





"Three Jubilee Lectures." By J. L. Peebles, M. D. Dr. Peebles is a trenchant and instructive writer and lecturer, and these three addresses are on the occasion of and pertinent to the Jubilee of Modern Spiritualism, a well worthy of being preserved in this tasty form, in print. Price, 35 cents. For sale at this office.



## SPIRITUALISM A FORCE

### To Condemn Is Easier Than to Aid.

INCONSISTENT CRITICS OF THE DUTIES AND POSSIBILITIES OF SPIRITUALISTS—ORGANIZATION NEEDS—OPPOSERS' FALLACIES.

To suggest organized effort by the Spiritualists, has been for years to cause the anguishes of morbid phobias and rabid haters of any union that tends toward power, or might cause financial necessities to be raised and viciously displayed in opposition. What they are not fitted for, others must be debarred from. "My Spiritualism" should be the ruling Spiritualism! has too long held the sway of making a united cause in Spiritualism an impossibility. A great variety of incompetent would-be leaders have prevented competency from assuming effect. With desultory struggles and floundering in the mire of morbid phobias, organizations, disgust has resulted in an opinion of impossibility. Because of failure to properly organize, the Spiritualist has often concluded it cannot be done. What is the half-century record of modern Spiritualists?

At first the evidence of intelligent and positive communion with the spirits of earth's denizens who had gone through death's gateway, opened over the world and caused devoted application to discover its truth. It was of vital importance to every mind that had been groping in the dark to discover some way that led to the light of life beyond the gloomy realm of material environment.

Materialism had been dominating the mind and disorganizing systems of thought based upon theory or faith. Human reason saw nothing inconsistent in the desire for positive truth.

The inherent impulse to worship had built systems of ceremonialism based upon fear of an infinite creator and judge, and reason taught its inconsistency. People became strongly desirous of some positive knowledge. Thus the "raps" or rapping philosophy by its scientific proof of life's continuity. The first investigators of occult phenomena were philosophical and scientific; hence the early meetings held by Spiritualists were for the discussion of problems relative to earth and spirit life. The first associations of Spiritualists—indeed until about 1880—there was no thought of placing phenomena upon the lecture platform. There was no development of mediumship for descriptive exercise until these later years. Then came a complication of platform interests—both for the society and the medium or speaker. People who had a curiosity to "see something" rather than to "know something" flocked to the balls, and meetings became profitable to the speculator in mediumship. The decadence of mental interest ensued with the evolution of physical forces to gratify sense faculties—the philosophy gave way to phenomena; and we are yet in the physical era of Spiritualism rather than the mental, moral and spiritual. This condition has caused for all of the confusion in organizing the cause of Spiritualism; and yet an association of Spiritualists should represent the composite condition of Spiritualism. But it is not the entire compound of conflicting interests that they who are laboring to construct an organized body can hope to harmonize. Because there are so many varied kinds of Spiritualists and interests in Spiritualism, the necessity for an associated body is accelerated. You state it correctly when you say, Mr. Editor, "That which flows from spirit communion constitutes in all respects the basic structure of Spiritualism." Hold to the statement that it is "spirit communion" we are seeking, more than only "spirit phenomena."

Spirit life has been proven by the "phenomena" of varied character. The real value of all spirit phenomena is to obtain spirit communion. When connected of the fact that spirits can communicate by the psychic forces of our organisms, and of the earth, and thus establish an intellectual rapport, the physical phases (or non-intellectual) grows to be of lesser importance. We no longer are bothered by the facts of low-orders, mentally and morally, in spirit life. We are seeking the more developed; and surely the wisest are not barred where the ignorant and lustre are able to go.

We do not organize our cities and states upon the plans of the lower types of humanity—but we seek the wisdom of the learned to unfold safe plans, and thus hold the inferior in subjection. Governments find laws necessary for the evil-doer more than the lover and devotee of right. To organize Spiritualists there must be a domination of the higher types of spiritual men and women who shall hold in subjection the instincts of low humanity to delude God's best gifts.

To organize all the heterogeneous mass of scientists, philosophers, occultists, and faithists into a combination with Spiritualists working for "spirit communion," and spiritual and mental growth, is indeed an impossibility—and no such proposition has ever been made. The time has come to organize the Spiritualists upon a spiritual basis! There has been no effort to organize Spiritualism! That must ever be beyond our ability to organize—because it represents all truth, all fact, all life, and is organized into Nature's wonderful aggregation. These must be ever differentiated and organized only in their needs and relationships. Apply this and you will see the need to organize some one kind of Spiritualism! Which shall it be? Which one of the varied interests and conditions specified shall it be? For my organization I choose the Spiritualists whose "true foundation is simply spirit communion." Have I the right to choose? If so, no one should place a barrier to my choice; nor should I try to prevent another or all others from their choice. Thus the only claims of the National Association for existence are those for which it is organized. You cannot condemn it for not taking in all that is labeled Spiritualism, when by its specific forces, Spiritualism has been organized to develop. You can only condemn it should it not represent a logical or important kind of Spiritualism.

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A scientific proof of continuity in existence is better than all the faiths in immortality. A religion that fails to prove its teachings or creed is worthless beside the one that is based only upon proof. The world has been cursed by false teachings relative to "life beyond the grave." The specific value of Spiritualism is that it proves the exact status of every person in spirit life—and points the way to progress and utility. Which are the highest possible means of salvation. The Spiritualists, in their organization and the Spiritualists can create a church. Because churches have failed in much, it stands not that a church may not succeed in much. If a church is not the highest type of human institutions for spiritual truth and human progress, yet a spiritual church, or even a business organization to develop greater spiritual possibility, is a step in advance.

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The teachings of these messages relate to the soul-life, to all that has or can constitute "religion." Religion is not (or should not be) a matter of merchandise, as are the material adjuncts of religious institutions. The sermon, the lecture, the message, the spirit manifestation, should be sold—but the enjoyment and utilization thereof is a question of personal capacity beyond the power of purchase. That which is entirely for earthly comfort or aliment is merchantable and can be controlled by organization for only worldly purposes. Surely, if earth-blessings can be derived from organization (for business purposes alone) we can equally derive soul-blessing by organizing to develop "religion" in its true and natural relation. To such a need do Spiritualists ask for an organization. It cannot be treated as we use that which relates only to our physical plane of life.

As institutions of learning, music or art, are organized for a specific purpose, so can spiritual truth be made the objective around which can be rallied the allegiance of humanity. We need the institution that spiritually educates, as sadly (perhaps more so) as we do the schools for propagation of worldly science and genius.

A scientific proof of continuity in existence is better than all the faiths in immortality. A religion that fails to prove its teachings or creed is worthless beside the one that is based only upon proof. The world has been cursed by false teachings relative to "life beyond the grave." The specific value of Spiritualism is that it proves the exact status of every person in spirit life—and points the way to progress and utility. Which are the highest possible means of salvation. The Spiritualists, in their organization and the Spiritualists can create a church. Because churches have failed in much, it stands not that a church may not succeed in much. If a church is not the highest type of human institutions for spiritual truth and human progress, yet a spiritual church, or even a business organization to develop greater spiritual possibility, is a step in advance.

We need to make advance! None will likely deny that. We cannot advance by only destroying; but must supplant by constructing. We want old systems and superstitions to fade away, and humanity be enlightened in true ways of life. Yet we feel afraid of results as "the burnt child dreads the fire," hence omit all relation thereto instead of making a defense that will protect us whilst we force utility therefrom.

Instead of decrying good endeavor, we should encourage, at least encourage. One step in advance, and the way for others to follow. Each philosopher more liberal than his predecessor, causes all the rest to advance; and each church or sect that moves away from the rubbish of the past or tills the fallow ground of fact, creates the impulse to lead all to grander attainments.

We need the Spiritualist organization to lead the hosts of darkened minds to the light of truth. If we must needs differentiate and organized only in their needs and relationships. Apply this and you will see the need to organize some one kind of Spiritualism! Which shall it be? Which one of the varied interests and conditions specified shall it be? For my organization I choose the Spiritualists whose "true foundation is simply spirit communion." Have I the right to choose? If so, no one should place a barrier to my choice; nor should I try to prevent another or all others from their choice. Thus the only claims of the National Association for existence are those for which it is organized. You cannot condemn it for not taking in all that is labeled Spiritualism, when by its specific forces, Spiritualism has been organized to develop. You can only condemn it should it not represent a logical or important kind of Spiritualism.

The question then is has the National Association any cardinal principle of value? Do not charge that it has barnacles or deficiencies—for these can be removed or remedied. If there is any form of Spiritualism that will bless humanity by an organization to develop it, then it is worthy of our most devoted effort. We need not cumber it with all that is unwholesome, ignorant and impractical—for intelligence can surely discover the true, beautiful and good. In this respect, I hold that the National Association has no right to notice fraud or any defilements in the name of Spiritualism—for fraud will die its own death and die its own death, and the master hand to discover its potencies, hence the N. S. A. should give the greatest possible aid and effort to discover the true. And we sadly need an organization to unfold the greater possibilities of spirit communion, and to assist each earnest soul who is struggling for this great comforter, helper and educator.

What have contradictory spirits to do with the value of an organization of mortals, whose alms are to discover the conditions of spirit life, and benefit by the exchange thereof? They are parts of the whole from whom we have the truth—and the truth they tell of individualism is of the supreme importance. It is not the spirits we have organized into a body, but the Spiritualists of earth.

The N. S. A. is a human machine created by earth persons for their benefit, and not to dictate to the spirit world, nor in any way create laws therefor. What right of knowledge has any one to say that "contradictions" by spirits should not exist, and can be easily settled here as we can discover here the difference between sweet and sour? The comparison is not logical. You had best prove that earth people can settle their "contradictions" on many simple propositions, as readily. But humanity sadly fails to do so.

Has there ever been a claim that the "philosophy or science" of Spiritualism is based upon anything else than "the laws or methods used by spirits to converse with mortals"? If so I have been a superficial observer. Spiritual philosophy and science are each founded only upon spirit law—and obedience to law can be the only method by which spirits converse with mortals. No act or force or form can be outside of law. To be above law is an impossibility.

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# The Progressive Thinker.

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## Our Symposium.

In pursuance of its customary attitude of an awakener of thought and study, **The Progressive Thinker** presents this week what may not inaptly be termed a symposium, in which many independent thinkers, each from his individual standpoint, give free expression to his views.

In this way one may arrive at a fair consensus of opinion as it exists among thinking minds among Spiritualists, concerning the National Association, and its work.

As a whole this symposium presents a combination of thoughts and views that may be studied with interest and real profit by our hosts of readers, and more especially by the constituents and official leaders of the organization.

As was to be expected, there is wide diversity of views, ranging from antagonism to all organization to intense partisanship in favor of organization and of the N. S. A. in special.

It will be seen that the matter of a creed or declaration of principles—which to many earnest minds appear as twins, or two names signifying virtually the same thing—excites much attention. There is evidently in the minds of very many Spiritualists a deep-seated antagonism toward anything that may even seem to point to any hampering of fullest freedom of the human mind to think for itself, and reach and hold its own independent, unfettered conclusions upon all matters of philosophy and belief, without let or hindrance from clique, creed, or any outside power or influence whatever.

Spiritualists who have observed the stifling, unprogressive, mind-stunting influence of creeds, articles of faith, statements of doctrine, etc., upon the churches of Christendom, are exceedingly jealous, and rightly so, that nothing of the kind shall ever curse Spiritualism or Spiritualists.

Heresy trials, expulsions and excommunications, because of progression in thought beyond some certain old man-established landmarks of our forefathers, shall never mark the history of Spiritualism, as it has the churches—to their shame, disgrace and weakness in an age of greater enlightenment and freer thought than was known in the former days.

Very much of the open, and latent, opposition or indifference toward the N. S. A. is embodied in this thought and feeling just mentioned, and the N. S. A. may wisely note the fact and give it due weight.

