

## **GESTALT AND THE SPIRITIST DOCTRINE**

The aim of this article is to quote some of Perls' teachings on Gestalt therapy as well as lessons extended to us by Gary Yontef, Richard Hycner, Lynne Jacobs and others, and establish a parallel between this line of psychology and the Spiritist Doctrine as codified by Allan Kardec. Some extracts of Kardec's books as well as the teachings of the Spirits, namely Emmanuel and Joanna de Angelis, among others, are also quoted for better understanding of spiritist principles. The most important issue of the Spiritist Doctrine is education and I quote from The Spirits' Book:

"Rightly understood, it (education) is the key to our ethical progress. When we can train our ethical nature with the same degree of effectiveness as we do our intellectual one, we will be able to straighten a crooked nature as surely as we straighten a crooked sapling. But training of this kind requires tact, experience, and profound observation. Theoretical knowledge alone will never be enough for a teacher to exercise it successfully... But once we bring the proper skills and care to the development of the ethical nature, we will find that, even though some natures will prove resistant, most will need only to be suitably cultivated in order to yield good fruit."

Life on earth is an educational experience designed by God to benefit the eternal consciousness of each individual. In the process of this education, each person comes gradually to understand and accept responsibility for his or her own activity becoming thereby a participant in God's overarching plan: the movement of all human consciousness toward a state of perfection. "It is only by interacting with each other that you benefit from your many different strengths" - states the Spiritist Doctrine and also "education is the treasure of the soul."

Buber holds that the dialogic attitude is the requisite stance for anyone who would be an educator or therapist. The dialogic attitude is assumed by the teacher or therapist who is voluntarily engaged in furthering the learning of the other individual.

In the process of education encounter is fundamental. We grow by what happens between people. According to Simkin, "as an organism interacts with the environment gestalten are completed, awareness develops, and learning takes place."

From my experience with both schools of thought, the process of therapy is a process of education. Not an education in a conventional sense, by which a person - the teacher - transmits knowledge to the other - the pupil - but someone who helps the patient to be aware and to take care of his own thoughts and feelings and also be responsible for his acts, and thus reaches self-support. "Therapy is a preparation for life and not its substitute", as pointed out by Yontef.

By working with awareness, contact, the paradoxical theory of change, and the here-and-now, for instance, we can say that Gestalt therapy may be considered as an educational way of helping patients to find out their path in life. As Perls has expressed it: "All I can do is, possibly, to help people to reorganize themselves, to function better, to enjoy life more, to feel - and this is important - to feel more real. What more do you want? Life is not violins and roses."

## DIALOGIC RELATIONSHIP

Quoting Perls, Hefferline and Goodman, Yontef strengthens that “the person (self) is defined in terms of the interrelations between the person and the rest of the field.”

“The first reality is contact between”, says Yontef, and he completes: “We grow by what happens between people, not by looking inward.”

This goes hand-in-hand with the teachings of the Spirits that God has created us to live in society. If we look, for instance, at our gifts of communication, it is evident that social interaction is an essential activity of life. Absolute isolation is contrary to the law of nature.” They stress that “human beings look for communal life as if by instinct... because they are destined to evolve through helping and sharing with each other.” (The Spirits’ Book) Jacobs and Hycner explain:

“Contact is the means by which we feed ourselves, by which we understand, orient, and meet our needs. But cast in the light of I-Thou, contact also stands at the ontic center of the psychological and spiritual development unique to our human existence. “The aim of human life is evolution. It is only by interacting with each other that you benefit from your many different strengths...” (The Spirits’ Book)

Lynne Jacobs teaches: “Contact is responsible for realizing the full potential of the person.” Hycner and Jacobs emphasize that “our uniqueness emerges in relation to others”, and that “the dialogic relationship is a model of contacting lived out to its highest potential. Contact and awareness are not merely the process that expresses the dynamic relation between stasis and growth: they are themselves spiraling developmental process, always emerging and transcending.”

Buber stressed over and over again that only through dialogical relation can the person come to know the uniquely human aspects of his or her self, and that genuine dialogue between persons is most central for realizing the full potential of the person (Friedman).

And Yontef states: “Dialogue is what emerges when you and I come together in an authentically contactful manner. Dialogue is not you plus I, but rather emergent from the interaction. Dialogue is something that may happen when both parties make themselves present. Dialogue can happen only if the outcome is not controlled or determined by either party.” And he concludes: “Living is meeting. Our sense of our self is relational.”

