is a city loved by the spirits as you encounter the most sublime devotions of charity of all kinds multiplying within its walls. Hence they were afflicted for seeing this city falling behind in the progressive movement that Spiritism has just imposed onto mankind. However, the progress will be so fast that the spirits will praise the Lord for having inspired in you the wishes to come and help them in this sacred route.’

As you see, ladies and gentlemen, the impulse that pushes you comes from above and it would be a real temerity to try to stop it since it would be knocked down like the rebellious angels that wanted to fight against God's power.

Thus you must have no fear for the opposition brought up by some self-serving adversaries or the travesty of materialistic incredulity. Materialism gets to its final hour and it is Spiritism that rings the bell since Spiritism is the dawn that dissipates the darkness of night. And here is something Providential! It is materialism itself that unwillingly serves as support to the propagation of Spiritism. Materialism calls the attention of the indifferent through its attacks. People want to know what it is about and since they find it interesting they adopt it. You have the proof of that before your eyes; without the articles of a given newspaper of your town perhaps the number of spiritists in Bordeaux would be half of what they are. That article has certainly excited curiosity because people generally say: *this is been attacked then there must be something*. They assessed the importance of the subject by the extension of the article. Then they asked: *Is it good? Is it bad? Is it true? Is it false? In any case, let us see*. They saw it and you know the result.

Then, far from having any hard feeling towards the author of the article we must be grateful for the free propaganda. And if there is any friend of his here we ask you to please stimulate him to restart so that instead of the 300 of today we will be 600 next year. I could mention to you other curious cases of propaganda carried out in certain cities by choleric sermons against Spiritism. Like Lyon, Bordeaux has just proudly planted the flag of Spiritism and what I see here gives me guarantees that it will not be removed. Bordeaux and Lyon! Two of the greatest cities in France! Focal points of light! And some say that the spiritists are mad! Praise the mad of such a kind! Let us not forget Metz that has just founded its Society where one finds officers of all ranks, claiming entry into the great family. I hope that Toulouse, Marseille and other cities where the new seed is already germinating will soon join their elder sisters, providing the signs of regeneration in their respective regions.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the name of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies I propose a toast to the spiritists of Bordeaux; to their fraternal union to resist the enemy that may want to divide it, thus facilitating their influence. I add to this toast and from the bottom of my heart with the liveliest sympathy the Spiritist Group of the Workers of Bordeaux that, like those of Lyon, give us a remarkable example of enthusiasm, devotion, abnegation and moral transformation.

I assure you that I am happy, very happy for seeing your delegates fraternally united around this table with the highest social ranks, demonstrating the influence of Spiritism upon social prejudices. It could not be different when we learn that the one who has the best social position in this world may have perhaps been a modest worker and that shaking hands with the last worker one may perhaps shake hands with a brother, a father or friend. In the name of the spiritists of Metz and Lyon, of whom I make myself the interpreter, I thank you for having included them in your expression of fraternal feelings.

To the spiritists of Bordeaux!

Ladies and gentlemen, the spiritist must not be ungrateful. I believe it to be our duty to acknowledge those who serve our cause even unwillingly. Thus, I propose a toast to the author of the article in the *Courrier de la Gironde* for his services, wishing that from time to time he may renovate his witty articles. And God willing very soon he will be the only sensible person in Bordeaux.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

Current poetry

Given by Mr. Dombre (from Marmande) who
came to Bordeaux for the ceremony.

The peasants and the oak
(Fable)

To Mr. Allan Kardec

*“The abuse has occult champions, more dangerous than the openly
declared ones and the proof of that is the difficulty to uproot them.”*

Allan Kardec (What is Spiritism)

One day some honest peasants
Proudly standing before a huge oak tree
Measured it with their eyes, large front
- In vain we provide, said one, our seed;
Along those harrowed and well smoked furrows
Fertilizers and sap are consumed; nothing grows
On the many branches and the thick foliage;
All this is such waste
Allowing this tree to impoverish the terrain;
Absorbing our sweat, sterilizing the grain.
Brothers, if you believe me,
Our field will be free
From the unwanted host... and that... on the spot!
Hands on, they shouted in excitement.

They were all strong, ardent.
A rope is tied to the tree, from the top
And there we have a chain;
The forming rings set the strain;
The trembling foliage rustles,
But that is all... they agitate and struggle,
Pulling the robust and tortuous dome,
But the trunk remains strong.
A wise man of the region,
A good old man tells them in-passing: - My children,
Your harvest is gone,
Destroy it... it is okay... You are on!
But knock it down easily you can't;
The big oak tree will not faint
Before your arms' little strength;
Age stiffens the body, inflexible at length.
Deliver the terrible assault more quietly
To the vigorous giant, respectfully.
Centuries have passed by this gnarled bark
Days are needed to undermine its park.
Shine Sunlight onto the root, unveiled
And death will come to the massive frail
When abuse cannot be suppressed in one blow
It is in the foundations that ruin will grow!

C. Dombre

The hedgehog, the rabbit and the magpie
(Fable)

To the members of the Spiritist Society of Bordeaux

*Charity, my friends, can be done in many ways. You
can do it through your thoughts and your works...*

*Guardian spirit of the Spiritist Society of Lyon
Spiritist Review, October 1861*

A poor hedgehog driven from his shelter
Wondered in the fields through and deadly thorns,
Under the blows from a child brandishing his clogs
Abandoned it bleeding, bruised and shaken.
He folds his trembling thorny armor.
He extends his eyes around
And since the danger has past, he whispers
A weak and mournful tone:
Where can I hide? Where shall I flee? ..back to my home
Is beyond my will
A thousand dangers that I cannot predict
Threaten me here... Will I then die?
I need shelter and some rest
To heal my abrasions.
But, where can I find such nest?
Who will take pity on my pain?
A rabbit living among the debris of a rock,
For whom charity is not just
A vain word, sees the friend's pain in shock
And approaching says: My friend, accept you must
Share with me my asylum. I am well protected in this shelter;
You will be safe. They can hardly track

You down here. Rest assured that together
Any care you need you shall not lack.
Before such graceful offer
The hedgehog started his slow movement
When an unrecognized magpie, waving
To the rabbit said: - wait a moment,
I beg you... a word... a quick warning;
And turning to the hedgehog: - it is a little private!
Forgive my delay!
Then the good rabbit asks his mate
To keep her voice down, when saying:
How can you bring such people within your fence?
You went too far helping those under!
I would never do such nonsense.
But aren't you afraid to regret later?
When he is healed and has recovered his strength
You will be the first, perhaps, to suffer the nightmare
Of his bad heart and his thorny health.
How then will you get him out of there?
The rabbit answer: - No worries
Should make us turn away from our generous impulses;
We'd rather be exposed to ingratitude
Than stay away from misfortune!

C. Dombre

November 1861

Bibliography

The Mediums' Book
Second Edition

The first edition of *The Mediums' Book* published in the beginning of this year was sold out in a few months and this is not one of the least indicators of the progress of the spiritist ideas. We attested ourselves, in our journeys, the healthy influence that this book has exerted on the direction of the practical studies of Spiritism. Thus, deceptions and mystifications are much less significant than in the past because this book teaches the means of uncovering the tricks of deceiving spirits. This second edition is much more complete than the previous one. It contains a large number of very important new instructions and several new chapters. The whole part specially dedicated to the mediums, to the identity of the spirits, to the obsession, to the question that may be addressed to the spirits, to the contradictions, to the means of distinguishing between the good and bad spirits, to the formation of spiritist groups, and the matters of fraud in Spiritism received remarkable developments, as a result of experience. In the chapter about the spiritist dissertations we added several apocryphal communications followed by adequate observations aiming at providing the means of finding the fraud of deceiving spirits who use false names. We must add, that the book was entirely revised by the spirits who brought numerous observations of the highest importance to the point that we can say that the book is as much theirs as ours.

We highly recommend this new edition as the most complete guide both to the mediums and to the simple observers. We can affirm that by strictly following it, one can avoid the so common hurdles against which so many inexperienced novices will face. After having read and given serious thought to that work, those who will still be mystified will only be able to blame but themselves since they were given all means of clarification.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

Bibliography

Spiritism or Spiritualism in Metz

First series of publications by the Spiritist Society of Metz⁴²

In the last issue of our Review, we mentioned this publication just as a reminder, then proposing to return to the subject. We read it attentively and can only congratulate the Spiritist Society of Metz for its results. She has in her heart, a large number of enlightened men, who we hope will learn to stay on guard against the traps of bad spirits who will continuously try to veer them from the good path they have put in place.

The publication is not a periodical. Metz' Society proposes to do the same from time to time but on unspecified dates, thus inserting the best communications that they might have up until then. Such procedure has the advantage of not having a commitment with subscribers to whom one must nonetheless serve and also for the reason that the costs are always proportionate.