Spiritualists as a body will be free—and it will not be wise nor prudent to forget, overlook or ignore the fact.

It may be said by those who are closely allied to the National Organization that many of those whose views are freely given in this symposium, are not in any way connected with its work. Very true, and that is one reason why their opinions are especially valuable.

The "Man About Town," who is a close, careful and critical observer, generally discerns the status of affairs in a clear and lucid manner, and his views are suggestive and valuable. All connected with this symposium are Spiritualists, and are especially interested in promoting the grand truths of our philosophy, and their opinion should have weight with the delegates who come stacked and primed to promote at all hazards the interests of the N. S. A.

It will also be noticed that many are in favor of organization who are radically opposed to a declaration of principles or creed. The principle involved in this consensus of opinion is indicative that Spiritualism is still larger and greater than the N. S. A., which is only part of "one stupendous whole," whose growth is a fixed fact irrespective of the divergence of opinion of those who go to make up its expansive membership.

"Poems of Progress." By Lizzie Doten. In this volume, this peerless poet of Spiritualism gives in her varied moods, "from gray to red, from lively to serene," is a book to be treasured and richly enjoyed by all who love genuine poetry, and especially by Spiritualists. The volume is tastefully printed and bound. Price, \$1.

## A Logical Bedlam.

Whoever was sufficiently interested in the Dreyfus court martial proceedings to read the details from day to day of the trial, with the conflicting opinions of witnesses, inconsistently called evidence, which lately convulsed France and shocked the whole world with the absurdity of the prosecution, must have reached the conclusion of a press correspondent writing from the scene of action, who claimed, "The whole trial was a logical bedlam."

The expression was a happy one, and well illustrated in few words the confusion, fraud and villainy which characterized the entire prosecution.

As the expression rang on the ear it seemed the same words best conveyed to the mind the idea and whole history of that system absurdly called religion which has dominated Western civilization, for, for those many centuries. Not only are the inconsistent teachings of the system "a logical bedlam," but its history, as told by its own defenders, also resembles the incoherence of the mad house. There is neither harmony nor consistency in dogma, or account of its origin.

The quidnuncs, they who know it all, and abuse others for not adopting their deceptive view of things, make a jumbled presentation of distorted facts when they attempt to vindicate the popular faith.

Where else, other than in a lunatic asylum, could have originated the idea of a child being born of a mortal mother, and she a virgin, whose child was sired by God himself, and yet was that identical God? And where else could be born the idea that men have power to crucify a God, and that God, though dead and entombed, yet with the flesh and blood of mortality upon him, rose and floated away in the clouds to heaven—a place just above the earth, the bounds of vision—where he regained his Father, and, though a son, was that Almighty Father himself? Confusion horribly confounded.

Then the doctrine of original sin, fall of man, total depravity, and redemption by the sacrifice of a God on a cross, by which the victim of the fall may escape punishment and the miseries of an endless burning, conditioned he believes this junior God is truth, the eternal Father, and that that Father in the guise of a Son died at the hands of men, for man's redemption. Certainly, it is the "logic of bedlam!"

Every page of Christian history down to the beginning of the 15th century, compared with reliable history, is equally confusing and suggestive of having a birth-place in an insane asylum, where madmen's brains and shattered intellects preside.

## Does Vegetable Life Feel and Think?

It has been maintained in these columns on several occasions that the evidence strongly indicates that vegetable life is only slightly removed from animal life, save that the former has not the power of locomotion, but is tied to the soil from whence it springs. It seems to think, feel and suffer, probably in a less degree than organized flesh, but that these sensations are common to it can scarcely be questioned.

Many is the time all have noticed the vine with its tendrils reaching out to some near-by object; while the young tree whose stem is yet elastic, is bent out of its perpendicular to gain freer access to sun and air than it could in the shadow of a tree. The attention of the London Mail was lately directed to the subject, which was followed by this statement copied from its columns:

"A well-known botanist propounds the question, 'Have plants the power of reason or any way of determining what is going on around them?' The question, though he admits it appears rather fantastic, is prompted by observations he made a few weeks ago.

"His daughter was tending a morning glory vine at home, when a delicate tendril reached out toward a nail in the casing. The botanist proceeds: 'She marked the position of the tendril with a pencil on the wood and then shifted the nail about an inch lower. Next day the little feeder had deflected itself very noticeably and was again heading for the nail.'

"The marking and shifting were repeated four or five times, always with the same result, and finally one considered the tendril, which had grown considerably, managed to reach the coveted support, and we found it coiled tightly around it."

"Other little experiments of a similar nature are put forward in support of the botanist's theory."

It was urged by a learned writer many years ago, that the probabilities are vegetable life will share with man the pleasures of an immortal existence; that the material body of all life has its counterpart in spirit realm. Whichever suggestion is true or not it is a pleasure to contemplate the continued life as a more beautiful form of this mundane world stripped of its alloy and its shadows.

So the World Wags.

"There is not one man in ten who believes in orthodox religion, and yet there is not one in ten who dares say he doesn't"—Lawrence (Kans.) Journal.

The way to change this order of things is for the loyal brave to fearlessly express an honest opinion. Doing so others less brave will step to his side. And others will do so as the right strengthens, until a column is formed that will be impregnable to the assaults of Superstition.

Twenty or more years ago Col. Ingersoll said in substance, in a public address, in our hearing:

"I do not advise anyone engaged in business, nor any person whose employment may be hazarded by an open expression of his skepticism, to ruin himself, or impoverish his family, by making a public profession of his unbelief. I do propose, however, to be a voice for persons so situated, and I will try and express myself so forcibly that I will not be misunderstood."

And he did, and his fame is world-wide in consequence. His cautionary advice is not as much needed now as then in the great commercial marts. In the rural districts superstition is still rampant, and care may be still necessary to avoid the avowed or insinuated opinion if not agreeing with the church. Religiousists are frequently more violent in the personal abuse of Spiritualists than of even Atheists.

This, probably for the same reason. They are so bitter on the Jews; from whom they claim to have inherited their faith, and on which faith they want us to believe they engrained the teachings of Jesus.

Do the duty which lies nearest thee.—Goethe.

Health and cheerfulness make beauty.—Cervantes.

# THE SEASON'S LESSON

## Stray Thoughts of Autumn.

Autumn with its winds and its approaching winter casts a gloom over many, but to me its sighing, sweeping winds, its cold and darkening clouds, presents a season of beauty, for by it we come into a change that is as much needed as the warm and gentle sunshine which has but so recently preceded it.

I love the change, although winter in its bleakness, its moultings of snow in surpassing whiteness 'proves oftentimes an obstacle to many, yet in the spotless grandeur of the gleaming snow-banks lies a field of usefulness.

Mother Nature while cloaked in the purity of her white dress sleeps beneath its weight, recuperating her forces, in readiness to burst forth anew in the early springtime, benefiting man as he toils here below.

"The seasons come and go, and all are filled with grandeur. I love the warm and radiant sunshine, when the birds carol so sweetly 'mid the branches of the trees and the murmuring brooks as they babble along o'er pebbly beds unobscured. I love to view the green and sloping hillsides, to my soul it lends an inspiration of love."

Yet as winter approaches, taking on her gray dress of autumn, the winds sighing and moaning through the trees, how I love it; the sound is wonderful to me, it brings me in touch with those higher forces beyond, uniting my soul in its energies to the arisen ones. It seems in the passing winds angels are speaking. Methinks I can hear them calling:

"Come up higher, ye children of earth; open the door of your souls to divine wisdom and beauty than the mere material dross of earth. Lifting your thoughts above its failures, meeting the response of those sweet-voiced messengers who would gladly lift you out of sorrow and despond bringing you into truth and harmony."

"Though your bark oftentimes seems frail, swept by the cold winds of earth's stormy waters, look up and see beyond the clouds hanging o'er you, the light that is piercing through to wait the love and wisdom that will bring you out of the material dross of earth. Lifting your thoughts above its failures, meeting the response of those sweet-voiced messengers who would gladly lift you out of sorrow and despond bringing you into truth and harmony."

"If organized into a cult, or sect, will it not be likely to encounter opposition from other cults or sects, which may be jealous of its success?"

It is clear that Emanuel Swedenborg, one of the greatest and noblest men of all time, never contemplated the formation of a church organization, based on the new light which he gave to the world. May it not be doubted whether the formation of the Swedenborgian or New Church has not, by thus inviting the opposition and rivalry of all other denominations, retarded rather than advanced the sphere of the wondrous intelligence which, through the mediumship of the Swedish seer, came to mankind?

Will not the glorious knowledge brought by modern Spiritualism be more likely to float into the open portals of our culture, and penetrate the power to the altitude of the pulpits; and insensibly breathe over the congregations; than if they came under the sanction of an organized sect, apparently somewhat hostile to, or rival of, the sects they thus invade? If the organ of combativeness is, at all aroused, the doors of the mind are apt to close against the admission of any proposition which has caused the conflict.

Then there is the difficulty of a creed. It is not likely that any Spiritual organization would be content to base itself on the two simple fundamentals of spirit survival, and spirit return. When you go beyond these you are immediately in an open sea; and your vessels are, sailing in every direction, and liable to come in frequent collision.

Nothing is better known among Spiritualists than that men go over to the spirit side just as they are, when the breath leaves the body. It is also known that they retain their beliefs, their creeds, sometimes for many years. When they return, they tell what they know. The spheres above them are as effectually shut to them, as they are to us yet in the flesh. There is, therefore, great contrariness of opinion brought to the surface by the spirit survival, and the natural for each one to think that he has received the truth; and he wants that embodied in a creed. I am loyal to my own communications, believing them to be of the highest; and am consequently brought into collision, on many points, with other Spiritualists, who think as well of their messages as I do of mine. There are many Spiritualists with whom I should not agree: on the question of the personality of Deity; the divinity of Christ; the authenticity of the Scriptures; the re-incarnation of the soul; the efficacy of prayer; the value of faith; and other points of doctrine, which I have received, through mediumship, from spirits purporting to be, and believed by me to be, of the upper spheres. I acknowledge the same right of belief in those who entertain the same reliance upon their messages that I do on mine. Then how are we to agree upon any creed that goes much beyond the two propositions above mentioned? These two are what make each of us Spiritualists. Beyond that we are free.

Discord or disagreement in our own ranks is a great barrier to the progress of our cause. I often hesitate to send Spiritual papers to those whom I would convince, because, in some of their columns, are communications which are contrary to my own, and which, as I think, would be likely to counteract the good which other columns might produce. And these doctrines, appearing in Spiritualistic papers, seem thereby to have the sanction of Spiritualists; and the reader says, "If that is your belief, I'll none of it."

A Spiritual organization may be apt to employ some agents who entertain—shall I say—"cranky" notions; cranky, from my standpoint; perhaps I am cranky to them—or beliefs which shock the orthodox faith—and all orthodoxes are not bad—and who put forth their individual views in their advocacy; and thus seem to speak under the authority of the organization; trampling on the sacred tenets of their brethren or elders; repelling the really devout, and linking Spiritualism to manifest error. I need not specify more particularly. Perhaps you are "tanked" enough to guess what I mean.

It was a favorable remark of Sir Roger de Coverly that "much might be said on both sides." That observation seems especially applicable to the case in hand. I do not pretend to decide which is the strongest. Able pens are marshalled in opposition. May the spirits advocate the right course, and cause the plan to be pursued which shall best spread amongst all denominations, and all peoples, the certain knowledge of the future life; and the conditions here, which shall ensure endless happiness hereafter.

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# BY WAY OF SUGGESTION

## Does It Apply to Spiritual Things?

SPIRITUALISM LIKE AN ATMOSPHERE PENETRATING EVERYWHERE.