The quote - dialogues - unquote between Kardec and the spirit-instructors reveal a wisdom that challenges many of our preconceived notions about our spiritual reality, as well as about the causes and purposes of many things and events that are seemingly inexplicable. The notes (remarks) made by Allan Kardec represent what has emerged from the contact between the Codifier of the Spiritist Doctrine and the Spirit Instructors. On a more personal level, the questions and answers help us to a better understanding of the higher-self within each of us; they show us, too, how our past can be reflected in our present successes and struggles and how we can unlock the gates to a brighter, better future. Dialogic relationship with the Spiritual World was the way Allan Kardec found to discover the Spirits’ teachings.

## EXPERIENCE

Essential to establishing a genuine dialogical stance is for the therapist, as much as humanly possible, to suspend, or “bracket, her or his suppositions” to place interfering experiences and understandings in abeyance.

Hycner teaches:

“When doing therapy in a phenomenological frame, careful attention is paid to the patient’s actual experience. This is based on the phenomenological “reduction” or “epoche” of Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology. “Phenomenon” here is understood as the person’s unique experience and meanings. Phenomenological field theory locates the experience of the perceiver in time and space – here and now. This means that the process of being aware takes place in the here and now, although the object of the awareness may be there or then. Each person is considered as separate and equally having the right to be as they are, to have their own experience”.

“Experience counts most” - explained Polster and Polster. And they continue: “present experience itself produces symbols which are valid statements and which extend the limits of the therapeutic interaction.”

Naranjo explains that: “Without experience even attitude becomes second-hand dogmas. Just as a dead organism cannot reproduce itself, mere dead attitudes cannot engender any corresponding attitude in another being.” (By the term “attitude” Naranjo says that “it is adequate in that it denotes a global response, it suggests the area of life philosophy and behavioral aspects.) And he continues: “Experience, on the other hand, is self duplication. It creates the external forms that convey its pulsating heart.” To the Gestalt therapist, true experience is therapeutic or corrective by itself. A wakeful moment – a moment of contact with reality – is one where our daydream phantoms may be seen for that they are.”

For Gestalt therapy, the genuine Gestalt therapist has learnt to accept other people and their experience while maintaining his own experience. Each person is separate and has the right to be as they are, to have their own experience.

As to experience, the Spiritist Doctrine explains that “whatever the individual experience, however, reaching perfection requires that every spirit undergo the entire range of experiences particular to existence in a material form. The effectiveness of the purification process, in fact, resides in accumulating these experiences. Spiritual refinement results from man’s soul experience, life after life, over and over again. Our present awareness extends over an extended period of the past. The area of experience varies from man to man. Each man only exists in the place for which he has fitted himself. Each person is a builder of his or her destiny. Each soul has his or her particular characteristics and the way of understanding the other is by respecting the particular rank or achievement accomplished by each one.”

To explain that better, for the spiritist principles, each person inherits from himself, from his many past experiences and from that acquires new resources, corrects previous mistakes, and adds conquests. Each one manifests his or her particular way of interpreting the inner and the external worlds. This is the reason why the phenomenological attitude towards others is welcome and accepted in the Spiritism as well. No judgment, no values, but also respect and love. “Love

thy neighbor” said Jesus. (Let us not forget that, according to Spiritism, Jesus is the God-given model of ethical perfection toward which we should all strive. He is the most perfect example that God has offered to us as a guide and model.)

## **AWARENESS**

Awareness and dialogue are the two primary therapeutic tools in Gestalt therapy. Awareness is a form of experience that may be loosely defined as being in touch with one’s own existence, with what is.

As taught by Yontef:

“In Gestalt therapy the only goal is awareness. Awareness includes knowing the environment, responsibility for choices, self-knowledge, and self-acceptance and the ability to contact.”

And he continues:

“Awareness is a form of experiencing. It is the process of being in vigilant contact with the most important events in the individual-environment field with full sensorimotor, emotional, cognitive and energetic support. Effective awareness is grounded in and energized by the dominant present need of the organism. It involves not only self-knowledge, but a direct knowing of the current situation and how the self is in that situation. By becoming aware, one becomes able to choose and/or organize own’s existence in a meaningful manner.”

