

## A LECTURE,

ON THE

## NECESSITY OF SCIENTIFIC AND PHILOSOPHIC CULTURE

## FOR THE PROGRESS OF SPIRITUALISM.

DELIVERED BY J. S. LOVELAND,

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Spiritualism is a universal eclecticism. No narrow creed of mere specialities can meet the broad demands of its comprehensive, all-embracing principles. No superficial selfishness can compass the ends of human culture which it proposes. Wide in its scope as the possibilities of humanity, it does not forget the particular, in enunciating the universal; nor blindly ignore the means, by declamatory ecstasies over the glorious beauties of the ends. Such infatuation belongs not to that Movement, which has enthroned reason as the supreme arbiter of truth. I said Spiritualism was a universal eclecticism. It extracts the nectar from all the flowering ages of the past. Most emphatically can it declare:

"No pent up Utica confines our powers;  
For the whole boundless universe is ours."

It is the great alembic of the flowing generations of time, wherein are fused the ideas of gone by days with those of this Dispensation, making a New Philosophy and a New Religion; thus conserving all the good and true of the old without persecuting the new. It is thus grandly Catholic. It most devoutly believes in the "Holy Catholic Church," for it shows that, in the truest sense, "*the Church*" is the spiritual life of humanity, therefore, as universal as man, and as holy as the Divine can be. These statements will be accepted, in the main, by most professed Spiritualists; but this, or a much clearer and exhaustive statement of the ideal outline of our Dispensation, is not enough to secure its acceptance or triumph. Its principles must not only sparkle as the jewels of a coronet, in the discourses of its advocates, but also in the

common understanding of the people; and, like the flowering spices of "Araby the blest," send forth the fragrance of a benevolence as comprehensive in its scope as the vast field of human necessities.

To secure results so grand—to shun the threatening dangers, which impend, like wrathful storm-clouds, o'er our pathway—to meet the eager hopes of awakened thousands, to convert the bright sun-burst of our day into a steady and glorious light, is, in part, the god-like work which heaven and destiny have given us to do.

In indicating the mode of its performance, and to particularize more fully its nature and necessity, I submit the following proposition, as embodying the theme of our evening discourse:

PROPOSITION.—The safety and progress of genuine Spiritualism can be secured only by a thorough scientific and philosophic culture of the masses of the people.

I say safety and progress, because there is no safety but in progress. That Movement, which does not progress, which ceases to be aggressive, has begun to die. It may battle for a time in self-defense, but its doom is sealed and there is no reprieve.

We have shown this afternoon that ignorance is the great danger; and, therefore, the opposite of ignorance must be the only way of safety. Such, however, is the transcendent importance attaching to this question, that we cannot pass it over with the mere enunciation of an inference, though never so clearly drawn, but must carefully and earnestly look at some of the many aspects of this subject, which at present demand the attention of all lovers of human well-being. Though a score of years have not passed over our Movement, we have reached a period where the solemn and inexorable warnings of history must be considered, or we are fearfully wrecked. We must advance in order to live. Stagnation is death. The world must continue to be converted to Spiritualism, or else Spiritualism as a Movement and a Power will die.

We have affirmed, and still do so, that Spiritualism is natural. That its phenomena are within, not above, or beyond the domain of law. In this phase it falls into the realm of science, and is bound to furnish positive demonstration. Suppositions or opinions may be the precursors and attendants of scientific research, but they do not belong in the category of positive scientific con-

clusion. Facts, phenomena, are the children of invisible potencies or principles. The perception, co-ordination and application of those principles to the growth and beautification of humanity is philosophizing. Science and Philosophy are the dual components of Spiritualism. Form, Power, and their consequent change, make up the universe. To comprehend the phenomena of Spiritualism demands the culture of science, and to see the scope of its principles is impossible without the philosophic insight. Any considerable deficiency in either direction will be fatal to our success. Manifestations the most startling may arouse and appall the sensuous world, but unless the culture of science shall classify them in the categories of nature, they will only render more dense the darkness of superstitious ignorance. Seers and philosophers may abound, but they, too, must be balanced by science, or we shall be lost in the vagaries of mere metaphysical speculation.