All communications contained in this first brochure have an eminently serious character and an irreproachable moral. We found nothing that could be classified as non-orthodox, from the point of view of Science and that of *The Spirits' Book*. If our friends, the spiritists of Metz, allow us to give them a piece of advice, we would stimulate them to continue to bring in future publications in the same circumspection that we found on this one; that they must be convinced that inopportune publications may be more damaging than useful to the propagation of Spiritism. We count on the wisdom and sagacity of those who are behind it so that they may not yield to the enthusiasm of more eager than thoughtful followers. May they always remember this maxim: *Nothing is gained by running, if you do not start on time!*

The two communications below extracted from this first volume will give you an idea of the spirit in which they were produced.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

42 Brochure 8-in, price 1 franc, in Paris Didier and Co. Edition, Quais des Augustin, 35; Ledoyen, Gallerie Palais Royal, 31; in Metz with Veronnais, Rue de Jardin 14 and with Warrion, Rue de Palais, 8

November 1861

The universal fluid

September 29th, 1860

The universal fluid interconnects all worlds; and according to the impulses given by our Creator's will, it entails every phenomenon of Creation. It is life itself and bonds the different matters in our world. It is this fluid that through properties that are subordinated to laws regulates the different nuances of physical and material affinities that are so mysterious to you. That is how you can see the past, the present and the future, particularly when the matter that obstructs your soul is nulled or weakened by any given cause. Then, through this second-sight (although less developed until after death), sees, touches and feels everything in this fluid-like medium, its element and the exact mirror of what has been and will be, for it is only the more coarse parts of that fluid that suffer sensitive changes in composition.

Henry, former magnetizer

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

Effects of prayer

October 15th, 1860

Prayer is a sublime aspiration to which God has given a magnificent power constantly claimed by the spirits. Like gentle dew which it brings refreshment to the poor exile on Earth and acts as a proven fruitful process for the soul. The prayer operates directly upon the spirit to whom it is addressed. It does not transform thorns into roses but modifies the life of suffering (nothing can be done against the immutable will of God), exciting impulse of the will that raises courage, giving strength to fight against adversities and dominate them. By this means, the path that leads to God is shortened and nothing can be compared to prayer in its wonderful effect. Only an inferior spirit would speak in vain against prayer and would be bound to the earth and behind in evolution not understanding the need to reach out to this anchor of salvation.

Pray, it is a word that descends from heaven; it is the drop of dew on the edges of a flower; it sustained is the support of the reed during the thunderstorm; it is the wooden board to the poor shipwrecked during the storm; it is the shelter to the orphan and the beggar; it is the cradle for the infant to sleep. A divine emanation, prayer is what connects us to God through language, calling God's attention to us. Praying for ourselves is to love God. Begging for a brother is one of the most meritorious acts of love. Prayer that comes from the heart is the key to the treasures of grace; it is the steward that provides benefits in the name of the infinite mercy. A soul that elevates to God through such sublime impulse of prayer, detached from its material envelope, seems to be plentiful of confidence before God; certain that what has been asked with humility will be granted.

Pray! Oh pray, make a reservoir of your holy aspirations to be discharged on the day of justice. Prepare the granary of abundance, so valuable during the famine. Bury the treasure of your prayers until the God chosen day for the distribution of your rich deposit. Accumulate it for you and your brothers and that will reduce your anguishes and will help you to transpose more rapidly the distance that separates you from God. Give thought to your miserable nature, counting the deceptions, the risks; probe the deep abyss to where passions can drag you to; look at those who fall around you and you will feel the inexorable need to resource to prayer. It is the anchor of salvation that will prevent the destruction of your ship, when it becomes stricken by worldly storms.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

November 1861

Spiritism in America

Fragments translated from the English by Ms. Clémence Guérin⁴³

Spiritism in America accounts for a number of very renowned men who have assessed its scope from the beginning and have seen in for something more than merely manifestations. Among them we find Judge Edmonds, from New York, whose writings on these important subjects are much appreciated and still not known enough in Europe due to lack of translation. We are grateful to Ms. Guérin for giving us an idea about these writings based on some fragments that were published in her brochure, and at the same time we regret the fact that she had not finished the work in a more comprehensive translation. She also adds some not less remarkable extracts from Dr. Hare, of Philadelphia; who was also one of the first to make a statement of faith regarding the new revelations. Ms. Guérin lived in America for a long time where she saw the production and development of the first manifestations, and she is one of those sincere and conscientious spiritists, judging everything with calmness, coolly and without enthusiasm. We have the honor of having met her in person and we gladly give her here the much deserved testimony of our profound admiration. By the fragment of her preface transcribed below one can see that our opinion is thoroughly justified.

“Like the Americans, we have a deep faith and radiant hope that this Doctrine, so eminently based on charity (not alms, but love), is the one that will regenerate and pacify the world. Never before has fraternal solidarity been so clearly demonstrated and more seductively. The spirits come to reassure us, help us, teach us and indicate to us the best use of our faculties, in seeing to the future; the spirits are evidently so much altruistic that one cannot hear them without feeling the need to imitate them; without reaching out to others, willing to share the benefits that we have so generously been given. Man does so with much more good will when he finally understands that it is the price to pay for his own advancement and that he only enjoys the merit of his own actions in the great book of God, aiming at the moral or material well-being of his brothers. What the spirits are successfully at doing right now has already been attempted several times on Earth by noble hearts and courageous souls but who were and still are unknown or ridiculed. People now have an idea about their devotion but this only happens when they disappear and then have a chance of being assessed with impartiality. That is why God allows them to continue their work after what we call death. It is an opportunity to repeat from Andrew Jackson Davis: ‘Brethren, fear Not: for Error is mortal and cannot live; Truth is immortal and cannot die!’

Clémence Guérin”

43 Large brochure, 18-in, price 1 franc. Dentu Edition, Palais Royal, Galerie D’Orléans

The passage below from Judge Edmonds will show how accurately he had foreseen the consequences of Spiritism. One must not forget that he wrote it in 1854, a time when Spiritism was new in America as it was in Europe.

“Others will evaluate if my deductions are true or false. My objective will be achieved if by speaking about the effects produced in my spirit by these revelations I give rise to the desire in some people to also investigate them, and thus bring new light into the study of these phenomena since up until now the most vehement adversaries, who shout against the imposture, these are also the most obstinate in their resolution to not hear or read anything about this subject; the most adamant to remain in complete ignorance about the nature of the facts. Men that uphold the reputation of knowledge, if not Science, are not ashamed for providing explanations that satisfy no one, based on superficial observations carried out with such a light-heartedness that would make a young student blush. However, this new power connected to man is not something indifferent and it will undoubtedly have a considerable influence on good or evil.”

“And we can already see that since its origin just five years ago the spiritualist idea propagated with a speed that the Christian religion did not equal in a hundred years. It does not seek deserted places, is not surrounded by mysteries, but comes openly to men inviting a detailed examination, not demanding a blind faith but recommending the exercise of reason and free judgment at all times.”

“We saw that the attack of the philosophers could not shake a single believer; that the sarcasm of the press and the anathemas of the Academy are equally powerless to stop its progress and, most importantly, we can already attest its moralizing influence. The true believer always becomes a wise and better man because it was demonstrated to him that the existence after death has been positively proven. All of those, who have carried out serious and sincere investigations on the subject, have found irrefutable proof. How could it be otherwise? Here you have an intelligence that speaks to us every day. It is a friend (In general, Americans begin by talking to relatives or friends.) He proves his identity by a thousand circumstances, leaving no room for doubts and through recollections that only he may have. He speaks about the consequences of the Earthly life and paints the future life with such rational colors giving an assurance that he is telling the truth since it agrees with our innermost ideas of divinity and the duties imposed on us.”

“Our loved ones are not separated from us after death and they are often close to us, we are helped and consoled through the hope of a certain reunion. How many times have I heard them, through me or through others! How many desolated people I have seen calmed by the gentle certainty that the beloved relative ‘brought back by the bonds of love is around them, , whispering in their ear, gazing upon their soul, conversing with their spirit?’

“Consequently, death is stripped from the entourage of mysterious and undefined terrors with which it was surrounded by those who expect more from the degrading passion of fear than from the noble feeling of love. Note that in passing, regardless of the variations in the teachings of the new philosophy, every disciple agrees that death is not a threatening specter but a natural phenomenon; a transition to an existence that is free from a thousand ailments of the material life and from the barriers that confine them to a single planet, the spirit may travel the infinity of the worlds and set flight to the regions where the Glory of God is actually visible.”

“It is equally demonstrated that our most secret thoughts are known by those who were our loved ones and that continue to watch over us. It is in vain to try to escape this terrible inquisition by its benevolence. One cannot doubt it even if they wanted too. I have often been amazed at at cause to

shudder by the unforeseen but irrefutable revelation that our most intimate thoughts and conscience may be examined by the very ones from whom we wanted to hide our weaknesses.”

“Isn’t that a healthy obstacle against having bad thoughts, criminal acts that in their majority are carried out because the guilty mind was assured by these words: ‘Nobody will know...’? If anything can confirm this truth so terrifying to some, it is the memory that all of us experience after a good deed, even when it was a secret: an inner satisfaction that cannot be compared to anything else. They know well because the left hand ignores what the right hand did. It is then rational to assume that if our friends may congratulate us, they can also reproach us; if they see our meritorious actions they also see our mistakes.”