According to the Spiritist Doctrine, awareness opens up the floodgates of intelligence and feelings for the natural acceptance of the successive and inevitable experiences that promote the being. Joanna de Angelis, Spirit, adds: “Awareness is the inner judge in charge of establishing the safe coordinates for life.”

Let us read Yontef again:

“Awareness is accompanied by owning, that is, the process of knowing one’s control over, choice of, and responsibility for one’s own behaviour or feelings. Without this, the person may be vigilant to experience and life space, but not to what power he or she has and does not have. Awareness is cognitive, sensory and affective. The person who verbally acknowledges his situation but does not really see it, know it, react to it and feel in response to it is not in full contact. The person who is aware knows what he does, how he does it, that he has alternatives and that he chooses to be as he is.”

According to Polster & Polster, “healing and growth through the restoration of awareness are an expression of the transcendental possibilities of human existence. Awareness of the obvious, the awareness continuum, is a tool that a person can deliberately use to channel his spontaneous drive for health.”

Yontef reminds us that “Perls is explicit in regarding people as capable of self support, and not fragile or needing protection from inner or outer reality.”

The Spiritist Doctrine states that “the wisdom of God is shown in the freedom of choice given to

every spirit, since everyone has to earn advancement.” As mentioned before, we are heirs of our own destiny.

The Spirit Joanna de Angelis, when explaining awareness says that the nature of awareness is not an intellectual nor a mechanical brain activity. Due to the fact that it comes from the evolutionary experiences, awareness may be seen as a strength that leads the person in his or her actions, thoughts and feelings. The momentum of awareness, that is, the instant in which we can decide assertively, using the balance parameter, is considered the highest point where and when the creature reaches the condition of human being. Awareness is the capacity of establishing parameters between the good and the evil. That, of course, helps the person to make options, follow his self regulation and develop hidden possibilities. Such dormant faculties that lay within the person are the presence of God in every person, awaiting for the right moment to grow and flourish.

The lucid conquest of awareness opens up spaces to the understanding of the Laws that rule life and enables the soul to better reflect its individual education and as consequence of the society in which it belongs.

The Spirits’ Book teaches clearly that the spirits prove their enlightenment when their actions conform to the law of God and by their understanding of the spiritual life. Behaviour is a result of the individual level each one reached in the process of developing awareness. Awareness is fully attained when the being grows in his or her psychological process of evolution. This growth is the result of the awareness continuum that benefits self-knowledge and gives courage to the person to face himself or herself, and work hard against limitations and childish behaviour. Naranjo points out that:

“Awareness, like the well-known hen of the golden eggs, is the ultimate transpersonal treasure...” and adds: “Gestalt therapy is, to a considered extent ... a way to awareness through expression - not only verbal but motor-gestural, imaginal and, broadly speaking, artistic.” Naranjo also explains that “the practice of awareness in relationships may be characterized, like Gestalt therapy in general, as a bringing of the transpersonal into the interpersonal.”

## **THE PARADOXAL THEORY OF CHANGE**

Extending on Perls’ view, Naranjo explains that our awareness is constricted because we have not accepted our suffering, and thus the therapeutic process necessarily involves (like in the spiritual traditions...) an element of austerity.”

The Gestalt therapy theory of change deals with awareness (including owning, choice, and responsibility) and contact brings natural and spontaneous change. “With awareness self-acceptance, and the right to exist as is, the organism can grow. The more one tries to stay the same, the more the person changes in relation to the changing environment” - says Yontef. Beisser, quoted by Yontef, advanced the theory that “changes do not happen through a coercive attempt by the individual or by another person to change him”, but do happen if the person puts in the time and effort to be “what he is”, “to be fully in his current position”. Let us remember what Perls said: “To die and to be reborn is not easy.” According to Naranjo, “It is this eminently transpersonal process that he (Perls) saw as the gist of therapy and even life.”

Marcel Proust, the French writer, once said:

“To heal suffering one must experience it to the depth of his soul.”

As to the attaining of perfection - ethical, psychological, and intellectual - the Spiritist Doctrine also deals with the acceptance of pain and frustration.

The Spirit Emmanuel teaches:

“To enhance one’s own life, man must exhaust many emotions, trim down the rough edges of his personality, readjust concepts and systematically fight against illusion.” And he concludes: “No one reaches the multiple areas of experience without passports acquired in the sufferings of pain.”

The spirit instructors teach us to endure our trials with patience and resignation: “Education is a sacrificial work in time and space in which all of us are committed. According to the Divine Wisdom, by accepting our pain and suffering, we are able to receive the highest and most beautiful lessons to enlighten our souls.”