What I shall write on the subject of forming Spiritualists into a sect will be rather in the way of suggestion, and not in the line of argument, or of contention. I love the knowledge of Spiritual truth, among the children of men; to make its phenomena known; to lift the thoughts of the people from the absorption of material affairs up to a higher realm; to a life which shall bear the fruit of everlasting happiness, is a consummation of highest import. Will this mighty truth, which has been dawning on the earth for the last half century, and must ere long effulge in the full glory of noon, be likely to spread more rapidly under the guidance of a separate and independent organization; or, if left to itself, to diffuse, like an atmosphere, penetrating everywhere over the globe? The question is momentous, and likely to engage, on either side, enthusiastic partisans.

All must admit the immense power of organized combination. This is seen where many men combine their means and efforts; and by unity of endeavor and power accomplish results beyond the reach of all the members in their individual capacity.

This is illustrated on a much larger scale where giant corporations unite their energies in a common enterprise—forming trusts, as they are called—and overwhelming individual opposition by their gigantic power.

But, if it may be asked, is not this advantage of assembled forces confined to material operations; to worldly affairs? Does it apply to spiritual things?

Will not a great spiritual truth push its way the better if left free to go whither it will?

If organized into a cult, or sect, will it not be likely to encounter opposition from other cults or sects, which may be jealous of its success?"

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# FOR EXCLUSION.

## Let Those Who Do Not Accept Stay Outside.

SHOULD A NATIONAL SPIRITUALIST ASSOCIATION NECESSARILY INCLUDE ALL CLASSES OF PERSONS WHO CLAIM TO BE SPIRITUALISTS?

A recent very elaborate article in **The Progressive Thinker** upon the inconsistency, or the impracticability of attempting to maintain a National organization with so many adverse and conflicting elements in it, as are claimed by those who identify themselves as Spiritualists, leads me to raise the question: "Should a National Spiritualist Association necessarily include all classes of persons who claim to be Spiritualists?"

If the present National Organization has formulated a constitution, adopted principles and by-laws consistent therewith, there seems no good reason why it should not, at its own option, exclude any and every person whose opinions and teachings do not conform to the constitution it has adopted. Why, because others claiming to be Spiritualists, although teaching and practicing adverse theories, should they become members of a National Organization?

The fact that not all Protestant denominations are orthodox, does not prevent those that are heterodox from organization, nor subject them to be classed with those who maintain adverse views. If only one-half the Spiritualists in America decide to organize themselves into a spiritual body, and call that a National Organization, why may they not legitimately do so?

Is there any reason why they should deprive themselves and the world, of the many benefits and blessings of organization, because the other half think differently?

All experience and observation show conclusively the necessity of organization for the successful work in all departments of civil life, and religious teaching. The fact that differences in opinion often exist in the same party or organization does not necessarily disband or destroy the organization, and why should it in a National Spiritualist Organization?

In the article above referred to, the writer evidently assumes that in a sect, embracing so many adverse views, composed of the grandest and most valuable teachings imaginable, intermingled with a vast amount of rubbish, the emanations of minds yet steeped in the densest ignorance, cannot so fraternize and combine as to become members of one and the same organization.

In this he is evidently right, and if the present National Organization or any other social or religious body of moral reformers attempts to combine and compromise error with truth, vice with virtue, evil with good, they will evidently fail.

But if organization is necessary for success, is there any reason why organization should not be maintained? At this late date it is hardly worth while to contend against organization.

It is only a question of what can be consistently embraced in the articles of confederation. This being granted, the second important query in the article referred to, is settled, viz.:

"Determine the fact as to whether the National Association, under all the circumstances, has a right to exist, or should exist, or at all hazards must exist, and if so, what are its diversified claims upon its members?"

If the National Organization is legitimately formed, and is working under the provisions of its constitution in accordance with the laws of the land, I recognize no reason why it should not exist.

If, in the formation of its constitution, its makers have erred, and have embraced in its provisions, unwise and incongruous matter, that has rendered the association nugatory or useless, it should be amended, and made consistent with the object of the organization, as set forth in its constitution.

This may be very easily done, in accordance with the provisions of its present constitution.

There is a diversity of opinion among the friends of the National Association, as to what its legitimate object should be. Some insisting that only business should be considered and transacted by its board of trustees. I think an attempt to limit its duties to business alone would lead to complications that would result in inharmonious, with no corresponding benefits. In fact, there is but little that is referred to the National, or that comes under its jurisdiction, that does not partake largely of business. It would be difficult to draw the line satisfactorily, if an attempt was made to make a division between what is business, and what properly belongs to the ethical, social and moral. Among the more important duties dependent upon a National Organization, is that of raising a revenue to prosecute its missionary labors, and to furnish institutions of learning, whereby those desiring an education in theories taught in Spiritualism, may secure that rare opportunity.

The valuable experience in the six years since the present association was organized has developed its usefulness and opened fields of labor that never can be cultivated except through a National Organization.

The legislation that is frequently necessary, in determining the rights of all organizations, especially if new, or if they are to involve property, can only be secured by National organization and cooperation.

Those that have been careful observers of the moral and religious effect that has resulted upon society, and the world, since the National Spiritualist Organization was formed have often observed pleasant and beneficial results from its influence upon the religious world. And while the organization has lacked experience, and the necessary means to accomplish great results, there is abundant evidence to show that greater good has resulted to the cause of Spiritualism, in the Christian world, since the formation of the National Organization, than from any other cause.

And there is no evidence to prove that any damaging results have occurred to the cause of Spiritualism.

I have so often expressed my views upon organization, and especially of its value to national organization, it will not be expected from me an elaborate argument at this time or place.

In the Banner of Light of September 9 I treated at some length, upon the same subject, National Organization. Those who are interested in this subject (and all Spiritualists should be), may see in that article some additional reasons (not necessarily to repeat here) why a national organization is necessary for the well being, the reputation, and the promotion of the great cause of Spiritualism.

A venerable brother and worthy contemporary, J. S. Loveland, contends there never has been a spiritual organization, much less a national one, according to his definition of the term. I trust he and all those who can

# GENERAL SURVEY.

## Miscellaneous Notes of the Work and Workers.

Chas. J. Barnes, the well-known trumpet and physical medium, is located at 11 Bishop Court, and will hold circles at above address Wednesday and Friday evenings at 8 o'clock.

In the case of the state board of health vs. Dr. Wakefield, prosecuted some time ago for practicing as a magnetic healer without being licensed, at Gibson, Ill., the jury returned a verdict of not guilty.

Lyman C. Howe spoke in Titusville, Pa., Sunday, October 1. He is due at the Temple of Reason, near Tonnsville, Pa., Sunday, and the 16th also.

D. M. King, president of the National Spiritualist and Religious Association, of Ohio, Maple Dell Camp, is now doing some lecturing in Michigan. He reports that he finds no societies for some cause or other badly crippled, or gone down. It has been reported that Michigan was the banner state for Spiritualism; if so what condition can other states be in? Societies that want a visit from this old pioneer worker, should address him at once at Vicksburg or Sturgis, Mich.

Mrs. C. McFarlin writes: "I am again located in Milwaukee, where I am engaged to lecture for the Unity Society of Spiritualists for the coming three months. The first meeting was held Sunday evening, October 1, in the Severance Hall on Milwaukee street. This hall is a clean, commodious hall with a pleasant influence. I understand it has long been the centre for the Liberal Club meetings which no doubt has left a psychic power for free thought there, making it an easy place for a medium to speak. I would like to make arrangements while here for mid-week lectures or parlor seances with Spiritualists or societies accessible to Milwaukee. I am also open for engagements with societies for the remainder of the lecture season, and solicit correspondence for lectures, funerals or weddings. Those wishing my services can address Mrs. Catherine McFarlin, 605 Jackson street, Milwaukee Wisconsin."

Moses Whisler, of Delta, Iowa, writes: "There is at present an opportunity for Spiritualists on line with us from Kansas City to arrange for lectures at stated periods by that noted 'Moses Hull of the West,' Rev. T. W. Woodrow. His experience as a Universalist minister from 1872 down to seven years ago, at which time he stepped on the Spiritualist rostrum, has eminently fitted him to deal gently with the erring ones, and yet at the same time undermine old superstitions with a sledge-hammer telling effect. Keokuk county has three convenient places to reach. Let us wake up a correspondence on this line, and if possible set a trial date for experience as to whether a regular circuit may be established. His address is T. W. Woodrow, 424 Portsmouth Building, Kansas City, Kansas."

G. W. Kircher writes from Louisville, Ky.: "One work in our new temple is progressing nicely. Mrs. Maggie Vestel, of Dayton, Ohio, is with us this month, and last Sunday evening, her first Sunday with us, there was no standing room left. Mrs. Vestel's tests from the trumpet in the light seem to please our people better than anything else. Our lecturer, Brother George B. Heinsohn, has returned after a pleasant visit to Cincinnati. Our society is very fortunate in bringing out two good mediums in Mrs. Mann and Wilbur Jones. All Spiritualists are urged to give their work she has done in the past ten years for our cause, and has been justly gifted for her good work. We are in good shape for our work this fall as our local material is as good as can be found, but the people want a change occasionally. Any mediums coming this way we would be pleased to correspond with them."

Mrs. Hamilton Gill will give a reception Tuesday evening, October 10, at her residence, 11 Bishop Court. Friends desiring to meet her brother, Chas. J. Barnes are cordially invited to attend. Mrs. Gill, assisted by Mr. Barnes, the well-known test medium, will give spirit messages at their hall 617 Vesel Madison street, every Sunday afternoon and evening, until further notice.

T. W. Woodrow, formerly a prominent Universalist minister writes: "I had the pleasure of delivering at the Central Iowa Spiritualist Association, which met at Marshalltown, Iowa, recently, four lectures. I went from there to White Pigeon, Iowa, and delivered eight discourses to increasing audiences. Spiritualism is the cream of all religions and worked out into good character is the fruitful butter, and when this is spread on the wholesome bread of the doctrine, the people will eat at our table with a relish. I will be situated for the future to respond to calls to serve in any capacity of minister of the gospel and to admonish the people to 'add to their faith knowledge,' and those desiring my services, will please remember my address, 421 Portsmouth Building, Kansas City, Kansas."

Lora Holton writes from 6111 South Peoria street, Chicago: "I contemplate a trip through Michigan during the month of November, and would like to speak for the Spiritualists of that state, and give tests. Parties desiring me to give them a call, upon very reasonable terms, please address me as soon as possible, 6111 South Peoria street, Chicago."

Effie M. Post writes: "The Helping Hand Society (Ladies Auxiliary to the National Spiritualist Society) of Flint, Mich., held its annual election of officers, on Tuesday, October 3. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year: President, Mrs. Effie Post; vice-president, Mrs. Ivah Ingalls; secretary, Mrs. Clara Ormsbee; treasurer, Mrs. Valeria Keyport. This society has passed its seventh anniversary, and the secretary



## KINDLY CRITICISM.

### The Coming Convention and Its Portent.

#### MANY GRADES OF SPIRITISM AND SPIRITUALISM.

In the coming work of the N. S. A. at Chicago we as Spiritualists have a great deal to consider; there are many questions of importance, but first of all a large body of our brethren must be awakened from the somnolence of this unfortunate epoch.

There are many kinds of spiritism on earth; one variety annihilationist with idolatry and with but a small knowledge of spirit return is called Hinduism, another inoculated with a commonplace worship of the spirits of their ancestors is found with the Chinese, there is spiritism and a license to lust among the Mohammedans, and so on ad infinitum, ad nauseam. The thinking world has also long since discovered that there are grades of Spiritism and Spiritualism amongst Spiritualists, and quite naturally being a little particular as to how they are classified, thousands are loitering around our front door yard waiting for this coming N. S. A. and its definition of what Spiritualism really is, to open the way for them to join our forces.