“By this we do not hesitate in attributing the incontestable and uncontested fact that there is not a single believer that has not become a better person. Our future destiny depends on our conduct. Not on our adhesion to doctrine particular religious sect, but on our submission to this great precept: LOVE GOD AND THY NEIGHBOR... We must not postpone our conversion. We have to work towards our own salvation, not later but now; not tomorrow but today.”

“There is nothing more reassuring, more strengthening to a virtuous soul in the trials and vicissitudes of this life than the thorough assurance that one’s future happiness depends on one’s actions, actions that can be guided. On the other hand, the wicked, the vicious, the cruel, the selfish and especially the selfish will endure self and mutual torments, torments that are worse than a material hell, something that even the most deranged imagination could ever imagine.”

Allan Kardec⁴⁴

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

December 1861

Notice

The subscribers who do not want to experience any delay in the delivery of the Spiritist Review for the year 1862 (5th year) are invited to renew their subscription before December 31st. Subscribers for the 1862, can purchase the collection of the four preceding years in one combined set for 30 francs, instead of 40 francs. Hence, the subscription will entitle them to have 5 years for the price of 4 with a 20% discount. Individual years may be purchased for 10 francs each, as in the past. The second edition of the years 1858, 1859 and 1860 are now sold out. A third edition has just been printed.

NOTE: The January 1862 issue will contain a very developed article about the interpretation of the doctrine of the rebel and fallen angels, lost Paradise and about the Origin and moral condition of man on Earth.

Bibliography

The following new books by Mr. Allan Kardec will be published soon:

Spiritism in its simplest expression – brochure destined to popularize the main elements of the Spiritist Doctrine. It will be sold for 25 cents.

Refutation of criticism against Spiritism, from the point of view of Materialism, Science and Religion. The latter will contain all necessary developments. It will contain a response to Father Marouzeau's brochure.

Several other works and one with a volume more or less similar to that of *The Spirits' Book* will be published during 1862.

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

December 1861

Organization of Spiritism

1. Up until now the spiritists have been spreading all over the world and that is not one of the least characteristic marks of the Doctrine. Like a seed carried by the wind it has taken root in all corners of the globe, an evident demonstration that its propagation is not the result of a clique or a local and personal influence. Isolated in the beginning, the followers are now surprised by their large numbers and since the similarity of ideas inspire the desire for gathering, and they seek to meet and to found societies. Thus, everywhere we are being asked to provide instructions in this regard, manifesting within us the desire to unite the central Society of Paris. It is now time for us to get involved with what we can call *organization of Spiritism*. *The Mediums' Book* (2nd Edition) contains important observations about the subject that we refer to those interested, asking them to give careful thought to that. Experience daily confirms its application that we will recollect here, adding more circumstantial instructions.
2. Let us begin by talking about the followers still amidst a hostile population or ignorant of the new ideas. We receive letters of individuals in that situation every day, asking what they can do in the absence of mediums and comrades in Spiritism. They are in the same situation as the initiators of a large number of centers only a year ago. The number of followers multiplied gradually and there are cities where they were counted on single isolated units but today they count on hundreds and thousands. The same will soon happen everywhere. It is a matter of patience. As for what they have to do that is very simple. In principle they can work on their own and get absorbed into the study and meditation of the special books of the Doctrine. The more they do an in-depth study the more consoling truths they will find, confirmed by reason. In their isolation they must feel happy for having been the first ones to be favored. However, if they only try to get a kind of personal satisfaction out of the Doctrine it would be somewhat selfish. They have a beautiful and important mission to accomplish, given their position: spread the light around them. The ones who accept such a mission and are not stopped by difficulties will be largely rewarded by the success and satisfaction of having done something useful. There is no doubt that they will find opposition. They will be cause for mockery and sarcasm by the non-believers and even from those persons interested in combating the Doctrine, but where would be the merit if there would not be any obstacle to overtake? Hence, we have nothing to say, no advice to those who would stop for the fear of

what other people might say. But to those who have the courage to stand up and sustain their opinion, above the petty human considerations, we say that what they have to do is to openly speak about Spiritism, without any concern, as if speaking of something very simple and natural, not preaching it and particularly not seeking or forcing conviction or trying to make converts at any price. Spiritism must not be imposed. People come to Spiritism because it is needed and because it provides what other philosophies don't do. It is even convenient to avoid explanations to stubborn non-believers since it would be to give them too much importance, leading them to believe that they are indispensable. The very efforts employed to attract them is in actual fact, to keep them away and they resist in their opposition out of selfishness. That is why it is useless to waste any time with them. When the need knocks at their door they will come on their own. While waiting, one must leave them alone, satisfied in their skepticism that frequently, believe me, weighs more on their shoulders than they would like to transpire, irrespective of what they say otherwise, because the idea of nothing after death holds something more terrifying, or more frightening than death itself. Besides the mockery there will be those who will ask: *What is it?* You must then endeavor to satisfy those, giving them explanations according to the dispositions that you find. When speaking about Spiritism as a whole, one must consider the words that are pronounced like seeds thrown in the air. Many fall on rocks and produce nothing, but if only one seed has fallen on fertile soil you must feel happy. Cultivate that it and be certain that this plant will be fruitful, producing offshoots. Some followers have difficulty in responding to certain objections. The careful study of the books will provide them with the means but they will certainly benefit in particular from the brochure that we will publish with that objective under the title: *Refutation of criticism against Spiritism, from the point of view of Materialism, Science and Religion.*⁴⁵

3. Let us now talk about the organization of Spiritism already in many centers. Of the steady increase in followers demonstrates the physical impossibility of constituting a single society in a given city. Besides the number, there are also the distances that may be an obstacle to many. On the other hand, it is a fact that meetings with a large number of people are less favorable to good communications and that the best are obtained in smaller groups. It is therefore better to increase the number of small groups with a specific focus. As we said, twenty groups of fifteen to twenty members will obtain more and do more for the propaganda than a single society of four hundred members. The groups are formed naturally by affinity of tastes, feelings, habits and social position. Everyone knows everybody and since these are private meetings one has the freedom of defining the number of people and select who should be admitted.
4. In addition the system of multiplication of the groups has the advantage, as we said on several occasions, to prevent conflicts and rivalries for supremacy and presidency. Each group is naturally presided by the head of the house, or by someone that might have been designated for that purpose. There is not an official figure or a president, per say, since everything takes place within the family. The head of the house, as such, has every authority to maintain good order. With an organized society there is the need for a special room, administrative staff,

45 The publication of this brochure proved unnecessary as confirmed by Kardec in 1862 (NT)

budget, in a word, a complication of inner workings that the ill-will of a few dissidents with bad intentions could compromise.

5. To these considerations developed at length in *The Mediums' Book*, we will add one that is of the essence. Spiritism is not seen as a good thing for everybody. Before long it will be understood that we have every interest in fostering a belief that makes people better and as a guarantor of social order. But until they are convinced of its positive influence and its moralizing effects upon the masses, the followers must expect that embarrassments will arise from it out of pure ignorance with respect to the true objective of the Doctrine or due to self-serving interests. The followers will be not only ridiculed but also scorned when the weapons of ridicule fail. They will be accused of madness, charlatanism, irreligion, witchery, and everything that incites fanaticism. Accused of madness! Sublime madness that leads to the belief in God and in the future of the soul! For those who believe in nothing, it is really madness to believe in the communication between the dead and the living, madness that goes around the world and reaches the most eminent people. Charlatanism! These have a peremptory answer: altruism, since charlatanism can never be altruistic. Irreligion! The spiritists who deny the existence of the devil and only acknowledge God as their Almighty Lord, sovereignly just and good. Singular witches that would renegade their master and would act in the name of their enemy! The problem is that the devil might not be happy with his followers. However, the good reasons are the least concern of those who want to undermine discussions. When someone wants to kill a dog it is said that the dog has rabies. Fortunately what we see is only the last sparks of the Middle Ages in our century. Since Spiritism comes to swing the last blow of mercy on them, their attempt of a supreme effort comes as no surprise. Rest assured, the fight will not be long. However, we must not become imprudent given the certainty of victory because carelessness could otherwise compromise or at least delay success. For the reasons above, the formation of large societies in certain places might find obstacles whereas the same would not happen with small groups.
6. Let us add another consideration. The societies as such are prone to a large number of vicissitudes; a thousand dependent or not causes beyond their control, may lead to a closure. Suppose that a given society had gathered every follower of the same town and that for some circumstance it no longer exists. There you have the members disperse and disoriented. Now, if instead there are fifty groups, if some disappear there will always be others and others will form. These are all hardy perennial plants that will be reborn, all the same. We must not cultivate a single tree in the field because lightning may abate it. Have a hundred and the same lightning will not affect them all, and the smaller they are the lesser exposed they will be. Hence, it all conspires in favor of the proposed system; when a given group that is formed somewhere becomes too big you must do like the bees: swarms that leave the mother-hive gather other hives and that in turn will form others. These will be other centers of action, irradiating around their own circle, more powerful for the propaganda than a single society.
7. The formation of the groups is therefore agreed in principle but there are still several important issues to be examined. The first of them is the uniformity of the Doctrine. Such uniformity could not be better guaranteed by a compact society considering that dissidents could always easily leave and form groups aside. Be the society united or fractioned the uniformity will be the natural consequence of the unity of the adopted foundation. It will complete in all groups that follow the route traced by *The Spirits' Book* and *The Mediums' Book*. One contains the principles of the Philosophy of the Science; the other the rules of the experimental and practical part. Those books were written with great clarity to avoid giving rise to different interpretations, an essential condition to any new doctrine. Up until now these