## **SELF-REGULATION**

The trust in organismic self-regulation is one of the basic points in Gestalt therapy. “In organismic self-regulation, choosing and learning happen holistically, with a natural integration of mind and body, thought and feeling, spontaneity and deliberateness.” We value organismic self-regulation and experimentation and these values guide the Gestalt therapist interventions. Naranjo pointed out: self-regulation is a basic trust in the rightness of our own nature.”

In the spiritist point of view the same occurs: we value the divine nature of the being and respect the differences.

Jacobs likewise explains it: “The Gestalt psychology principle of Prägnanz states that the field will form itself into the best gestalt that global conditions will allow. So, too, Gestalt therapists believe that people have an innate drive to health. This propensity is found in nature and people are part of nature.”

Self-regulation refers to being responsible for oneself. According to Jacobs and Hycner, “the process of organismic self-regulation, as reflected in contacting and awareness, is itself involved in a development of the person’s uniquely human becoming. It is not enough to say that contact and awareness serve our biological and emotional needs. There appears to be a kind of ontological imperative, an urge towards growth, so that these processes operate at increasingly finer levels of complexity and abstraction from biology.”

For the Spiritist Doctrine, we are gods. By the word “God”, we also understand perfection or better, we have the divine within of ourselves. We are capable of coping with difficulties, and growing continuously. Jesus said: “The kingdom of God is within you”, and The Spirits’ Book teaches: “All spirits strive towards perfection, and God furnishes them with the means of acquiring it through the trials of life in the body. But Divine justice also requires spirits to achieve, in their new existences, the things they had not been able to do or complete in previous

trials.” (The Spiritism believes in reincarnation. To reach perfection on Earth, a soul completes the work of purification by undergoing the trial of a new life. Just one life is not enough for acquiring emotional, cognitive, and energetic support.)

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

In Gestalt therapy the patient is an active and responsible participant who learns to experiment and observe so as to be able to discover and realize his own goals through his own efforts. The responsibility for the patient’s behavior, change in behaviour and the work to achieve such change is left to the patient. For Gestalt therapy the person is responsible (response-able), that is, he or she is the primary agent in determining his or her own behaviour. People are responsible for what they choose to do. They are responsible for moral choices. Gestalt therapy helps patients discover what is moral according to their own choice and values. “A person who shows creative interaction takes responsibility for the ecological balance between self and surroundings,” teaches Yontef.

Naranjo also stresses:

“Responsibility is not a must, but an unavoidable fact: we are the responsible doers of whatever we do. Our only alternative is to acknowledge such responsibility or deny it. All that Gestalt therapy is saying is that by accepting the truth (which amounts to a non-undoing rather than a doing) we are better off: awareness cures.”

Joanna de Angelis, the Spirit, in dealing with the issue responsibility explains:

“Responsibility is the clear manifestation of the conquest of awareness. Responsibility does not benefit self-victimization nor the moral weakness. The responsible person is able to discern between what to accomplish and how to accomplish.”

## **HOLISM**

Gestalt therapy is holistic and views the biopsychosocial field, including the organism and environment, as important. The human organism is potentially free of internal control hierarchies. Gestalt therapy actively uses psychological, sociological, cognitive and motivational variables and no relevant dimension is excluded in the basic theory.

Perls claims that “only a comprehensive psychotherapy can be integrative and only a therapist with a comprehensive view can spot and tackle core difficulties.”

The Spiritist Doctrine states that we have to consider man in his totality. He is his body and his soul; he is his thoughts and his feelings; he is his attitudes and how he contacts his inner and external worlds. Each aspect is linked to the other. This is the way one can improve oneself and earn enlightenment.

For Gestalt therapy, living is a progression of needs, met and unmet, achieving homeostatic balance and going on to the next moment and new need. The same occurs with the Spiritism in dealing with the problems of being.

## **THE HERE-AND-NOW**

“Gestalt therapy focuses on what is being done, thought and felt at the moment rather than on what was, might be, could be, or should be. In a phenomenological therapy “now” starts with the present awareness of the patient... Prior events may be the object of present awareness, but the awareness process (e.g. remembering) is now. Now one can contact the world around us, or now one can contact memories and expectations” – teach the Gestalt therapists.