To-day, if Spiritualists are any criterion of what Spiritualism means, believe in a God and deny to the same breath that there is a Divine Factor in the universe. We teach charity and cast aspersions on our neighbors; preach harmony, and squabble in the most undignified manner; ask skeptics to give conditions, and never dream that we also need to furnish better conditions, namely, mental workers. Some of us claim that there is no spiritualism in the universe than human souls; forgetting that as our bodies are composed of nature's elements, so must we, the soul or spirit, be individualized from the potentialities of the universal laboratory.

Some of our people never think beyond the one fact of spirit return, and would be utterly at sea in a philosophical discussion of anything excepting that one fact; others still are satisfied with the usual spiritualism of the mediums before graduating to perfection, and yet another class avers that they don't want to incarnate another time and don't propose to have their religion run on that basis. Others cannot see a gem in the old Bible worth stooping to pick up; and we have those who worship Truth, that God-given potency, whether in the Bible, Koran, Talmud, or in the Spiritualism of to-day. Still others find delight in talking of the Spiritualism of the scriptural days, and many demand that all the good taught in the days of the past, whether by Hindu, Chinese, Greek, Jew or Christian, be duly credited, and that all the evil of those days also shall be most emphatically pointed out.

We have also a large percentage of Spiritualists who are out to their neighbors, "Give the fellow fellow" and who are not satisfied to listen to a thoroughly charitable teacher. This class has so predominated that it is a glaring fact, a horrible certainty, that the stench of the fakism at our doors threatens to overpower us. Our own doorways should have been cleansed with hands in our pockets falling at the Christian churches just across the way; and now that we find we have no beautiful clean spiritual temple to invite our neighbors into, let us define, not a new Spiritualism, but

#### THE HIGHER SPIRITUALISM, and finish the building of our temple that we may invite in our friends and neighbors from their vile church conditions.

We have one faction—insular Spiritualists—who deny the prevalence of fraud and license. All a morally careless medium worker has to do is to shiver a few times, grimace and jabber a mixed tongue, for them to feel positive that they have heard from the seventh heaven. The character of the communication seems to have nothing to do with it. I have often heard them say, but thoughtless people remark after having attended a modern slight-of-hand performance, "Don't you think the spirits helped that man?" Oh, said commentary on our condition. What next will spring up from the unthinking mind?

We have Spiritualists who expect—expect ten to fifty full-form materializations from the mediumship of one instrument twice to fifteen times per week for an unlimited number of years, and these dear souls are absolutely horrified when they notice a personation or transfiguration. Others go to a trumpet circle in full hopes of hearing from a dulcify daughter through a greasy tin horn which has not been washed or scoured since it was first blown; and some expect the father who never drank or smoked to manifest in a circle composed of tobacco chewers and moderate drinkers. Still others expect their spirit friends to communicate through every mental medium in the field, though they, the seekers, do not care a fig for the media outside of the proof they bring, forgetting that it is only in an atmosphere of loving kindness that mediumship of any phase can thrive; and that loving kindness may oftentimes mean giving the instrument bread and butter, clothing and shelter, freedom from the storms of life and safety for to-morrow. In short, we talk of the need of charity and harmony, and give too little of it; and we ask the skeptic and investigator to give conditions which we as a body of people do not furnish.

With all of these elements is organization a good thing? Should it be continued, and above all how can it best be continued?

Or must this great truth and series of truths which is the forerunner of coming human justice, which brings absolute knowledge of the continuity of life, be left to languish by the wayside, cast into the hands of the self-seeker, for the future welfare is the burning question of the hour? Not only is it a question which affects to-day, but to-morrow; future generations yet unborn will

**EITHER REJOICE OR SUFFER** as a consequence of the work done by Spiritualists at this convention. Children of the coming centuries will either be better, more truthful, freed from bigotry and the fear of death or be as imperfect as we of this nineteenth century, accordingly as Spiritualists work for the higher Spiritualism at this convention of truth-seekers, or loiter in the valleys of lassitude.

Spiritualism depends upon physical and mental, for its proof, and as the instructions given through media is built its philosophy. The explanations of life itself and of mediumistic phenomena constitute its science, and the ethical teachings are its religion.

As the foundation of this temple and the pillars which support the structure are mediumistic phenomena, the very first thought should be to take good care of the little band of sensitives whose lives of sear and burn speak loudly of their devotion to duty. The second need

is to disseminate our truths. The third is to start in motion the great system of machinery necessary for propaganda. First of all comes our declaration of principles, which is merely a statement of who we are, what we are, where we are going and the reason of our obtruding ourselves upon public notice, and if we want the world's sympathy we must be very careful not to outrage the common sense of the world; for all races, in all climes, all peoples in all lands feel that there is a Divine Essence somewhere which is far superior to mortality, which is omnipresent though perhaps oftentimes latent, and which is omniscient though many days inert. This sense of a Supreme Presence is too common to be ignored, dear Spiritualist friends, and demands our attention, for without though reveling in the joy of knowing there is a life beyond, will make

#### BETTER CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT EARTH COMMONWEALTH

If we reverently look up and out, and within also, to that Vastness Something which is and has its Existence in every leaflet and grain of sand, in each throb of old ocean, and every ray of light from distant suns, which vibrates within all human souls and radiates from every angel messenger who endeavors to lead us upward.

If our declaration of principles be reverent, and do not savor too much of hydrocephalus, we may expect within the next ten years to hear such men as Minot Savage declare themselves Spiritualists; if we clean our own doorways we may look for the greatest growth in avowed numbers which the world has ever seen.

Societies should have in connection with their usual church services, psychic research stations. We need new buildings untainted by past ecclesiastical murderings of the truth, unstained by public dances, and unpolished by well-filled cuspidors, for all our services. In short,

#### WE NEED OUR OWN SPIRITUALIST CHURCHES.

which in the second story shall give rooms for physical seances. It has been taught for over fifty years that mediums and spirits need a perfectly clean room to obtain good manifestations for the general public, where the walls should be decorated with beautiful pictures, and flowers and blooming plants should be placed in the room, and to bring harmony and ventilation should be sufficient to make germ poisoning at least improbable; the medium should freely offer test conditions; the doorkeeper be advised not to admit people until they had bathed and also cleansed their bodies of whisky, tobacco, evil thoughts and passions; and then, with no possibility of deception or for medium snatching or the throwing of paraphernalia, in this beautiful shrine of truth grand results might be expected. The ancient Egyptians and Assyrians exacted just these conditions before seeking communion with the higher spirits. Why should not we?

Organization is as I have affirmed a necessity for the continuance of the phenomena; and organization under some name is an assured fact for the future, whether that name be Spiritualism, Primitive Christianity, or Naturalism, largely depends upon whether we are broad enough at this coming convention to look at all sides of the question and brave enough to work for the whole truth instead of only a part of it.

I personally have many times been falsely accused of being opposed to phenomena, though the facts are exactly the opposite, as my many friends among the physical and message media well know. I meet more phenomenal mediums than lecturers quite naturally, and have therefore a larger acquaintance in that direction. I am a phenomenal medium myself and I prize my gift of tongues, prophecy, my test and message-giving as much as my trance lecturing and improvisations. Through my own experience I aver that Spiritualists require too much spirituality of their honest seers, and too little in the other sense of the careless ones; the teachers are poorly remunerated. Mediumship through lack of understanding is scarcely bearable to any person not naturally inclined to martyrdom. A large percentage of the sensitives are next door to privation; the development of media gifts means years of physical and mental suffering and self-denial; exercise of any phase means the most tedious and unendurable on account of it, and we can count it as a fact that but few investigators or Spiritualists would consent to retain test, physical or intellectual mediumship if they once had it developed. It is not so entirely the necessary psychosis, which must be a birthright, but it is the

#### ABILITY TO BEAR THE BURDEN OF SENSITIVENESS

which must be inherited and cannot be commanded.

Mediumship is a dangerous gift; like any other great development, the possessor never stands still morally, but either progresses or retrogrades.

I want to see pretended mediumship eliminated; we are too young to be so loaded down with fraud and chicanery; how coarse the Euclid Hall and Spirit Circle G. are, and how much to be learned from the honest ones; the coming N. S. A. Convention should be to decent people, how disgusting to persons of civilized sensibilities, how the family of the grand agnostic must feel, how the masses who have not yet learned the difference between Spiritualism and farce must smile; and will our N. S. A. longer leave our honest workers to be associated in the public mind with such wretched mediums? Shall our devoted instruments for truth be catalogued before the world with such ruff-ruff? I say no, no; a thousand times no! All that is manly and womanly in us must wake up at these two calls: First, to protect and encourage media and mediumship; second, to prevent swindlers from using the name by which sensitives are designated, a title which should stand un sullied before the world and denote purity and progress.

Our N. S. A. has been sadly imperfect, but nevertheless that same National has cleared the space and gotten ready to do something better; let us aid it by something practical. The delegates are largely to blame for its inefficiency; but first of all it was a mistake to start it without the combined consultation of psychic workers. Laymen never made a mistake, and spoke to the fact of media enterprise; direct inspiration from higher realms has made Spiritualism a potency, and

#### DIRECT INSPIRATION FROM THE SAME SOURCE ALONE

will be wise enough to make it practical and possible in organization. Let a body of representative mediums be appointed at the next convention to draft a declaration of principles and the thing will be accomplished, and I do not mean occasional mediums, but instead those who have devoted their lives to the propaganda.

Organization is not necessary, say some, yet how quickly the same persons would organize to protect their homes and drive an enemy from the country. Then why not, dear brother and sister

Spiritualist, organize to protect the truth that it may be kept unspotted by the money-graber and the pretender, and also to demand and keep our rights of religious liberty?

We never yet as a people have aided financially the poor, the suffering or the unfortunate, except in a few isolated cases where Ladies' Aids have proven themselves worthy of the name. Then we do not believe in charity; rather would we have industrial justice for all men. In the meantime it looks as though we intended to let those who are suffering from present social conditions starve or suffer at our door without extending a hand to assist them!

Spiritualism teaches the need of organization, the need of charity toward all, the necessity for mediums being provided for the need for better conditions of birth for future generations, the crying necessity for cleanliness and purity in the seance-room, as well as the mere fact of spirit return. To keep up our organization requires a statement of principles, designatory names for workers which cannot be stolen by irresponsible parties, church buildings set aside for the special use of Spiritualists, newspapers and journals well patronized, libraries of liberal books, houses for our indigent and worthy workers, missionaries to reach new localities, schools for the instruction of gifted sensitives, and above all and with it all, an extended hand to all who suffer, all who are ill and poverty-stricken, all who mourn, and all who long to progress. May our N. S. A. take its next step, be the prayer which we should all send heavenward.

CARRIE F. WEATHERFORD.

## MISSIONARY WORK.

### Make Special Effort In This Way.

#### FORM CIRCUITS AND SEND OUT SPEAKERS AND MEDIUMS.

It is thought by some people that Spiritualists cannot be organized on account of the diversity of opinion and the different understanding of the facts that Spiritualism presents.

It is true that we cannot organize the different and conflicting opinions and beliefs of Spiritualists, nor can we organize Spiritualism, because Spiritualism was organized before we mortals ever heard of it. It is a fact in nature, or contains many natural facts. But we can organize Spiritualists for business purposes and on business principles, "for business only," and by so doing we will greatly facilitate conditions and hasten the time when all shall know of the beautiful reality of our "heaven revealed" philosophy.

We should organize for a definite purpose, and that purpose should be clearly stated that the world may know what we stand for. The telephone companies are organized to build lines and to manufacture instruments through which the messages are transmitted. Let us organize to educate and develop our instruments through which the spirit messages are given.

The telegraph companies organize to secure the right of way, to clear the way through forests, to protect our over hills and mountains and to span oceans to make conditions to transmit messages from one country to another, from one people to another.

Let us organize to secure the right of way, to clear away the forest of superstition, to drain the swamps of ignorance, to span the oceans of doubt and agnosticism, and to open the way for communication between all the people of this world and those of the spirit land.