books have served as regulators to the immense majority of spiritists and are welcomed everywhere with unequivocal sympathy. Those who tried to stay away from them had to acknowledge by their isolation and decreasing number of partisans, that the general opinion is not on their side. Such consent given by the majority has great value. It is a judgment that cannot be accused of personal influence since it is spontaneous and declared by thousands of people that are completely unknown. A proof of that general consent is that we were asked to translate it to several languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Italian, Polish, Russian and even Tatar. Without presumption we can then recommend its study and practice in the several spiritist meetings and with even more reason as they are the only ones where the Science is up until now treated comprehensively. Every other one that has been published about the subject has only touched on a few isolated points. As a matter of fact, we do not have the pretension of imposing our ideas. We just say that because it is our right. Those who find them convenient should then adopt them. The others have the right to reject them. Hence, the instructions we give are naturally for those who walk with us; for those who honor us with the title of their spiritist leader and in no way do we wish to regulate those who intend to follow another avenue. We deliver the Doctrine that we profess to the general appreciation. We have in fact found many adherents that give us confidence and reassurance before some isolated dissidences. In reality, the future will be the final judge. The susceptibilities of a offended egos, the ambition and frustrations for material hopes will disappear in everyone, by the force of things. People will no longer be considered, they will see the doctrine and the judgment will be impartial. What are the new ideas that did not have self-serving contradictors when they came up? Who are the propagators of those ideas that were not targeted by the attacks of envy, particularly if crowned by success? Let us now return to our subject.

8. The second point is the formation of the groups. One of the first conditions is homogeneity without which there could not be a communion of thoughts. A meeting cannot be stable or serious if there isn't sympathy among those who compose it and sympathy cannot exist among people who have divergent ideas and that have a hidden or even open opposition. Having said that, it is far from us the idea that the discussion must be stifled because, much on the contrary, we recommend a scrupulous examination of every communication and all phenomena. It must be well understood that each person can and must issue their opinion but there are persons who discuss to impose their ideas and not to clarify. We stand against the spirit of systematic opposition; against preconceived ideas that don't yield even before the evidence. Such persons are incontestably a cause of disruption that must be avoided. The spiritist meetings are, in this respect, are in exceptional condition; what they require above all is reverence. Well, how can one show reverence if there is always a distraction produced by an acrimonious controversy? If there is a bitter feeling among the attendees and when one feels surrounded by people that are knowingly hostile and in whose faces one can read sarcasm and disdain regarding everything that is not in agreement with their opinion?
9. In *The Mediums' Book* (#28) we described the character of the main varieties of spiritists; since that description is important for the current discussion we will repeat them here. The first line contains those who only believe in the manifestations. For those, Spiritism is just a Science of observation; a series of more or less curious facts; Philosophy and morality are accessories to which they don't give much attention and whose reach does not concern them. We call them *experimental spiritists*. Then come those who see something beyond facts in Spiritism. They understand its Philosophical reach; admire the consequent morals but do not practice it; are ecstatic before the beauty of some communications, as when they hear an eloquent sermon but from which they take no advantage. The influence upon their character is null or insignificant. They don't change their habits and are never deprived of any pleasure: the miser is always stingy, the proud always full of themselves and the envious and jealous always hostile. Christian charity to them is just a nice maxim and the assets of this world

prevail against the future world in their appreciation. These are the imperfect spiritists. Side by side with them there are others in larger numbers than one may think and that don't limit themselves to the admiration of the spiritist moral, but that practice it and accept it in all its consequences. Convinced that the Earthly experience is a transient trial they endeavor to take advantage of these brief moments to advance on the path of progress, striving to do good and suppress their bad inclinations. Their relationships are always safe because conviction repels any bad thoughts. Charity is always their rule of conduct. These are the true spiritists or the Christian spiritists.

10. If the preceding is well understood then it is clear that a group formed by elements exclusively from this last class would be in the best conditions because it is only among those who practice the law of love and charity that it is possible to establish a serious fraternal connection. Unions would not be long-lasting among people to whom moral is a mere theory, since those do not impose any impediment to their pride, ambition, vanity and selfishness, they do not impose more advantage to their words either; they will want to be the first when they should diminish themselves; will get irritated with contradictions and will not have scruples to sow disagreement and discord. Among the true spiritists, on the contrary, there is a feeling of mutual trust and benevolence. One can relax in such a sympathetic environment whereas there is stress and anxiety in a mixed environment.
11. All this is in the nature of things and there is no invention here. Does it follow that one must require perfection in the formation of the groups? It would be simply absurd, since it would be the same as demanding the impossible and then nobody would be able to take part in them. Spiritism aims at the betterment of mankind, thus it did not come to look for perfection but for those who strive to become better by practicing the teaching of the spirits. The true spiritist is not the one that has achieved the objective but the one who seriously want to achieve it. Whatever your antecedents may be, you will be a good spiritist just by acknowledging your imperfections and by being sincere and perseverant in the purpose of amending yourself. Spiritism is a true regeneration because it breaks the links with one's past. One is indulgent with others as, one would like others to be, and not a single malevolent or bitter word leaves one's mouth against anyone. Someone that behaved in a rude way in one meeting would be demonstrating not only lack of courtesy and civility but also lack of charity. Someone shocked by contradiction and who tried to impose his or her personality or ideas would give demonstrations of pride. Well, neither one nor the other would be on the true path of Spiritism, that is, Christian Spiritism. Anybody that believes to have a fairer opinion than another must have it accepted through gentleness and persuasion; bitterness on one's part would be very wrong.
12. Hence simple logic demonstrates to anyone who knows the laws of Spiritism what are the best elements for the composition of really serious groups and we do not hesitate to say that these are the ones that have the greatest influence on the propagation of the Doctrine. By the esteem with which they control and by the example they give of its moral consequences they prove its seriousness and impose silence in mockery, which, when it attacks the good, is more than ridiculous, it is hateful. In any case, what do you expect that an incredulous critic would think when observing experiments whose attendees are the first ones to consider it a game? He leaves it more incredulous than when he came in.
13. We have just indicated the best composition of groups; but perfection is not more likely in groups than in individuals; we indicated the objective and said that the more you approach it, the better the results will be. It can eventually be dominated by circumstances but one must focus every attention onto avoiding the hurdles. Unfortunately, when a group is created, one is not very strict in the choices because before anything else one wants to form the center; in order to be admitted in general one just need a simple desire or some sort of sympathy to the general ideas of Spiritism. Later it is observed that such adhesion was too easy.

14. In a group there is always the stable element and the floating element. The first is composed of hard-working people that form the base; the second element is composed of those who are admitted temporarily and accidentally. It is to the composition of the stable element that one must pay careful attention and in this case one must not hesitate in sacrificing quantity in favor of quality since this is the element of impulse and regulation. The floating element is less important because there is the freedom of modifying it at will. One must not lose sight of the fact that the spiritist meetings, like all other meetings in general, have the source of their vitality in their foundations. With that respect, it all depends on the starting point. The one who wishes to organize a group in good conditions must, before anything, ensure that one counts on the support of some sincere followers who take the Doctrine seriously and are known for their conciliatory and benevolent character. Once such a core is formed, even with three or four people only, the rules will be established for both admission and the realization of the session rules that must be observed by the newcomers. These rules may be modified according to the circumstances but there are some that are essential.
15. Since the unity of principles is one of the fundamental points it cannot exist in those who did not study and thus cannot have a formed opinion. The first condition to be imposed is serious study, to avoid frequent distractions by objections and useless questions. The second, is a categorical declaration of faith and adhesion to the doctrine of *The Spirits' Book* and other special conditions that may be considered appropriate. This with respect to the permanent and senior members; to the observers that generally come to acquire a little bit more of knowledge and conviction it can be less rigorous; however since there are those who could cause disturbance with observations that are uncalled for, it is important to be assured of their dispositions. Before anything else, it is necessary to keep curious people away and anybody else that may be attracted by frivolous motives.
16. The order and regularity of the works are equally essential. We consider eminently useful to open each session by reading some passages of *The Mediums' Book* and *The Spirits' Book*. This ensures that the principles of the Science and the means of avoiding the hurdles often found in the practice are always fresh in everyone's memory. Thus, attention will be concentrated on many points that may escape a private reading and may give rise to instructive comments and discussions that may also count on the participation of the spirits. It is just as important to archive every received communication according to the date with clear indication of the medium that served as the intermediary. The latter reference is useful for the study of the type of mediumship of each one. It often happens that we lose sight of these communications, which then become obsolete. This discourages the spirits who gave them aiming at the instruction of the attendees. It is then essential that the most instructive communications are collected and read from time to time. It is common that such communications are of general interest and not given by the spirits for the instruction of a few and to be left in archives. Therefore it is useful that they are taken to everybody through publicity. This subject will be examined in an article in the next issue, indicating the simplest mode, the most economical and at the same time the most adequate to achieve the objective.
17. As you can see, our instructions are exclusively addressed to the groups formed by serious and homogeneous elements; to those who want to follow the route of moral Spiritism, aiming at everyone's progress, the essential and sole objective of the Doctrine; finally, to those who want to accept our guidance and to take into account the advice of our experience. It is incontestable that a group formed according to the indicated conditions will operate with regularity, without barriers and in an efficient way. What can be done by a group can also be done by others. Let us then suppose a given number of groups in a given town all formed based on the same foundation; there will necessarily be unity of principles since they hold the same flag; there will be a sympathetic union for their maxim is love and charity; they are, in a word, members of the same family among whom there could be no rivalry of ego since all are driven by the same feelings towards good.