The present is an ever-moving transition between the past and the future. In Gestalt therapy we orient more to the now than in any other form of psychotherapy. “Experiences of the past few minutes, days, years or decades - says Yontef - that are of present importance are dealt with.” Allan Kardec asked the spirit instructors in Question 392 of The Spirit’s Book: “Why can’t the incarnate spirit remember its past?” And they answered: “As human beings you cannot, and may not, know everything. God, being wise, has determined so. Without the veil that hides certain things from you, you would be dazzled, as if you had suddenly passed from darkness to light. Through the forgetfulness of the past, you are more fully your essential self.”

In the following Question (393), Allan Kardec asked for a profound comment: “How can we be held responsible for our deeds, and rid ourselves of our faults, if we do not remember them? ...”

The answer was the following: “With each new life a spirit becomes more discerning and more capable of distinguishing between good and bad. What would happen to free choice, however, if the spirit remembered all its past?”

In the Spiritist Doctrine, although the past refers to a broader concept, that is, of past lives lived by the soul, the point of view is the same as for Gestalt therapy: the present includes the past and the future. If we look through our present life - our tendencies, tastes, virtues - we are able to understand the experiences lived by the spirit and how it metabolised them.

Commenting on the subject in The Spirits’ Book, Allan Kardec taught: “While we don’t have an exact memory of what we have been and done in the past, we do have, during our present incarnate life, an intuition of our previous lives. This intuition takes the form both of instinctive tendencies and conscience. The intuition of the past gives rise to an intent to avoid committing the same mistakes again...”

I quote Perls: “Don’t decide, don’t hurry, just attend to the tip of your brush and let it go where it wants.” And Naranjo stresses: “Gestalt therapy is unique among the major schools of psychotherapy because of the extent to which this is a system built upon intuitive understanding rather than theory.”

Once I attended a workshop given by Gary Yontef. He told the participants about an experience with one of his patients. The person was anxious to know his “advice” on what decision he should take in a particular situation. At that moment, Yontef wisely told him “to stay with it” and followed with: “Do what your heart tells you to do.” This is a pointed example of understanding self-regulation and believing in intuition as well.

## **CARE**

Another important issue for the Existential Philosophy and for the Spiritist Doctrine as well



refers to care. Martin Heidegger's Being and Time, by analysing the Dasein, being-in-the-world, devoted himself to the study of care. He says that the being is a being of care (the word care is translated from the German Sorge). We live our lives taking care of ourselves and taking care of the other-selves. In the process of therapy the same occurs. We can't heal the patient, but we can take care of him. He is responsible for his own life. As Gestalt therapists we are merely a beacon to point out or intervene in order to maintain the patient's awareness continuum, but we can't decide for him. The responsibility is left to the patient.

One of the most expressive teachings of Jesus refers to care. His Parable of the Good Samaritan explains this: on his way from Jerusalem to Jericho, a good man assisted a man who was stripped naked and wounded by the thieves, leaving him half dead. The steps taken by the Samaritan were: to listen to the wounded man (dialogic relationship), give him the material aid (oil and wine), take care of him by placing him on his own beast and taking him to an inn." His recommendations to the host were: "take care of him and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee."

Naranjo explains that "not only does Gestalt therapy share with Buddhism (and other spiritual paths) its prescription of virtuous relationship and awareness cultivation, the awareness of pain and death included in particular..."

## **MORAL**

Perls, as quoted by Yontef, said once:

"In Gestalt therapy morality is based on organismic need". Each person must contact the elements in the environment, and decide for himself which is nourishing and to be assimilated, and which is toxic and to be avoided. The practice in Gestalt is increasing the patient's awareness of antecedents, organismic reaction, consequences of behaviour, and so forth."

Naranjo stresses:

"Good" and "evil" are suspicious to the Gestalt therapist, who is used to perceiving most of human advice as subtle manipulation, discussion on moral issues as self-justification and rationalization of needs, statements of worth or worthlessness as over-generalizations and as projections of personal experience onto the environment in people's attempt to avoid responsibility for their feelings and reactions."

In spite of such views on the good and bad, Gestalt therapy abounds in injunctions toward life and experience. These are moral injunctions in the sense that they refer to the pursuit of the good life. Even though the notion of morality in common parlance has come to indicate a concern about living up to standards extrinsic to man, it is possible that all great issues in morality have once originated in a humanistic ethic where good and evil were not divorced from man's condition."