Let us organize, leaving out all dogmatism, confining no one to another's belief, but that we may give to each a better opportunity to learn, and the freedom to express whatever may seem to him to be true.

Let us stand by the organization we now have. Some valuable lessons have been learned. Let us profit thereby. Wherever anything is wrong we may make it right. Let us get to work and organize a society in every town and village throughout the land wherever it is possible to do so.

Let us organize state associations, its officers to be elected from delegates sent to the state conventions by local societies, the state conventions to send delegates to the National Convention. There to elect officers from the number to look after the interests of the Spiritualists as a whole, including the local societies in states where there are as yet no state organizations.

The N. S. A. has proved itself capable of organizing state associations. It can certainly help the Spiritualists of any state to organize, as it helped New York, Texas, and other states. Where state associations are at work, let them institute mass meetings for the purpose of disseminating our gospel and raising funds to carry on the missionary work.

There are many hundreds, if not thousands of places where local societies can be organized. We need missionaries, not a half dozen, but many. I know of many towns now where societies can be organized, and my little circuit of observation in this direction is very small, comparatively. I think the most important thing to be done is to get the N. S. A. Convention should be to appoint missionaries, and to provide funds to send them forth to organize local societies in states where there are no state organizations. Where a state is organized it should be encouraged to send out missionaries.

I know from personal experience that the Spiritualists are ready to organize. All that is needed is the organization, and the funds to carry on the work. Wherever we have effected a local organization public work has commenced, though no public work may have been done in that place before, and where there is a good working society Spiritualism is respected. Spiritualism has no standing where it has no organization.

I would be willing to put myself under bond to organize and charter fifty societies in the next year in either Pennsylvania, Ohio or Michigan, and there are probably twenty other states in the Union where the same number or more may be organized and chartered. If this is true we could have twenty state associations, and each one backed by half a hundred local societies.

In a little time, with proper work, these societies would grow strong, other societies would be formed, our cause would receive the attention it well deserves, and the people be freed from doubt and dogma.

We now have sixteen state associations, I believe, and if each one of them would put forth the effort, they could make them average fifty societies each, and more, in one year, and with a little more work they could be made self-sustaining.

The missionary should visit the local societies at regular intervals and thus help to encourage and strengthen them. Circuits should be formed and speakers and mediums put upon them. The enormous expense of railroad travel which our speakers and mediums, or their employers, are now obliged to pay, would be reduced to a minimum.

Christianity has succeeded as an organization, with all of its inconsistencies

and contradictions. Methodism had to organize to protect itself against the ignorant advocates of its doctrines. Everything in the universe is organized. Let us unite and push the work forward to success.

W. SPRAGUE.

## ORGANIZATION.

### The Cause Will Live and Grow Without It.

#### THE N. S. A. HAS NO BUSINESS TO LIMIT, CONTROL OR FASHION THOUGHT TO SUIT ANY PRE-ARRANGED FORMULA.

To the Editor:—Truth cannot be entirely suppressed by organization, but it may be, and often has, in the past, been long delayed in its coming by just that instrumentality, and the truth of spirit communion will form no exception to this statement. There is no need for an organization to tell mankind what to believe and what not to believe. Systems of belief are at best but crystallizations of speculative and dogmatic thought, and whenever an organization is established to propagate and perpetuate such system it is an advertisement to the world that "Here only is the truth to be found, and there is no progression beyond our standards."

An organization is in short a public acknowledgement of the weakness of the truth it represents; it is an instance of arrested development of some half-truth which has found its way into the world but is unable to stand alone and do battle with truths which by their own inherent power win the hearts and minds of men.

Organizations are a stumbling-block in the way of many a timid soul that if accustomed to walk alone would soon work its way to a higher realization of the truths of the natural and the spiritual world.

The lessons of "the starry heavens above us and the moral law within us" must be learned by ourselves. The understanding of nature, law, God, spirit, matter, conscience, duty, love, thought, reason, life—the great world without and within, is for the individual himself to achieve. Who can comprehend for me the problems of Euclid or the operation of the law of gravitation? None, verily. I do not comprehend Nature, I comprehend. Others may give me the benefit of their endeavors, but it is up to me to reach my own goal. Holding of the candle while I do the work.

What, then, has our National Spiritualists' Association to do with the truth of spirit communion? Just this and nothing more—Spread the glad tidings among the nations of the earth by all conceivable legitimate ways and means. But by what means and ways?

Alas, there is the rub. I suggest that everything be done that good sound sense and common sense can dictate. Let our mediums in the free exercise of their gifts; that fraudulent practices by mediums and pseudo mediums be exposed and condemned; that local societies be warned against such persons; that all genuine mediums be assisted in cases of prosecution at law arising out of the prejudice of bigotry; that Spiritualistic literature be disseminated as freely as possible; that every man, woman and child be permitted; that an absolutely free platform be maintained.

But let us all remember that whether the N. S. A. sink or swim, the truth of spirit communion, it shall not perish. Without organization Spiritualism will live and grow. Without mediumship it would die to-morrow. A medium here, another yonder, from the church, from the state, from the nation, from the humble family, from one of wealth and influence, obscure or prominent in society, keeps the flame flickering, burning, blazing around the world, and the N. S. A. is never once thought of.

"There was a man at the well who told me all I ever knew—how wonderful!" "A woman described all my friends who had died years ago, and told me many wonderful things about the past and the present and a spiritual world of nature, law, God, spirit, matter, life and life which makes the world believe in the 'truths of Spiritualism,' and it is because that fountain supplies the waters that feed and satisfy the tenderest sympathies and nature of man that Spiritualism will endure. It is a part of the activities which belong to man as man. It finds its root and cause of being in love and can no more die than love can die, nor can it easily be diverted or perverted from the object of its being.

Wouldst thou, presumptuous as thou art, Or'er our play the tyrant's part, And with the hand compel the heart? Oh, rather, rather, hope to blind The ocean way, the mountain wind; Or fix thy foot upon the ground To stop the planet rolling round.

The N. S. A. can do, has done, and probably will do a great deal to further the interests of the cause by furnishing opportunity for the expression of the best thought of its most enlightened advocates; but it has no business to limit, control, or fashion that thought to suit any pre-arranged, cut and dried formula. Neither can it do so. Any attempt thereto is sure to meet with complete failure. Spiritualists, let us not, perhaps, who bear that name—but Spiritualists who are such by nature as well as in name, are free thinkers in the fullest sense of the word and will brook no interference with their right to judge for themselves of what is true.

Suppose our convention adopts a credo, or simply a "declaration of principles," who is to be bound by it, what difference will it make with anyone, and how will it make a cause of truth? And suppose that the declaration be of the most patent and universally accepted principles, or truths, such as that man is a spirit; that disembodied spirits may and do under proper conditions communicate with the embodied, that right conduct and good intentions, and not belief, determine the spiritual status of the individual here and hereafter, has the world never heard of such propositions before; or will it believe any more certainly that such are the facts now because we say so?

I would not give much for that man or woman's Spiritualism who is made a Spiritualist by somebody's say-so, even if that somebody happened to be so august and respectable a body as the N. S. A.

On the other hand, if we adopt a credo or declaration of principles, we will be catalogued as one more sect in the religious sects of the world—that and nothing more, so far as outsiders are concerned; but amongst us there will be found many a narrow-minded fiddling who will meekly put on the collar, and then because some grand old authority of whose name he is utterly unworthy to touch, does so readily conform to it, will read him out of the ranks of the Spiritualistic earth, out of the Spiritualistic heaven, and into the Spiritualistic hell.

Spiritualism is doing well enough as it is. It is permeating all forms and systems of religions thought. Gradually, but surely it is transforming the materialism of the world into a practical altruistic Spiritualism. The Sad-

duces and Pharisees of modern thought are withdrawing into the caves and crypts of slightest fishes, bats and owls. Not long, and no one worthy the reckoning will be found to deny or question the oneness of the spiritual and earthly life. Men will walk and talk with angels, and angels with men, and the earth-sphere will no longer be considered as the center of the earth, but will be looked upon as the first in the series of bright spiritual and celestial spheres which hold in blessed thrall the glorious and transcendent destiny of one common humanity.

A. M. GRIFFIN.

## SHOULD BUILD ANEW.

### Creeds and National Organizations.

#### EACH SHOULD BE FREE TO THINK HIS OWN THOUGHT—ORGANIZATION SHOULD BEGIN AT THE BOTTOM.

The great difficulty in formulating a credo to express the views of the multitude, is found in the fact that educated men, and indeed, the half-educated, have opinions of their own which have been formed by a long process of reasoning, provided they did not build such creeds on inherited error. Such persons are reluctant to surrender convictions thus formed to the dictation of even a large majority.

The more numerous the subjects involved in a credo the greater must be the concessions to bring all into a harmonious whole. Successful political parties, guided by statesmen, have uniformly narrowed their platforms to very few subjects, sometimes to only one or two, rather than enlarging to embrace the many issues which divide the body corporate. Religious societies originally formulated their creeds so as to embrace few subjects. Belief that Jesus was the son of God, born of a virgin, who came to earth to save mankind from endless woe, was the foundation of all Christian creeds, and all else was but auxiliary. As this creed expanded, so as to make Jesus God himself, co-eternal with the Father, the issues were enlarged, and divisions arose. Instead of one sect there were two. Discord increased as men reasoned, until now it is claimed throughout Christendom there are over one thousand varying sects, and their numbers are continually augmenting. A dozen, a hundred, or a number however small or numerous, may unite and formulate a credo; but the element of discord enters the organization, liable to crop out at any time and produce integration. The liability increases with the addition of each subject embraced in the credo.

When modern Spiritualism first came into being independent thinkers first embraced it. Many churches welcomed it. Each had its own creed, and its own, until every subject in the realm of thought had an advocate in the new faith. To name those various beliefs would require mention of every system of morals and philosophy which has divided the people since man was civilized. Nothing has been too gross to be favored by somebody. The wildest chimeras of disordered brains have found able advocates. Truth, ambition, aspiring genius, and loving fancy have revealed at a mutual board, and asked all to unite in pushing out their favorite measures. The multiplicity of these fungi nearly swamped Spiritualism thirty years ago. It has not yet outgrown them. Had agitation and discussion been limited to matters pertaining to the new faith, and all outlying subjects had been left to other societies, having no common care, discord would have been avoided.

Does not common sense suggest, with such a condition of things, each Spiritualist shall be at liberty to think his own thought on all questions dividing humanity, other than as regards an immortal life and spirit communion, and leave him, his faith and private acts to be settled in other tribunals?

Social organizations are desirable and should be encouraged. They are mighty helps to attain a given end. A dozen, a hundred, a thousand or a million persons laboring in harmony, forgetful of minor issues, and pushing forward a worthy cause, by united effort long continued, can accomplish what at first may seem impossibilities.

True organizations begin at the bottom. They embrace individuals uniting their efforts and spending their energies for a common purpose. Groups first formed; these groups merge in numbers, are merged into societies. These societies, when sufficiently numerous, may unite in a general society, which will be watchful over all. When these general societies, like the primaries, have become numerous, then it is probable it will be well to copy our federal government, and form a national and central organization, with supervision over state societies, as the latter have never been able to govern themselves. As the national government permits the people in their sovereign capacity to locate cities, and organize townships, so when these organizations desire, territorial organizations are authorized.

Should not Spiritual societies imitate this national device, commence at the bottom and within, rather than at the top and from without, a few ambitious individuals, self-appointed, managing to gain control, then formulating rules and creeds to govern the whole? A Republic begins and rests on the people. An Autocracy begins with usurpation, and generally ends in tyranny and oppression.

May be the idea of a National Society, originating with primary or state societies, has been lost sight of, and that that is the reason the one now existing lacks success. If so would it not be well to begin anew, and build from the base upwards, instead of the summit downwards. An inverted pyramid resting on its apex, is liable to tottle and fall at any moment; but properly constructed on a broad foundation it is as enduring as the globe itself.