18. However, it would be useful to have among them a point of connection, a center of action. According to the circumstances and places, the several groups leaving aside personal issues could designate for that a center that for its position and relative importance would be the most capable to give Spiritism a healthy impulse. According to the case and if necessary to avoid susceptibilities a central group, formed by delegates of all others, would take the name of *director group*. Given our impossibility to correspond with all of them, we would keep a more direct communication with that center. We could also and in certain cases designate a person to more specifically represent us. Without prejudice to the relationships that will forcibly establish among the groups of the same city that walk identical paths, an annual general assembly could gather the spiritists of the several groups in a familiar party that would be simultaneously the celebration of Spiritism. In such occasion there would be speeches given and the most remarkable communications would be read or those more appropriate to the occasion. What is possible among the groups of a given city is also possible among the groups of several cities as long as there is communion of principles and feelings among them, that is, as long as they can maintain reciprocal relationships. We will indicate the means to reach that when we talk about means of publicity.
19. All this, as we said, is of simple execution and without complicated engines but it all depends on the starting point, that is, of the composition of the primitive groups. If they are formed by good elements there will be so many other good roots that they will give provide fruits to. If, on the contrary, they are formed by heterogeneous and antipathetic elements; by doubtful spiritists, more concerned with the form than the substance, who consider the moral part as accessory and secondary, then one should expect irritating controversies and a deadlock; personal pretensions; shocks of susceptibility and consequently conflicts that anticipate disorganization. Among the true spiritists as defined above, who see the essential objective of Spiritism in its moral, which is the same to all, there will always be sacrifice of personality, condescendence and benevolence, and consequently security and stability in the relationships. That is why we have insisted so much on the fundamental qualities.
20. Some may say that these severe restrictions constitute an obstacle to the propagation; that it is a mistake. Don't believe that by opening the door to the first that shows up you are going to make miracles. Experience is there to demonstrate otherwise. You will face a swarm of curious and indifferent people that will come to the group as if to a spectacle. Now, the curious and indifferent are an obstacle and not a support. As for the systematic or proud unbelievers regardless of how much you show them, they will only see reason for ridicule because they will not understand and don't want to make the effort to understand. We have already said this, and once again I repeat, that the true propagation, the one that is really useful and fruitful, that one is done by the moral ascendant of the serious meetings. Had everyone only known gatherings of this kind; there would be even more serious spiritists, since it must be said that many were deviated from the Doctrine because they only attended futile sessions, without order and seriousness. Thus, be serious in the true meaning of the word and serious people will come to you. These are the best propagators because they speak out of conviction and preach by both word and example.
21. Given the eminently serious character of the meetings it should not be inferred that one must systematically ban the physical manifestations. As we said in *The Mediums' Book* (#326), these are of incontestable utility from the point of view of the study of the phenomena and for the conviction of certain people. Nevertheless, in order to take advantage of these two aspects, one must exclude every frivolous thought. A session that counts on a good medium of physical effects and that would be involved with manifestations of that kind with order, method and seriousness, whose moral condition offers every guarantee against charlatanism and fraud not only can obtain remarkable things from the point of view of the phenomena, but can also do an abundant good. Hence, we advise you not to neglect this kind of experience as long as there are adequate mediums and that special sessions are organized with that

objective, independent of those dedicated to philosophical and moral communications. The powerful mediums of that category are rare but there are phenomena that although more vulgar are not less interesting and concluding because they demonstrate with evidence the independence of the medium. Among those, there are the communications of alphabetical typology that sometimes give the most unexpected results. The theory of these phenomena is necessary so that their mode of operation may be understood since it rarely leads those who don't understand them to a profound conviction. It also has the advantage of clarifying the normal conditions in which these phenomena may occur, and consequently, avoiding useless attempts thus uncovering fraud whenever it is the case. It is a mistake to believe that we are systematically against physical manifestations. We recommend and will always encourage the intelligent communications and in particular those that have a moral and philosophical reach because those are the ones which tend to the essential and definitive objective of Spiritism. As for the others, we have never contested their utility but we stand against their deplorable abuse or the possible abuse; against the exploitation by charlatanism; against the bad conditions in which they are frequently carried out thus entailing ridicule. We have said and repeat, that the physical manifestations are the beginning of a science and that nobody advances by only remaining with their a-b-c's; that if Spiritism was not born out of the turning tables it would not grow as it did, and that today perhaps nobody would speak about it. That is the reason why we strive to make it enter the philosophical avenue, certain that by addressing more the intelligence than the eyes, it would touch the heart and no longer be a transient trend. That is the only way through which it could go around the world and enroot as a doctrine. The result has by far surpassed our expectation. We only give the physical manifestations a relative importance rather than absolute. That is our mistake to the eyes of some people that exclusively dedicate to that and cannot see anything beyond. If we are not personally involved with them, it is because they would not teach us anything new and because we have more essential things to do. Far from criticizing those involved with that, on the contrary, we encourage them as long as they do it in beneficial conditions. Every time that we learn about such kind of trustworthy meetings we will be the first to recommend them to the attention of new followers. That is our categorical declaration of faith about this issue.

22. In the beginning we said that several spiritist groups requested to unite with the Parisian Society. They even used the word *affiliation*; an explanation is needed with that respect. The Parisian Society was the first to be formed regular and legally. For its position and the nature of its works, it had great participation in the development of Spiritism, and in our opinion, it justifies the title *Initiating Society* that was given by certain spirits. Its moral influence was felt far away and although numerically restricted there is an awareness that it did more for the propagation than if it had open its doors to the general public. It was formed with the only objective of studying the Spiritist Science in-depth. For that it did not need to gather in a large auditorium or with a large number of members since it knows that the true propaganda takes place through the influence of the principles. Since it is not moved by any material interest an excessive number of participants would be more damaging than useful. Thus it will gladly see multiplying around it private groups formed in good conditions and with whom it could establish fraternal relationships. It would not be consistent with its principles and would not be up to its mission if it could conceive a shadow of envy; anyone who considers the Society capable of that, doesn't know it. These observations are sufficient to show that the Parisian Society could not have the pretension of absorbing other societies that could be formed in Paris or elsewhere and keeping the same customary procedures. In that case the word *affiliation* would not be improper since it would suppose a kind of material supremacy, something that is not absolutely aspired by the Society and that would even have inconveniences. As an initiating and central Society it can establish purely scientific relationships with the other groups or societies but its role stops there. It does not exert any control upon those societies who have no dependency and are entirely free to form as they

- wish without the need to report back anything to anybody and without any intrusion of the Parisian Society in any kind of business of the others. Thus, the foreign societies may form on the same basis; declare that they abide by the same principles and without any other relationship other than the concentration of studies and advice that can be asked and that the Parisian Society will give with pleasure. On the other hand, the Parisian Society does not boast of being immune to the vicissitudes more than the others. If, say, it had them under control and for any reason it disappeared, then the lack of a supporting point would result in disruption. The groups or societies must seek a supporting point more solid than a human institution that is necessarily fragile. They must acquire their resilience on the principles of the Doctrine that is the same to all and one that outlives all of them irrespective of having those principles represented by a formed society.
23. The role of the Parisian Society was clearly defined in order to avoid any misunderstanding or false interpretation; its relationships that the Society will with foreign societies therefore are extremely simplified, limited to moral, scientific and exchanges of mutual benevolence, without any hierarchy. They will exchange the results of their observations through publications and correspondence. In order that the Parisian Society may establish these relationships, it is necessary that it receives accurate information from the foreign societies that are supposedly marching on the same route and holding the same flag. They will then be included in the list of correspondents. In the case where there are several groups in one town, they will be represented by a central group as discussed above in paragraph 18.
 24. We will now indicate a few works with which the several societies may collaborate in a useful way; later we will indicate others. We know that the spirits, not having any sovereign science, can see certain principles from their personal point of view and consequently not be always in agreement. The best criterion of truth is naturally the agreement of the lessons in several points by different spirits and through mediums that do not know one another. That is how *The Spirits' Book* was composed. However there are still many important questions that can be resolved in that way and whose solution will have more authority the more it is obtained in its large majority. Hence, the Parisian Society may occasionally address questions of this kind to every corresponding group that will then request the position of their spiritual guides through their mediums. Another task is related to the bibliographic search. There is a large number of old and modern books where we can find more or less direct testimonials of the spiritist ideas. A collection of those testimonials would be a very precious work but this is almost impossible to be carried out by a single person. Nonetheless it becomes easier if each group is prepared to gather a few elements out of their readings and studies, and transmit them to the Parisian Society that will coordinate the work.
 25. In the current situation this is the only possible organization of Spiritism. Later the circumstances may change but one must not do anything that is untimely. It is already a lot in the short time where followers have multiplied enough, leading to this result. There is in this undertaking a horizon that can extend to infinity given the simplicity of the organization. Therefore let us not complicate it for being afraid that we will find obstacles. Those who are kind to demonstrate some trust may be assured that we will not leave you behind and that everything will come at the appropriate time. It is only to those that we address our instructions, as I said, without the pretension of imposing ourselves to those who don't walk with us. In order to denigrate our work they said that we want to make a school out of Spiritism. Well, why wouldn't we have that right? Didn't Mr. de Merville try to form a devilish school? Why would we be forced to follow the steps of this or that? Don't we have the right of opinion, the right to formulate, publish and proclaim it? If that idea finds so many followers, apparently they don't consider it lacking common sense. But that is our mistake in the eyes of certain people who don't forgive us for having arrived faster than they did and even more so, for our triumph. Be it a school then if they wish so. For us it will be a real honor to write on its façade: *School of moral, philosophical and Christian Spiritism*. All those

who hold the flag *love and charity* are invited. Everyone who holds that flag has our deepest sympathies and will never lack our support.