The Spiritist Doctrine teaches us about three kinds of moral:

a) The individual moral, that one the being develops through the past and present lives and refers to the particular way he or she interprets his or her inner world and the events of the environment. It refers to his thoughts, feelings and behaviour. It is related to self-knowledge and

awareness.

In our present life, we can guarantee our own ethical progress and our ability to resist our lower tendencies by knowing ourselves. The spirits teach us to ask ourselves what we have done and what our aims were in doing it. Self knowledge is the key to the individual transformation. Enright teaches that people can deal adequately with their own life problems if they know what they are and can bring all their abilities into action to solve them. "Once in good touch with their real concerns and their real environment, they are on their own."

b) The second moral is the social one and refers to the way one contacts the environment. The social moral is based on Jesus' words: "Love thy neighbour as thy self..." This is the moral of the dialogic contact, the "virtuous relationship," according to Naranjo. The Spiritist Doctrine points out: "Without charity there is no salvation."

c) Finally, the third moral is the religious moral, which concerns the relationship between man and God, and is expressed by prayer and faith in the Supreme Wisdom and Love. As we can see, the three morals - the individual, the social and the religious - deal with the holistic view of the man, as well as awareness, pain and frustration. All of them include responsibility, experience, care, contact, and dialogue. Let us remember Yontef holding that "spirituality is relational."

## **ALLAN KARDEC'S BIOGRAPHY**

The Spiritist Doctrine was codified by Allan Kardec. He was born in Lyon, France, on 3rd October, 1804 into a family who for many generations had been either lawyers or magistrates. When he was 10 years of age he was sent to the Institute of Pestalozzi at Yverdon in Switzerland, where he soon acquired the habit of investigation and learnt the art of free thinking. In 1822 at the age of eighteen, Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail, his real name, returned to France. A year later he took up residence in Paris and in 1824 published his first book entitled: A Theoretical and Practical Arithmetic Course. He had an instinct for methodology and this was only the beginning, for he was to publish many other books on varying subjects including A Classical Grammar of the French Language (1829). Some of these were adopted by the French University and the sale of these books rendered him a sufficient income to live on, while he continued to give free lessons to school children. He spoke several languages: Italian and Spanish, has a profound knowledge of German, English and Dutch and some knowledge of Latin, Greek and Gallic.

He opened his first school in 1825: "First Grade School" (École de Premier Degré), for superior teaching and the following year he opened "The Rivail Technical Institute" whose teaching was based on that of Pestalozzi.

He married Amélie Gabrielle Boudet on 6th February 1832. She was nine years his senior, a writer, teacher of fine arts, poetess and artist. She played an important part in all her husband's activities.

Between 1848 and 1850 an explosion of spirit phenomena occurred in America and even more strongly in Europe. In the last book of the Codification Posthumous Works published by Amélie, Kardec had written: "It was in 1854 that I heard about the 'table-turning' for the first time."

His friend Mr. Fortier brought him the initial news on these extraordinary happenings: “The tables also talk!” Kardec reply to this was: “I will only believe when I see it and when it can be proved to me that a table has a brain which can think, nerves to feel with and can also become somnambulic. Until then, allow me to see nothing more than fantasy in these stories!”

After various encounters with Mr. Fortier, in 1855 he became a frequent visitor at the seances held in the house of a certain Mr. Baudin. It was in fact there that he began his studies and research. His wife always accompanied him to all the meetings and eventually became his secretary, upholding him in every aspect of his work.

He adopted the nom de plume of ALLAN KARDEC at the suggestion of Spirit, so that the works of the Codification should not be confused with his own works.

The first book of the Codification (The Spirits’ Book) was published in 1857. This same year he also began meetings in his own home. A year later he founded “The Parisienne Society for Spiritual Studies.”

In France, with Allan Kardec, although the Doctrine started with the spirit phenomena, the attention was directed to spirits’ teachings and to their philosophical and religious aspects and to moral consequences as well.

The few remaining years of his life were dedicated to his work, the completion of the Codification, and to lecturing on Spiritism and its philosophy.

On March 31st, 1869, having just finished drawing up the constitution and rules of a new society that he planned to form, his busy life was suddenly brought to an end.

The Codification of the Spiritist Doctrine comprises the following books:

The Spirits’ Book

The Mediums’ Book

The Gospel According to Spiritism

What is Spiritism

Genesis

Heaven and Hell

Posthumous Works

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