Whether there should be state societies, intermediary between the primary and the national, may be a question of considerable importance; but by all means let the primary, in their sovereign capacity, formulate subordinate societies, and let representatives of these societies formulate the higher organizations; and let all remember that it is the credo of the church which retarded science, desolated the earth, and deluged it with blood, and that a very good creed had better be brief and exact, quite broad, and not too narrow, rather than so narrow as to exclude a single honest believer.

G. W. BROWN, M. D. Rockford, Ill.

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## THE CRISIS.

### The Tendencies of Organization.

#### LEADERS AND LIVING ISSUES.

To the Editor:—Fifty-one years ago last March, Benjamin Franklin, assisted by a band of wise spirits who were deeply interested in the happiness of humanity, determined to open intelligent communication with the people on earth; they chose the most children from Hydeville, N. Y., for their mediums, and succeeded in communicating by the rapping method. It has been many times truthfully stated that the first rap at Hydeville knocked the bottom out of the entire Christian dispensation; only a glance at the old Christian theories, and dogmas of fifty years ago, proves the truth first claimed for the tiny rap in every particular. Not a vestige is left of the bottomless pit; the endless hell, a visionary heaven somewhere up among the starry worlds, the trinity of Gods, salvation for the violation of infinite law, or the infallible word of God made up of history, aspiration, inspiration, and a strong tincture of human selfishness and deception. Now the question we must soon consider is, which way are we tending, which way drifting (for we seem to be drifting)? There must be a reason why we are not in the front ranks as reformers. Are we honest, are we true, are we worthy, are we frauds, fools or incompetents? These are serious questions, that is why I ask them. I have good reasons for asking them. I recently listened to the Rev. Thomas Gregory, who withdrew from one of the finest Universalist churches in this city last June. Why? Because he is determined to be free, free to preach the truth without limitation or restraint. He is one of the ablest preachers in the city. He gets out of the bonds, he shakes off the packs from his back, and our Spiritual pastors put them on. Is there one intelligent Spiritualist in the N. S. A. that does not know that the \$15,000 home and the \$15,000 in bank will prove a curse? If so, he is unfit for his position.

I am unable to see my own way clear to endorse any movement that can be manipulated to limit or restrain anybody.

Neither Theodore J. Mayer's generous offer, nor the additional fifteen thousand dollars in bank to the credit of the N. S. A. are what level-headed Spiritualists demand, or ask; we do not want to be anchored to a home and fifteen thousand dollars, housed or placed upon the dependent or invalid list. We want leaders and an object that commands us; the present spiritual routine does not satisfy; we want men and women who are not afraid of living issues, popular or unpopular; we want no more political, medical, Christian or Spiritual monopoly. Those are live issues. We want leaders at the front who have strength to stand alone, stand by their convictions, with courage enough to assist those who are fighting the great battles for liberty, justice and equality. We want leaders who promise to do the fact of spirit return just as they demonstrate geology, and astronomy. They can do so without doubt; they will settle that question.

We do not need missionaries any more than do the heathen, or the geologist. Spirit life and communion are natural scientific truths. All that is now left for Spiritualists to do is to better the condition of humanity here and now; uplift them so they can see and be blessed by the truth. We do not need any special prayers, mummerly or mystery, but good, solid everyday work.

The fraud cry, whether just or unjust, will settle itself just as soon as our leaders set a good example. Example is a winning card.

As I have previously written for the readers of "The Progressive Thinker" "The Foundations" for the last decade by some of our leaders have been towards the adoption of old worn-out church forms and methods, for what purpose if not for position, and the money there is in it? Who will answer this query?

The extreme effort for State and National organization is not necessary; we have so long been taught to believe that we must make some external parade and show in order to satisfy what our conscience says we ought to do, that we come to make ourselves believe we can live and thrive by proxy. Societies tax and at their best are expensive; only the most simple and inexpensive should be tolerated by reformers, depending upon internal work and growth, more than upon the external.

In no true sense can Spiritualists be regarded as the spiritualists of the last meeting in Chicago. I think it is time to write, that not one Spiritualist in a thousand will be represented.

I am more than pleased to know that the great mass of Spiritualists cannot be coerced or frightened into a surrender of their independence, by joining any society. Skepticism and independence have always been the friends of humanity.

If we will attend to this world, make it bright and beautiful, all will be well. The score of national organizations would be insufficient to enlist even a majority of Spiritualists; organization always signifies conservatism, order, limitations, and restrictions, and we all know the first expression of every organization is in the line of limitations and restrictions; somebody must bow, and some must be exalted in order to have order and success. We are not yet ripe enough to be thus manipulated by anyone.

The coming convention has before it a glorious opportunity; let us all as Spiritualists do our best to make it a practical working business convention; we can give the meeting our best thoughts, our good wishes. We can make it social and cheerful if we so socialistic.

M. E. CONGER.

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DR. E. J. WORST, 133 Main St., Ashland, Ohio.

## CO-OPERATION

### To Strengthen, Spiritually, Mentally, Financially.

#### MANY MISUNDERSTANDINGS TO BE RIGHTED AND VEXED QUESTIONS TO BE SETTLED.

To the thoughtfully minded man or woman in the ranks of Spiritualism the seventh annual convention of the N. S. A., to convene in Chicago, Ill., the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th of October, is to be the turning point of that august body; the question "It is or is not to be?" must adjust itself. Those who have the interest of that Association's welfare at heart see that there is much work to be done, many misunderstandings righted and vexed questions settled.

The present value placed upon science, philosophy and religion of Spiritualism adumbrates but faintly what may be its position in the world's religion of the future. Dimly seeing this, many men and women have formed the conviction that this organized body, known as the N. S. A., not for personal aggrandizement nor to govern the spirits that return to us, nor to rule the method by which the science of Spiritualism is given to the world, nor to frame laws by which its philosophy must be taught, nor yet to formulate a credo for its religion; but by and through co-operation to so strengthen themselves spiritually, mentally and financially as an Association, thereby being better qualified for that work in Spiritualism which seems to them right and best; and to strive for the



CENTRAL PRINCIPLES.

The Future of Spiritualism.

SHALL WE ENCOURAGE OR DISCOURAGE ORGANIZATION?

Every flower, every crystal, every soul in fact every natural growth of the whole universe must have its central principles of organization, but some people deem Spiritualism such an inferior and almost worthless thing, that it scarcely deserves an organization. The semi-Spiritualists or what may be called materialistic Spiritualists are dreadfully afraid that a creed may be foisted upon us and yet I have never heard of a full-grown Spiritualist in the world, who wants a creed. They say, place Spiritualism on the same basis that you would a science, as no body thinks of having a creed for a science. How plausible that all sounds. But I will take these men at their word. I will treat Spiritualism just as I would a science. But how do we treat a science when we wish to make it known in a systematic manner? We draw up a schedule of corollaries and principles. That is just what we want for Spiritualism. Of itself Spiritualism is the grandest, broadest and most beneficent of all sciences. It has its great facts and principles which our broader and more analytical minds are able to set forth before the world. What kind of argument is it to bring up the idiosyncrasies and absurd theories of some men and then declare that the whole matter lies in confusion and there is no use in trying to bring order out of chaos? What does all such talk amount to? It shows that while the spiritual sun has illumined mountain and valley and given a new glory to life, it has also struck some swampy lowlands and awakened into action some forces which are less salutary. What does it amount to? I again say. When we draw up our schedule of principles, we do not expect to leave it to the one-sided or ignorant minds but by the broadest and clearest minds we have, aided by the higher world. Shall we condemn astronomy because a colored preacher like Jasper declared that "de sun do move around the earth," or because some transcendentalist who considers the universe a mere subjective matter, may affirm that there are no stars worlds except those that circulate in one's own brain? Is there any danger that these one-sided minds will be called upon to draw up a synopsis of astronomical principles?

In spite of all that is said against Spiritualism, in spite of its short-comings and contentions which are regrettable, it is one of the greatest movements of the world. It has led off in all reforms, including the temperance reform, the anti-slavery reform, the woman's rights reform, medical reform, economical and co-operative reform and has already begun through mediums, a higher life to several nations. Its demonstration of immortality and the destiny of man, and the nature of the soul, and the nature of the hell and devils of old theology is fast melting away before its influence. It was found that among 17,000 prisoners of the United States and Canada not one of them was a Spiritualist, while thousands of church members were among the number.

Spiritualism is both a religion and a science. Religion is aspiration toward the spiritual and divine. Materialism is degradation toward the material and the sensual. The one is the cause of the ignorant and unholiness of the past led to bloodshed and superstition. What have we to do with them? Mediums have been persecuted in various states and cities in a way that would not be ventured upon were it understood that they were channels of inspiration and religion. Spiritualism is the foundation of all real religion and has a right to the protection guaranteed under the United States Constitution. Let us foster our National Organization, then, not only as a shield against bigotry, but as a strength that comes from union.

E. D. BABBITT, M. D.  
Los Angeles, Cal.

Organization a Power for Good.

While many of the brightest and most eloquent lecturers hold to-day that immortality is true, and the Christ question is settled, I have no positive knowledge that either is an unmistakable fact; still, I have hoped, as a true Spiritualist and medium of more than a quarter of a century, that proof might come to me, that reincarnation is a fact beyond question of doubt.

As I am ever trying to understand the principles that are stirring the minds of the people to-day, I am equally interested in giving to mankind everywhere, greater liberty to right, to hold first that the soul is divine and that it should be given to the world as fast as the people are ready to receive it.

I must heartily advocate organization, at all times and in all places, and feel sure that they are a power for good if well officered and the principles if good carried out rightly and justly. There is no question that many one-sided persons become monopolies, when evil-minded or egotistic persons are leaders of the same, and I believe the only way to work out this growing evil is by direct legislation.

It is perhaps difficult to formulate a plan, that if carried out to the letter would remedy the evils arising out of organized bodies to-day, at once. But to my way of thinking, a more perfect organization might be formed by discussion, by representative intelligent people who may meet in convention, and there discuss the merits of each question raised in the one body, and arrive at a plan that would present justice and equity.

To me there can be no baser crime enacted than perpetrating a fraud upon confiding and unsuspecting men and women.

Mental mediums are doing grand work in educating the masses, and where the philosophy is given (that which educates) then the phenomena may follow and be understood. But we believe most firmly that one should first become somewhat familiar with the laws which produce materialization before he is ready to witness the phenomena.

I think the best plan to interest people in Spiritualism to-day is to educate them by good lectures and platform tests, which open the way to a better understanding of spiritual living upon the earth-plane, and by this educating process, we are taking the right steps in spiritual progression.

DR. H. C. ANDREWS.  
Logansport, Ind.

Illinois State Spiritualists' Association.

Will all chartered societies of the I. S. S. A. please forward names of their delegates who will attend our meeting, Wednesday, October 17, at 4203 Evans avenue, at 9 o'clock a. m., as soon as possible?

ELLA M. JOHNSON,  
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A FATHOMLESS SCIENCE

A Philosophy Which Leads Man.

A RELIGION OF FACTS—RATHER THAN FAITH AND FANCY.

As the time for the annual convention of the N. S. A. approaches, all persons who are in the least interested are thinking of the living issues which are to come before the convention.

There is one thought which especially occupies my mind, and I ask for space to mention the same. We recognize Spiritualism as a fathomless science which deals with all problems of the human mind; a philosophy which leads man in all walks of life; a religion of facts rather than faith and fancy. The latter removes all action kindred to creed-making. For nineteen hundred years the few facts inculcated in the teachings of Jesus have been kept alive by constant revision until the different sects are numbered by hundreds. Every step forward by these faithful followers has caused bloodshed, distress and woe.