Allan Kardec

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

December 1861

Obituary

Mr. Joabard's death in Brussels

Spiritism has just lost one of its most fervent and enlightened supporters. Mr. Jobard, Director of the Royal Museum of Industry in Brussels, officer of the Legion of Honor, member of the Academy of Dijon and the Promotional Society of Paris, died in Brussels from a stroke on October 27th, 1861 at the age of 69 years old. He was born in Baissey, Haute-Marne, on May 14th, 1792. He had worked successively as a land Surveyor and was also the founder of the first lithographic company in Belgium; Director of the *Industrial* and of the *Courrier Belge*; Editor of the *Bulletin de l'Industrie Belge*, Editor of the *Presse* and lately of the *Progrès International*. He was awarded with the title of Honorary President of the Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies. Here is what was published in the *Siècle*:

“Original, prolific spirit, unhesitatingly responsive to paradox and the system, Mr. Jobard delivered genuine services to industrial technology and the long abandoned cause of Intellectual Property of which he was a stubborn and perhaps excessive defender. His theories about the subject were formulated in a term he called “Maunotopole” based on his book published in 1844. We owe to this tireless lithographer, several writings and brochures about all sorts of subjects from oriental psychics to the utility of fools in the social order. He has left as well, some pungent tables and fables. Among his many inventions was the ingenious lamp, which was shown at the Universal Expo of Paris in 1855.”

As far as we know not a single paper spoke about the most remarkable characteristic of his late years: his total adhesion to the Spiritist Doctrine, whose cause he had embraced enthusiastically for it is painful to the adversaries of Spiritism to admit that men of genius adopt these new ideas, men that cannot be called mad without raising doubts about the sanity of the accuser. This is in fact one of the most embarrassing points to them and for which they have never been able to give a satisfactory explanation, that is the fact that the propagation of these ideas have been initiated in the most enlightened class of society. Therefore they hide behind the banal axiom saying that the genius is a cousin-brother of madness. Some even

affirm, in good faith and without a smile, that Socrates, Plato and all the wise philosophers that professed similar ideas were nothing but crazy people, particularly Socrates with his familiar demon.

Now, is it possible to be a person of common sense and still believe that there is a genius at his service? Then, Mr. Jobard could not find mercy before this learned assembly that looms as the supreme judge of reason and of which it intends to be the ideal model.

We were told that they ignored this phase of his spirit to spare Mr. Jobard's reputation and as a sign of respect for his memory. Obstinacy with false ideas has never been a sign of common sense. Besides, it shows narrow-mindedness when related to pride, and this is more common. Mr. Jobard demonstrated that he was simultaneously a man of common sense and spirit when he renounced and without hesitation his first theories about Spiritism as soon as it was demonstrated to him that he was mistaken.

Everybody knows that in the early days and before experience had clarified the issue, there were several systems and that each one explained the new phenomena in their own way. Mr. Jobard was a supporter of the *collective soul system*. According to that system *"only the soul of the medium manifests but it identifies with several other living creatures, present or absent, so that it forms a collective whole, gathering aptitudes, intelligence and knowledge of each one."* From all systems created at that time how many still stand today? We don't know if this one still has followers but what we know for a fact is that Mr. Jobard advocated and amplified it, was one of the first to abandon it when *The Spirits' Book* appeared, to a Doctrine that he openly embraced as demonstrated by his several letters published by us. In particular the doctrine of reincarnation which struck him like a beam of light. One day he said: *"If I were so much entangled in the maze of the philosophical systems the reason is that I lacked a compass. All I found were dead-end paths that led me nowhere. None took me to a concluding solution of the most important problems. I racked my brain, I felt I missing a key to get to the truth. Well then! That key is reincarnation, it explains everything in a logical way, according to God's justice and for that we say naturally: Yes, it must be so."*

After his death Mr. Jobard neglected certain scientific theories that he sustained in his life. In our next issue we will talk about it, where we will then publish some conversations that we had with him. We will say, in the meantime, that he was very quickly disengaged from his body and that his disorientation lasted a very short time. Like every spiritist that preceded him, he confirms every point that was brought to us from the spiritual world where he is now much better than on Earth but from where he nonetheless leaves behind sincere sorrow in all those that were able to admire his eminent knowledge, benevolence and affability. He was not one of those jealous scholars who stood in the way of newcomers whose merit they overshadow. On the contrary, all of those are to whom he reached out to and opened the way would have been sufficient enough to form a beautiful procession. In summary, Mr. Jobard was a man of progress, tireless worker and supporter of every grand idea, generous and capable of advancing humanity. If his loss is regrettable to Spiritism it is no less to the Arts and Industry that will have his name inscribed in their archives.

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

December 1861

Act of Faith of Barcelona

(See the November 1861 issue)

The Spanish newspapers were not as moderate in their assessment as were the French newspapers about this event. Whatever the opinion that one may have about the spiritist ideas, there is something so strange in these events considering the time we live in, that they entice more pity than rage against people that seem to have slept for centuries and suddenly woke up with no awareness of how far humanity has already come, believing it to still be at the starting point. Here is another excerpt from an article published by the *Las Novedades*, one of the largest newspapers in Madrid:

“The act of faith that was carried out a few months ago in A Coruña where a large number of books were burned at the doorsteps of a church had left in our spirits and in the spirits of all of those persons of liberal ideas a very sad impression. Yet, the news of a second act of faith celebrated in Barcelona was received with even greater indignation by us and all over Spain, an act of faith carried out in that civilized capital of Catalonia, amidst an essentially liberal population that knowingly has great qualities, to whom no doubt this barbaric insult was addressed.”

After reporting the facts from the Barcelona paper, it continues:

“This is the revolting spectacle authorized by the men of the Liberal Union, right here in the XIX century: a bonfire in A Coruña and another in Barcelona, and many others that will still come in other places. That is what should happen since it is consequence of the situation of the minds that currently dominate things and interfere in everything. Reaction inside regarding the bills of law that were proposed; reaction abroad support the reactionaries governments of Italy, before and after its fall, combating the liberal ideas in all occasions, seeking support to reaction all over the place and obtained to the price of inept concessions.”

It is then followed by lengthy considerations about the symptoms and consequences of such act but that due to its essentially political character don't belong to the scope of our journal.

The *Diário de Barcelona*, an ultramontane journal, was the first to announce the act of faith reporting:

"The titles of the burned books were enough to justify their condemnation. It is the Church's right and duty to ensure that its authority is respected, even more so when the freedom of press is given more latitude, particularly in countries that enjoy this terrible ulcer of freedom of religion."

A Barcelona newspaper, *La Corona*, then publishes the following thoughts:

"We expected from our colleague (The Diário) who broke the news that he would be kind enough to satisfy the public's curiosity, seriously alarmed by such an act, incredible in our current days, but it was in vain that we waited for the explanations. Since then we have been assaulted by questions about that event and to the benefit of truth we must say that the government's allies suffer more with this than with those that make them opposition."

"With the objective of satisfying the much excited curiosity we sought the truth and we regret to say that the fact is true and that in fact the act of faith was celebrated in the following conditions:"

(Following the report given in our last issue)

"The means employed to get to this result could not have been more expedited or effective. Customs were presented with the above books and the Commissioner was told that they could not be processed without the permission of Lord Bishop. Lord Bishop was absent; on his return he was presented with a copy of each book, and after reading them or having them read by persons of his trust and according to the judgment of his conscience, he ordered to have the books to be set on fire since they were immoral and contrary to the Catholic faith. An appeal was filed against the sentence and the government asked to allow the owner to return them to the place of origin considering that the circulation of such books were prohibited in Spain, but even that was refused under the allegation that since they were contrary to the Catholic moral and faith, the government could not consent that such books would corrupt the moral and religion of other countries. Despite all that, the owner was forced to pay the legal rights that, as it seems, should not have been demanded. A large crowd witnessed the act of faith that does not come as a surprise if taken into account the place and time of execution and in particular the spectacle. The effect produced upon the witnesses was that of astonishment to some, laughter from others and indignation onto the majority, as they gradually understood what was going on. Words of rage were pronounced by several, and then the jokes, the mockery and jest of people who saw with pleasure the blindness of certain men. They are right about it since they foresee in that reaction the fastest triumph of their ideas, much deserving of the times of Inquisition. They mocked so that their ceremony would not increase the prestige of the authority that so complacently is given to truly ridiculous demands. When the ashes of that new bonfire were cold, it was noticed that some people who were around or passers-by who heard about it, collected some ashes as reminders of the act of faith."

"That is the report of the events that those people cannot stop talking about among themselves. They are outraged, sorry or even happy according to their way of seeing things. The honest partisans of peace, of the principle of authority and religion are afflicted by these reactive demonstrations because they understand that reactions precede revolutions and also because they know that whoever sows winds can only harvest storms. The liberals are annoyed by the fact that similar spectacles are brought to reality by

men who don't understand religion without intolerance and that want to impose their religion, like Mohammed imposed his Koran."

"Now, abstraction made to the quality of the burned books, let us examine the fact in itself. Can jurisprudence admit that a diocesan bishop has the final authority and can prevent the publication and circulation of a book? People will say that the right of press will control what must be done in this case. But does such a law determine that the books, however bad and pernicious they are, must be thrown on fire to justify a syndicate spectacle? We cannot find in that law a single article that justifies such act. Besides, the books in question were declared publically. A Commissary declares the books to Customs because they could be classified in Article 6 and pass through the diocesan censorship. The government could have prohibited their circulation and the matter would have been settled. The priests should be content in giving their flocks advice as for abstinence of particular reading if considered contrary to moral and religion but one should not give them an absolute power that transforms them into judges and executioners. We abstain from issuing any opinion about the value of the burned books. What we see is the fact, the tendencies and the spirit behind it. From now on, which diocese would then abstain from using and abusing a prerogative that in our opinion the government itself does not have, if they do that in Barcelona, the liberal Barcelona? Absolutism is very sagacious. It tries to show authority everywhere. If successful it dares further. Let us hope, however, that the struggles of absolutism are useless and that every concession may not have any other result but to unmask the party that renewing scenes like those of last Thursday, precipitates even deeper into the abyss onto which it runs blindfolded. That is what we are led to expect by the effect produced by the act of faith of Barcelona."

Spiritist Review
Journal of Psychological Studies

December 1861

The warbler, the pigeon and the little fish

Fable

To Mrs. and Ms. C... from Bordeaux

Love and Charity
(Spiritism)

In the rose bushes bordering the hedge

A warbler had hatched her brood;

All chicks were happily fed;

Misfortune, alas, loomed!

Amidst fires the torments raged

Pouring down the rain

Turning into a vast lake the terrain

The pen already inundated.

Far from the bushes the nest fluctuates

The bird follows its own destiny;

The heart still open to hopes;

The generous star is far away, shiny.

Yet, the water flows. With the water from the grasslands

The creek receives the floating nest

Which, despite the pitfalls of the water banks

It safely arrives to the river bed.

A little bank of sand arises,

Sticking out of the river, in the middle;

Helped by a gentle wind, waving a little,

To safe shores our nest browses.

For a moment the warbler feels elated,

With her beak she touches the valuable straw;

Then she feels deeply distraught:

In such a place, what would be her fate?

The chicks the hunger obey,

Should she leave them behind, and fly away?

There on the sand, exposed and abandoned!

They had just been saved

By a good breeze, a friendly wave.

However, if a new surge amazes

Or a dismal gust abrades?

At that moment a large pigeon lands;

*“Excuse me”, she says, “my audacious warbler,
My appeal is in your kind hands,
This whole family must be safer.”*

Oh! Good pigeon, take back to the calm plains

These little victims of the storm.

Be so kind and my children store

In you vast and generous wings.

It is not so far and your vigorous claws

Have never carried such a light weight.

The pigeon heard and responded straight:

“I deplore your terrible pain,

But I am sorry to say that other concerns claim

My attention, forcing me to fly

But have no worries and try

To follow my good advice:

Trust your luck... The benefactor spirit

Who saved your life will not be cross

With you, leaving you behind with your loss.”

And happy with herself the pigeon flew away.

Swimming around a little carp heard

Everything, and everything she learned.

“Be reassured, she said, oh desperate mother!

Your pain, I understand well, is bitter

But not everything is lost in your despair,

I have no strength to share

But I hope I can help you ashore.”

And taking a little straw by her mouth,

Plentiful in the nest that had gone south,

She pulled and slid on her way.

The warbler stood, helping with her own sway,

Her wings in the air, the winds blowing,

The uneasy load, the fish pulling,

The nest was balanced, the fear was out,

Avoiding the currents on their route.

The margins near, now safe grounds!

The warbler was charmed to have found

Good bushes, and woods a ton.

The little fish then said: “*From now on*

Don't trust the big ones; the appeal of desperation

Only slightly touches the hearts on vacation;

Their skills are advice and condolences.

However, the fraternal assistance

Is only found with the little ones!

C. Dombre

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

December 1861

The supernatural

By Mr. Guizot

We extracted a remarkable chapter about the supernatural from the new book '*L'Église et la société chrétienne*' 1861, by Mr. Guizot. It is not a speech for or against Spiritism as one might think because it does not discuss the new Doctrine, but since Spiritism is inseparable from the supernatural to the eyes of many, being a superstition according to some and a truth according to others, it is interesting to get to know the opinion of a man of the caliber of Mr. Guizot about the subject. There are comments in this work of indisputable accuracy, but we also believe there are big mistakes given by the point of view or taken by the author. We will provide an in-depth analysis in our next issue.

**

“Every attack against Christianity today, irrespective of how diverse they are in nature and measure, start from the same point and tend to the same end, that is the negation of the supernatural in man’s destiny and in the world, and the abolition of the supernatural element from the Christian religion, as with every religion, in their history and dogmas.”

“Materialists, Pantheists, Rationalists, Skeptical, Critics, Erudite, some openly others discretely, all think and speak their ideas that man and the world, its moral as its physical nature, they are only governed by general laws, permanent and necessary, whose course has never been or will never be suspended or modified. I don’t have the intention of thoroughly discussing this matter here, essential to all religions. I just want to submit to the declared or occult adversaries of the supernatural two observations, or more precisely, two facts that in my opinion resolve the issue.”

“It is about a natural or supernatural faith, about an instinct inherent to the supernatural that is the basis of every religion. I don’t mean every religious idea but every positive religion, practical, powerful, lasting and popular. Everywhere, in all climates, at all times in History, at all levels of civilization, man carries

this feeling that I would rather call presentiment, and that the world which he sees, the order of things, the facts that are succeeded regularly around him are not everything. In that vast reality it is in vain that he finds new discoveries and conquers new things; it is in vain that he wisely attests the permanent laws that preside over everything. His thoughts are not bounded by this universe of his science. Such spectacle is not enough to his soul. His soul goes beyond, seeking. It foresees something else. It aspires for other destinies and another master to the universe and to itself.”

“*Beyond all these heavens the God of heaven resides*, said Voltaire, and the God who is beyond all heavens, is not the personified nature but the supernatural itself. To him, this is how religions are addressed; they are based in the objective of putting man in connection with God. Without the instinctive faith of men in the supernatural, without its spontaneous and invincible impulse towards the supernatural, there would be no religion.”

“Among all creatures here, man is the only one that prays. Among his natural instincts there isn’t any that is more natural, more universal, and more invincible than prayer. The child accepts it with a kind solicitude. The elderly kneel before it as in a refuge for decadence and isolation. Prayer reaches the young lips just mumbling God’s name and the lips of the agonizing that no longer have the strength to say it. Among all people, luminary or obscure, civilized or barbarians, have their formulas and prescriptions for invocation. Wherever there is man, in certain circumstances, at certain times, under certain impressions of the soul, the eyes look above, hands are united, knees are bent to implore and to say grace, to worship or appease.”

“With joy or fear, publically or in the intimacy of the heart, man seeks prayer as the last resort to fulfill the emptiness of his soul or to carry the heavy loads of his fate. It is prayer that he seeks when everything else fails, when he doesn’t find support in his weakness, consolation in his sufferings, hope for his virtue.”

“Nobody ignores the moral and innermost value of prayer, irrespectively of its effectiveness given its objective. The soul is relieved for the simple fact that it prays, it stands, calms down, finds strength. Returning to God the soul experiences that feeling of health and rest that spreads all over the body, changing from a heavy and troubled appearance to a serene and pure ambience. God comes in support of those who have implored before and without knowing if he will answer.”