If Spiritualism, as an organization, begins by formulating a "Declaration of Principles" which, as advocates of such action affirm, will be revised each year, will it not be placing itself in this category? I believe in making the very best use we can of what is already here.

We have a government whose constitution is free from gods—let us keep it so. Let us make our organization a guaranty to personal and state liberty. We have schools of science, philosophy and practical learning. Let us place in these chairs of psychometry, which includes clairvoyance as a demonstrator of immortality and an effective agency for healing. Colleges are only waiting for this, as the American Psychological Research Society has lately proven.

When have we seen so much agitation in the sciences? of medicine as in the past few years since clairvoyants and magnetic healers have taken their places in the field? Time can better be spent in protecting, than in formulating a "Declaration of Principles." Where can we find better opportunity to teach fact and truth than in the public school—the illuminating glory of America. Then let us clean them of faith and doctrine and thus utilize this enormous existing organization. Let us demand that denominational lessons will belong but to their denomination; and let us place the "Brotherhood of Man" and "denominations" by having schools of our own, but with the boundless foundation we have, assert these privileges in a most general manner. Make our public schools institutions of practical learning—"bulwarks of civilization."

Spiritualism must do more than demonstrate immortality, that has with the suppression of stock and fagot existed in all history we have. Immortality is a keynote of all religion or spiritual philosophy, and in Spiritualism, which seers and mediums have proven it.

Having declared "there is no death," let us live each moment of our life by using the material at hand. As an organization let us be in keeping with the high civilization which we enjoy by being free from everything except a purely business organization for the purchase of protecting the liberties which we have (for in many instances they are in danger) and to stimulate all investigations. We will then teach the "Brotherhood of Man" and the practical, enterprising humanitarian. So let us have our organization free from "declaration" or discussion of ceremony and have it to protect the demonstrated facts and declarations already made.

If we undertake to limit spirit return, we take our stand in the ranks of the superstitions. In fact the great problem of human development means slow, steady strides of progress; so let us as the free and untrammelled advocates of progress and liberty keep our organization free from all barriers, and by asserting the true and denying the false, let mankind to a nobler stand. The world does not need isms, but a band of enterprising workers to stand firmly for the good in everything which will encourage and strengthen justice and goodness until they will predominate. Spiritualism stands for Truth wherever it exists, and as an organization cannot pretend to stand as having all the truth, but only as a defender of human rights and liberties.

GALVESTON, TEX. JOHN W. RING.

ON THE N. S. A.

The Kind of Organization Needed.

A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION INDISPENSABLE TO FUTURE SUCCESS.

I consider the theory of what comes under the head of true and genuine Spiritualism a grand fact, one that will not down, and the true explanation, of the principles and philosophy of life, past present and future. I consider that there should be a permanent N. S. A. by all means, and that it is indispensable to our future success and prosperity. If we are to have a permanent N. S. A. to meet the emergencies of the present conditions of the Spiritualists, we must consolidate, we must organize. The masses must be united—must harmonize, for, as a united body of Spiritualists, banded together in love and harmony, we are non-existent, as a body politic we are not known in the land.

We must have a centralizing nucleus to work to if we wish to succeed, for as at present, we consist of a heterogeneous mass of followers, with nearly as many different ideas pertaining to Spiritualism proper as there are individuals in the catalogue, and all exercising a self-evident independence of thought of their own, without corresponding influence or power.

We must have a broad and concise declaration of principles, setting forth who and what we are before the world at large.

We must have local associations organized and governed with a code of ethics to harmonize with the declaration of principles. Local associations to elect representative delegates to state associations.

We must have state associations organized from local delegations, from local associations, to unite the local associations and to elect delegates to the national association to elect delegates to the declaration of principles. State organizations to elect delegates to represent them in the N. S. A.

We must have a N. S. A. to represent the whole and to give us power and standing before the people in proportion to our magnitude, and organized by delegates from state associations, and gov-

erned by a code of ethics harmonizing with the declaration of principles.

Expenses of the N. S. A. to be met by local associations throughout the country, including delegates from state associations.

Local organizations to adopt a code of ethics in harmony with the declaration of principles, but not broad enough to include all the trash that is now sailing under the flag of Spiritualism. All could subscribe to them who are true Spiritualists; those who are not could be rejected, and those who are independently self-conceited in their own opinions, could keep out.

The spirit realms are known as spheres, spirits occupying different spheres according to their development, yet all are spirits, and all in harmony, so with us, we are all spirits, this would mean the use of a "Look up" to associate with my fellow-man who is illiterate, undeveloped, and cannot comprehend my language, or who is a gutter drunkard, or stretch out my arms and hug all God's creation, good, bad and indifferent, to my bosom, because they are Spiritualists. Yet I can stretch out my arm and take my fellow-man by the hand, and say "Look up" and we will be all the better for it.

We receive communications from the spirit spheres just according to the recipient, if the recipient is of an intelligent, developed class, a high class of intelligent spirits will be attracted, and a high grade of intelligence received. If the investigator is of a low grade, or undeveloped, just such spirits will seek to communicate. Whether it be "Jim Brown, the liar," or "Jack, the Giant Killer," we are under no obligation to receive all we hear, or that is given, and call it pure.

Spiritualism proper is not a religion, the belief in which is expected to land us right into heaven; it is more of a naturalism. It includes the combination of both spirit and matter, resulting in what we call nature, thus our parent.

Articles setting forth our principles (not belief) and published to the world, are absolutely necessary for our future success and protection—otherwise we trail along as at present, a laughing-stock for the world—outside of our own eyes.

I am aware that there are many able Spiritualists that are opposed to consolidating, or being bound by what they choose to term a creed. I will say to all such, there is no compulsion for you to do so. But we think you overestimate your freedom.

The theory of reincarnation I consider the most absurd of any idea that has grown out of Modern Spiritualism. No spirit that has ever had an individualized existence, as a physical human being, can counteract the laws of nature and become incarnated over again, from the same standpoint; it is contrary to the everlasting law of nature and progression. Nature's unfolding is final without a "re" attached to it, and to have a memory of living a former life, is a grand imaginary hallucination.

I do not think that there was such a personage at the commencement of the Christian era 1800 years ago, known as Jesus Christ, but that there was such a being known as Apollonius of Tyana. I have no doubt, a very worthy personage, and probably a well developed medium, teaching both by precept and example, lessons far in advance of the comprehension of the people, who was held up before the people, by later Testament writers, as being a wonderful character, a God—and given the cognomen of Jesus Christ, "the Son of God." But I consider him no more to be held in reverence by the people, as a medium of great value than A. J. Davis, or any other great medium of the day.

C. P. MITCHELL.  
Moline, Ill.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

Let Every State Sustain Its Missionary.

FACTS TO BE CONSIDERED—IS SPIRITUALISM A RELIGION?—AND HOW CAN WE PRESENT OUR "ISM" SO IT WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE WORLD?

In view of the fact that soon the National Convention will hold its session in Chicago, and that much will come before this body of representative men and women for discussion, we as Spiritualists and workers look forward with interest, and hope that at its close something outside of having met and rejoiced in the companionship of the good, true and tried, will have been accomplished. The ultimate results of these annual gatherings ought to have been productive of much good, yet those who must remain on the outer fence or wall (since railroad fare and the cost of dollars are wondering what has been done by this great body of thinkers, as also the National Association, since their coming together the year previous.

They seem to meet, talk and discuss, subjects handled pro and con, then disband, return to their homes, and forget all. Which to a looker-on is not only wasted time, but money. If our "ism" is anything but a farce, why not draw the line between the farce and what we claim Spiritualism to be?—viz., a religion. It is a religion of and for the soul, pray what is it? I am a believer in the phenomena, or physical demonstrations, but I draw the line when it comes to whistling "Marching Through Georgia," while what is supposed to be an exorcised soul is keeping time with a "clothes-line" or tying knots in handkerchiefs to be thrown at the sitters. If there is anything inspiring or instructive or Spiritual about these exhibitions, let the writer with many others has failed to see it.

Spiritualism ought to Spiritualize, and not demoralize. And the education, or demand for these kinds of manifestations, has filled our ranks with the frauds or impostors. Is there no means of escape? Must honest workers be classed, with no distinction? as all are "Rev." "Prot." and "Doctor." Let us pray to get rid of these titles; they are the cloak that conceals a multitude of sins. We ask, can nothing be done that will protect the honest worker from being classed with charlatans? Through this demand for the marvelous many good, true workers have stepped out of the field and are to-day stranded, while Mr. Gullible stands with open mouth, courting that which, in the final, leaves doubt and an empty purse, with its additional experience, which, said to say, only prepares him for the next fake or impostor. The result, as we all know, is a degraded Spiritualism, which is a disgrace to the worker to carry out the furtherance of the season's work. Yes, "is true, money is the barrier that prevents the trace and inspirational worker from serving, for it is the essential root that must sustain us. There is a great field ready for the harvest, and many laborers awaiting a signal. Why not let each spirit in the ones that we send them into towns and cities where Spiritualism has never been presented, selecting both physical and mental mediums for the presentation and teaching of our philosophy. Prosecute those to the full extent of the law who would debauch their powers (if they possessed any), then will we deserve purification, and our ranks become purified, leaving

us not only an Ism of truth, which is religion, but others will be made to recognize that we discountenance fraud, and place true Spirituality—which can only be obtained by right living, doing and thinking—as the prize won by ourselves and awaiting all who come into the light of true-Spiritualism. Be up and doing, ye delegates at this coming National Convention, and may your decision materialize into the bettering of our present conditions.

WORTHY OF ORGANIZED EFFORT TO PROMOTE IT.

THE CREED THAT SHOULD BE ADOPTED—ACCEPT TRUTH—REJECT ERROR.

To the Editor:—The near approach of the National Spiritualists' Convention is suggestive of thought. Is Spiritualism more or less than this: The knowledge of the truth that personalized, incarnate intelligences, through natural law, and in communion with persons, alize incarnate intelligences? The modes of communication being various, and the communications themselves valuable or worthless, beneficial or detrimental, agreeable to their various import.

Is this truth a religion? No! Is it a philosophy? No! It is simply one of the truths of nature. Is it a truth of such importance as to be worthy of organized efforts to propagate it? I answer this question most decidedly in the affirmative. Yes! It is a truth whose influence upon all religions, all philosophies, all morality, and life itself overshadows all others.

In the final result it will matter but little as to how much rubbish there may be in the propagation and spread of this truth. The truth is not at all responsible for this rubbish. But the universal acceptance of this truth will be of incalculable consequence to mankind.

It will prepare him for a higher and better state of being upon this earth and in the state of existence immediately to follow this. It will bring him upon a higher plane, as a moral, intellectual, and spiritual being.

I believe that I have discovered this law in nature: That I give only to those who are worthy of receiving; and so fast as man becomes capable of wisely and justly controlling her wonderful and mysterious, though natural, forces will be invested with their knowledge and use.

National and subordinate organizations should adopt no creed except this: 1. We accept truth and reject error. 2. We encourage the good, the beautiful and the pure, and discourage the bad, the immoral, and the vicious. They should be organized upon business principles for the spread of truth and the general betterment of the brotherhood of man. Having it fully understood that they were entirely irresponsible for individual idiosyncrasies, predilections or immoralities.

Truth is the basic rock upon which must finally rest all religion, all philosophy, and all morality. Its constant tendency is to elevate. Its discovery is the motive power to intellectuality and spirituality.

Ignorance and immorality are the screen (wisely provided by nature) which conceals dangerous forces and prohibits us from converting them to our selfish uses.

Truth is an attribute of Infinity. It never changes. What was truth, is now, and ever will be. Every determined and acquired truth has a tendency in the right direction and according to its importance are the benefits derived.

Morality is a condition of a finite, intellectual and spiritual being, in its relations to other such beings, and changes with the intellectual and spiritual development of such beings.

Stupendous organizations (governments) are hurried forward for our material interests and benefits; how much more important then should be organizations for advancing us intellectually and spiritually. In reality we have a vast number of such organizations, but being predicated on error, fall wholly or partially, to accomplish any considerable amount of good. For this reason, as Spiritualists, we should avoid creeds and dogma, and build squarely upon the foundation of truth; then we need never fear of having the rock upon which we build disturbed.

No person can live a better life than his best ideas. The moral universe in which we live has infiltrated into each of us the moral characteristics that we possess. But we should not forget that in a measure we are responsible for the moral status of the finite beings of the universe. This responsibility is a tremendous one; and it therefore behooves us to give out nothing but that which is true, and beautiful, and pure.

B. F. SLITER.

SOME QUESTIONS.

How Differentiate the Good from the Bad?

IS THE N. S. A. COMPETENT TO LEAD.

To the Editor:—Now that the N. S. A. Convention will soon be here, all interested will give to it a hearty welcome. The convention, no doubt, will furnish lots of enthusiasm, earnest endeavor, and good sense, for which all will be glad, and especially so for any great sense of new ideal (without creeds or dogmas) for our practical good, in the direction of truth, love, or justice, so that when the convention is over each and every one will have a happy dream of golden future. But nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm. Nothing can so expand the soul as the energy of enthusiasm, so let the combined energies of the convention be reborn to enthusiasm, and new ideas, more than ever before. And let the same proceed only from the divine fountain of infinite wisdom. And now, Mr. Editor, a few questions for the consideration of the convention will, I hope, be in order.

I suppose you as well as others must have felt that there are great departments of Spirit or Spiritualism, namely: good and evil, the diabolical kind as well as the divine. Then which department of Spirit or Spiritualism is our great national corporation based upon? Or upon which department has it set its seal of divine approval? The reason for this question is obvious. The great present universality and popularity of Spirit, or Spiritualism, under the name of occultism, etc., is simply phenomenal. Every church, sect, or religion, claims to be enriched with it. But how are we to differentiate the good from the bad? or the satanic from the divine? Is the N. S. A. competent to lead us, infallibly, in this direction? Or must we blindly run our own Spiritualism, according to our own ideas?

Has the N. S. A. produced in the world, during the past six years, any higher growth, or grade of Spirituality, or any more progress, than the old, golden setting to a rare or precious jewel, simply for ornaments' sake? Does the N. S. A., like all other organizations, control or subordinate all its integral parts and interests? Or does it possess any features that are specially advantageous in guaranteeing to the world, or to the church, a better and more earnest endeavor to present the truth as it is given to us, would be more productive of good results to the humanity, and greater good to the human race.

MARY WEBB BAKER.  
Spartanburg, Pa.

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A TRUTH OF NATURE.

WORTHY OF ORGANIZED EFFORT TO PROMOTE IT.

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GREAT DIVERSITY

OF SENTIMENT AND KNOWLEDGE IN THE INVISIBLE WORLD.

DISCORDANT TEACHINGS OF INSPIRED MEDIUMS, ETC.

To the Editor:—Another delegated National Convention will soon assemble in this city, and like its predecessor, there will be many earnest men and women, whose best efforts will be directed toward the planting of a National Spiritual Organization upon a firm basis.

Soulspring addresses will, for the time, impress those who participate with the idea of grand success, and a sure method of attainment of most desirable co-operation of all Spiritualists upon a common basis of thought, purpose and action. It seems, however, that it is expecting too much, when we realize that there is but one fact upon which the Spiritualists are a unit, and that is that death does not end all, and that under favorable conditions, information comes across the border from the unseen mental and spiritual world.

The countless thousands of forms of religious beliefs prevalent in the world, represented by the different organizations, had their origin in the belief in spirit return, and that is the center thought around which all church organizations and specific forms of religion have crystallized.

An effort to place all these organizations as a unit under one leader, I think all would recognize as a natural impossibility; as well endeavor to mingle fire and powder in harmonious relationship.

For untold ages the mighty procession of human life has been moving off the stage of visible physical being into the realm of the invisible, carrying with them their attainment made in spiritual and mental progress.

As a consequence, there must exist as diverse a variety of sentiment and knowledge in the invisible world as can be found in the complex human world, with which the earth is to-day filled. This truth is clearly demonstrated in the varied communications from the invisible, who seek every available channel to find expression. As a result there is no unity of opinion, even on questions that it would seem as though there should be uniform knowledge.

Many inspired mediums tell us that Jesus of Nazareth was all that the world required; that as a spirit they have met him in the spirit life. Other inspired mediums, with equal earnestness allege that no such character ever existed; that the entire story is a myth. The same differences of opinion exist relative to many historic characters.

On the question of reincarnation, it would seem that all souls that enter into spiritual existence ought to have some knowledge upon this question, but we find that inspired mediums who claim reincarnation are contradicted by other inspired mediums who allege that their statement is absolutely untrue.

We are told by mediums that every form of animal life has its counterpart in the spiritual world. Other inspired mediums tell us that that statement is absolutely untrue, and so we might enumerate these contradictory statements ad infinitum. There is no definiteness on any one subject, but opinions are as varied as are the opinions of people with whom we are surrounded in this life daily, and how can it be otherwise? We are not under control, and we must be largely a personal work wherein the individual attains the spiritual through personal unfoldment; but to formulate any creed or basis upon which the Spiritualists of the nation can act as a whole, cannot but prove disappointing to its projectors.

E SPRAGUE.

PREPOSTEROUS.

Make Occultism a Prime Study.

KNOWLEDGE THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD.

As the time draws near for the National Convention to assemble at Chicago we are all more or less interested as to the results of such a meeting. Spiritualists are composed of people who are supposed to be honest investigators and desire truth, but as to organization many are opposed to it, except so far as business purposes are concerned. But that any attempt to formulate a creed or have any basic principle uniting the Spiritualists outside of spirit communion, seems preposterous indeed. Now while the phenomena and the fact of spirit return is true, does that fact satisfy the honest investigator? Or, rather, do we not wish or desire to know something of these occult forces in nature whereby we may become wiser pertaining to spiritual things? We all believe in progression, both here and hereafter. Some of the noted spiritual instructors declare that every opportunity necessary for the development of our spiritual faculties will be accorded us when we lay aside the material that as spiritual things are spiritually discerned, we as incarnate souls shall continue to rise higher and higher in the scale of being until we become as the Gods. Another class of our Spiritual speakers and teachers declare that it is only by repeated re-embodiments or through reincarnation that we evolve to higher conditions of soul growth, and not until the latter becomes master of ceremonies will we be fitted to remain outside of material or animal life, for we are all more or less animal in our natures. Then we are somewhat divided in our opinions regarding Christ's divinity. Was he a master mind, a medium, or a God? We think the friendly discussion going on between Rev. Moses Hull and Dr. Peabees in regard to the Masters of the Law, Dr. Florence Hunney, a work of deep thought, carrying the principles of evolution into new fields. Cloth, \$2. For sale at this office.

"The Heresy Trial of Rev. B. F. Austin, M. A., D. D. Giving a sketch of Dr. Austin's life, story of the heresy trial, copy of the charges, the heresy sermon, the scene at conference, and Dr. Austin's full address defending his views on Spiritualism at the London Annual Conference at Windsor, Can., etc. Price 25 cents. For sale at this office.

"Who Are These Spiritualists and What is Spiritualism?" A pamphlet of 60 pages by Dr. J. M. Peabees, the well-known author. Price 15 cents. For sale at this office.

We have Bible Spiritualists who try to prove that ancient and modern Spiritualism are one and the same thing, while another class declare they have no use for Bibles, Christ or anything of the kind.

Through mediums the loftest

thoughts have been given us, and through others ideas perhaps not so elevating, showing us that all express themselves according to their comprehension of things. For one, I believe that when we organize schools and make occultism a study, determined to know if possible how the phenomena are produced through spiritual agency, and just how to unfold the latent powers within us, so that spirits in and out of the body can cooperate and work together as human souls, then we shall have solved some of the problems and become wiser. Unless we do this, the liberal churches who are teaching the Spiritual philosophy will attract so many from our ranks that we shall be obliged to do something more than talk, but with our money, time and talent, be willing to make some sacrifice for Spiritual truth. Some in our city write and talk beautifully upon the subject of Spiritualism, but use their influence at home with the liberal churches and never give one dollar for our cause. If there is need for a National Association it should receive the patronage and support of the people, and we do hope that by the time the convention assembles in Chicago in October next that they may have formulated some plan whereby Spiritualists will come together as one and build for time and eternity; also that lecturers and mediums of all phases, and Spiritualists as a whole, may cultivate their spiritual gifts and continue to unfold the latent forces within.

If we aspire to do this we shall be enabled to go forth in might and spiritual power, for knowledge is the savior of the world and the key that unlocks all hidden mysteries.

NELLIE S. BAADÉ,  
Detroit, Mich.

NOT OF THIS WORLD.

Spiritualism Unlike Any Other Movement.

IT IS SPONTANEOUS AND WILE CONTINUE SO.

For some time I have doubted the expediency of a National organization of the Spiritualists. While in some respects it seems desirable, there are several objections. According to my observation, men are influenced more by opinion than by truth, in consequence of which there are conflicts which retard the advance the spiritual cause. Opinions are always associated with personal interests, while truth is impersonal. As organization is founded on a statement of principles, it seems impossible to eliminate opinions; and as opinion proves nothing, settles nothing, and is regarded as a finality, it becomes authoritative. This gives rise to unpleasant results.

Like other people, Spiritualists are anxious to appear respectable and gain a popular standing in the community. They resort to the usual means, notably, by adopting church customs. This method calls for organization and they proceed in accordance with the call. Organization gives rise to power, whose exercise is not always agreeable to all concerned. While the aim of popular recognition seems desirable, we should also aim at individual spirituality; for upon that everything depends. Spiritualism is the outward expression of spirituality.

It might be well to inquire whether there are not other means to promote the cause more efficient than by national organization, such as by psychological societies, scientific investigators, philosophical writers, public speakers, the home circle and private workers, and above all the mediums who furnish the phenomena upon which Spiritualism is founded. If these means were dependent on national organization, then we should organize, govern and be governed.

The spiritual movement is unlike any other movement. Its power is not of the world, nor does it owe its control, and to attempt to control it seems unwise. We are only recipients of that power and subject to it.

Another objection to national organization is the expense incurred in its support. Local organizations will do for what a national organization is designed, with the aid of the spiritual press and the lecture hall. The annoyance in obtaining the means to defray the expense incidental to a national organization, and the difficulty in obtaining them are not agreeable, and tend to hamper the free course of the spiritual movement.

The mere belief in spirit communication, after it becomes familiar, has but little moral or spiritual effect on the believer—about as much as a belief in the golden rule. What is more needed is a living, realizing, inspiring knowledge which can exist only in the truly spiritualized soul. So long as the existing moral and spiritual status continues in earth life, it can be reflected back from spirit life. If we encounter contradictory statements coming from the other side, let us see to it that they are not made on the earth side, for here is where they had their origin.

In the early history of the spiritual movement, the cause spread with amazing rapidity. There was then no national organization, nor scarcely any other, for the movement was spontaneous, and will continue to operate in the same manner. It is for us to respond; the advance will depend more on the character of the response than on any movement we can originate or direct.

It seems a serious neglect of duty among Spiritualists to allow their children to go without spiritual instruction. It is quite a common thing to see the children of Spiritualists, when grown, entirely indifferent to Spiritualism. There is a false notion that the children with the religious opinions they are being formed in the minds of children, among Spiritualists. Church members have no such scruples, but vigorously resent any such interference in correcting the false opinions instilled by the church.

There is a pressing demand for juvenile instruction regarding Spiritualism, and its neglect is reprehensible. Efforts in this direction, it seems to me, would be wiser than the same expended in national organization.

E. J. SCHELLHOUS.

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