“Will he listen? What is the definitive and exterior efficacy of prayer? That is the mystery, the impenetrable mystery of God’s designs and actions upon each one of us. What we do know is that our life, both the internal and exterior life, it is not up to us to dispose of that according to our thoughts and wishes. All names that we can give to that part of our destiny and that does not belong to us: chance, fortune, star, nature, fatality these are other veils that cover our ignorance. When we use those words we refuse to see God where he actually is. God is beyond the limited sphere of man’s actions and power, God that reigns and acts. There is in the natural and universal act of prayer a natural and universal faith in that free and permanent action of God upon man and his destiny. *We are workers together with God*, says St. Paul: workers with God in the works in general for the destiny of humanity and that of our own destiny, past and future. That is what allows us to see prayer as the link between man and God. But the light stops there for us. *The paths of God are not our paths*. We walk them without knowing them. Belief without seeing and prayer without foreseeing are the conditions imposed on man in this world for everything

beyond his own limits. It is in the awareness and acceptance of that supernatural order that faith and religious life consist.”

“Thus, Mr. Edmund Scherer is right when he doubts that ‘*Christian rationalism is and can ever be a religion*’. And why has Mr. Jules Simon, who bows so respectfully before God, did he title his book: *La religion naturelle*? He should have called it *Philosophie religieuse*.” Philosophy pursues and reaches some of the great ideas upon which religion is founded. However, given the nature of its processes and the limits of its domain, it has never founded and it could not found a religion. Speaking more accurately, there is no natural religion, as soon as you abolish the supernatural, religion disappears.”

“Who would dare deny that this instinctive faith in the supernatural source of religion can be and has also been a source of an unlimited number of mistakes and superstitions, a source to their tower of infinite pain, but to dream of denying it? Here, as in everything else, it is in man’s condition that good and evil are incessantly mixed in man’s destiny and in his works, like in himself, however from that incurable mixture it does not follow that our great destinies have no meaning and that do nothing but to set as free in our elevations. Having said that, and whatever our deviations, it is still certain that the supernatural is part of the natural faith of man, being the *sine qua non* condition (essential), the true object, the very essence of religion.”

“Here is a second fact that I believe deserves the thorough attention of the adversaries of the supernatural.”

“It is acknowledged and attested by Science that our globe has not always been in the condition that it is today; that at several and undetermined times it suffered great transformations, transformations that altered its face, the physical cycles, the population; that man, in particular, has not always existed and that he could not have existed in several of the progressive states through which Earth was submitted.”

“How has he come into being? How and through which power did mankind begin on Earth?”

“There could only be two explanations for that origin: it was either the product of nature’s own work and intimate natural forces of matter or it was the works of a supernatural power, external and superior to matter. For the appearance of man on Earth, it must have been one of these two possible causes: spontaneous generation or creation.”

“Admitting, and that is something that I cannot admit, the spontaneous generation, such mode of production could not ever have produced but children, at the first hour and in the beginning of nascent life. I don’t believe that anybody has ever said that true the virtue of spontaneous generation a man and a woman, a couple, could have been produced out of matter, and with their faculties, stature, strength, etc. such as the Greek Paganism made Minerva out of Jupiter’s brain.”

“That is the only way that man could have appeared the first time on Earth and lived, perpetuating the species. Now imagine the first man appearing here as a child, alive but inert, unintelligent, powerless, incapable of sustaining himself, in a single moment, cold and trembling, without a mother to listen and feed him! That is, however, the first man that could be produced by the system of spontaneous generation.”

“Evidently the other possible origin of the human species is the only admissible, the only possible. It is only the supernatural event that can explain the first apparition of man here on Earth.”

“Those who denied or abolished the supernatural would abolish every religion at the same time. It is useless to triumph upon the supernatural, so many times wrongly introduced in our world and in our history; they are forced to stop before the supernatural cradle of humanity, powerless to produce man without the hands of God.”

Guizot

Spiritist Review

Journal of Psychological Studies

December 1861

Philosophical and religious meditations

Dictated to Mr. Alfred Didier, medium, by the spirit Lamennais

Parisian Society of Spiritist Studies

We have already published a certain number of communications given by the spirit Lamennais and we can observe its elevated philosophical reach. Sometimes its theme was clearly defined; on other occasions, however, it was not so distinct to give it a title. We made this observation to the spirit who then proposed to give a series of dissertations about multiple subjects under the general title philosophical and religious meditations, with the freedom for us to give a particular title to the subjects if needed. We then suspended the publications until we had a number of messages susceptible of coordination. That is the publication that we begin today and will continue over the following issues.

We must take into account that the spirits that reached a high degree of perfection are the only ones capable of assessing things in a way that is totally correct; until then, whatever the development of their intelligence and even morality they can be more or less supported by their worldly ideas and see things from their personal point of view, that explains the contradictions often found in their assessments. Lamennais seems to be in this category. There is no doubt that his writings contain many good and

beautiful things regarding his ideas and style, but there are evidently the ones that may be submitted to critics and for which we don't take any responsibility. Everyone has the freedom of taking away what they find good and reject what doesn't seem correct. It is only the perfect spirits that may produce perfect things. Well, Lammenais is no doubt a good and elevated spirit and he does not pretend to be perfect yet and the somber, melancholic and mystical character of the man is undoubtedly reflected in the spirit and consequently in his communications. Therefore, from just that point of view, they would already be interesting material for observation.

I

“Ideas change but God's ideas and designs never change. Religion that is faith, hope and charity, one in three things and the symbol of God on Earth, remains unshaken amidst the struggles and prejudices. Religion exist primarily in the hearts above all, hence it cannot change. It is at the time when disbelief reigns and the clash of ideas without benefit to the truth that the dawn comes up saying: I come in the name of the God of the living ones and not of the dead; it is matter that perishes since it is divisible but the soul is immortal given that it is unique and indivisible. When the soul of man is weakened by doubts about eternity it materializes morally; it divides and consequently is submitted to unfortunate trials in the new reincarnations. Religion is thus man's strength. Every day it sees new crucifixions inflicted on Christ. Every day it hears blasphemies thrown at its face but it remains unshaken like the Virgin that watches the sacrifice of her own son, sustained by faith, hope and charity. The Virgin was dispelled by the suffering of the Son of the Man, but she is not dead.”

II

Samson

“After reading the story of Samson in the Bible I saw in my thoughts an image similar to the powerful artist that France has just lost, Decamps. I saw a man of colossal stature with muscular limbs as in Michelangelo's Day. The strong man sleeping by the side of a woman that was burning around her, perfumes, like those introduced by the Orientals, in a typically very luxurious and feminine gesture. The man showed signs of fatigue and there was a little cat at times jumping on him, other times on her. The woman came closer to make sure that the giant was deep asleep and then with a little pair of scissors she had the long hair of the colossal man cut. You know the rest. Armed men jumped on and arrested him. – The man imprisoned by the shackles of Delilah was Samson, said a spirit that I soon saw by my side.

This man represents humanity weakened by corruption, by greed and hypocrisy. Humanity, when God was with her she raised the gates of Gaza, like Samson. When Humanity was sustained by freedom, or Christianity, it crushed its enemies, like the giant crushed the Philistines' army on his own. ‘Thus, I answered to the spirit, the woman by his side...’ He did not allow me to continue and said: ‘She is the one that replaced God; see that I don't speak about the corruption of the past centuries but of yours.’ A long time had passed since the image of Samson and Delilah had vanished from my eyes. I saw the angel, always alone, saying with a smile: ‘Humanity is defeated.’ His expression then became deep and thoughtful, adding: *‘these are the three things that will give back to Humanity its primitive strength: Faith, hope and charity. They shall come in a few years and will be found in a doctrine that men will call Spiritism.’*

Continuation

Each religious phase of humanity has the divine power materialized in the figures of Samson, Hercules and Roland. A man who is savvy in logic would say: 'I guess you are right, but such comparison seems too subtle and slow.' It is true. It is possible that such an idea has not yet crossed anyone's mind; in any case, let us examine it. I spoke about Samson, emblem of power of the divine faith in the early days. The Bible is an oriental poem; Samson is a material figure of that driving force that knocked Heliodors down at the Atrium of the Temple and that gathered the waves of the Red Sea, after having separated them.

This divine power had abated armies and destroyed the walls of Jericho. The Greek came from Egypt and the East. Samson's tradition only existed as part of the Egyptian History and Philosophy. The Greek flattened the giants of granite from Egypt; Hercules was armed with a club and brought to life. Hercules carried out his twelve labors, defeated the Hydra of seven capital sins and became the symbol of divine power in the pagan world. He was turned into a god. But notice who was the winner between those two giants. Should we smile? Should we cry? As Lamartine said.

Eve had two daughters: Delilah and Deianira. As you see the tradition of Samson and Hercules is the same as that of Delilah and Deianira. The difference was that Delilah had replaced the hair of the Pharaoh's daughters by the diadem of Venus. The Afternoon falls on the famous Roncesvalles, a giant lying in a deep ravine desperately screams Charlemagne's name. He was crushed under a huge rock that his weakening hands uselessly tried to remove. Poor Roland! Your time has come. You are insulted by the Basques from the top of the rock who still throw big stones at you. There are women among your enemies. Roland may have perhaps loved one: always Delilah and Deianira. History does not say, but it is very likely. Nevertheless, Roland died like Samson and Hercules. You may now dispute that gentlemen, but it seems to me that this is not a subtle event. What will be the personification of Spiritism's strength in the future? Time will tell, they say here on Earth. On this side we say: man will see always.

Lamennais (to be continued in the next issue)

Allan Kardec⁴⁶