On the other hand, mere science, without philosophy, will conduct us to the arid regions of frigid materialism. They must complement each other. Being different, they are often, through ignorance, forced to appear as opposites, though both are nature's methods, and both true. Philosophy is *deductive*; science is *inductive*. The first reasons *from* principles; the second *to* them. The one from universals *descends* to particulars—from principles to phenomena; the other *ascends* from phenomena to principle or cause. All Movements, which include the idea of revelation from the invisible, naturally tend toward the extreme of philosophy. The devotees are usually, if not invariably, disciples of the deductive method. So far as method is concerned, they follow Aristotle instead of Bacon. Principles, "Eternal Principles," are to them the beginning and the end of reasoning. Spiritualism, claiming, as its adherents do for it, entire freedom from all taint of supernaturalism, ought to be in no danger from the exclusive philosophic method. Such, however, is not the fact, as we shall see in our discussion. It might seem that exclusive devotion to one or the other of these would result in greater perfection, but it is not so. The unscientific philosopher becomes a dreaming visionary, while the unphilosophic scientist becomes an atheistic materialist. The people, therefore, need culture in both directions. They are analogous to the arterial and venous circulation of the blood. Both must be in perfect equilibrium in

order to perfect health. Deeming, as I do, that our danger lies in the direction of extreme philosophizing, for ignorance is always prone to pursue that road, I shall more especially insist upon scientific culture, as constituting our only safety. We are all agreed that the basic fact of our Movement is spirit manifestation, as their *naturalness* constitutes the fundamental idea. No man can be in harmony who rejects one, or the other. Accepting the first without the second makes him a fanatic; rejecting the first, makes him a mere carping skeptic.

We have already seen that we must conquer or be conquered; the world must be converted to Spiritualism, or Spiritualism must cease to be. This conversion must be wrought by demonstration. To make that demonstration, it is absolutely necessary that the masses should be thoroughly cultured in science, as well as philosophy. We, as Spiritualists, must be scientific, in order to make the demonstration, so must the world be to comprehend it. Now, has the demonstration been made? I think not, and it seems to me very bad taste for us to complain of scientific men and associations for not making a thorough and exhaustive investigation of the subject, when we have allowed nearly twenty years to pass without doing it ourselves. We have men of thorough scientific culture, we have numerous kinds of mediums, and any amount of wealth, and yet, so far as the public presentation of the subject is concerned, it comes before the people in the dress of jugglery and imposition; and will continue so to do till individual selfishness shall be subjugated by wisdom to the common weal. Such exhibitions as have been given in this hall, the past winter, no matter how genuine they were, appeal to the popular mind as the tricks of impostors. And so they ever must, so long as such lamentable ignorance exists respecting the powers and methods of unaided humanity. To accomplish this work, and so settle the question as to silence forever the carping doubts of atheistic unbelief, and banish the pious sneer of church intolerance, demands such investigation as I have hinted. There are also not a few embarrassing questions which need to be answered. Among them may be reckoned such as these: How are we to account for the fact that the productions of trance speakers, no matter who the spirit may be who assumes to speak, always bear the unmistakable impress of the medium's mentality, culture, and even idiosyn-

crasies? The same verbal and grammatical errors occur whether Daniel Webster or Lorenzo Dow controls. What is the nature and extent of that "control?" Why should Theodore Parker speak poetry through Cora Daniels and logic through some one else? S. J. Finney, entranced fifteen years ago, or to-day inspired, or in his own normal self-hood, presents the same essential, mental profile, changed only as study and culture have developed and polished him. It is perfectly easy to give an answer to the difficulties involved in these and similar questions, which satisfies the superficial; but is it one which closes the mouths of thinking men? If the trance medium is "*controlled*," if the *organs of speech* are possessed by a spirit, and the spirit of the medium is absent from his or her body, what business have their petty habits and weaknesses of thought and phraseology to appear in the discourses of the illustrious ones of former days? This whole subject of Mediumship needs not to be re-examined, but to be investigated for the first time, by competent persons, in accord with the rigid demands of Science. The various phases of Mediumship should be gathered before a jury of earnest, honest, competent scientists. They should carefully note all the special physiological changes, so as to be able to settle absolutely the extent and nature of the change in condition in the medium. In the circulation—the vital heat—breathing—the nerves—the mental powers—the affections, in fine, everything pertaining to our normal, life condition. Then, of course, the character of the manifestations, as affecting, or being affected by the peculiarity of temperament, health, etc., of the medium should all be observed and noted. Tests of all conceivable kinds, not inconsistent with humanity, should be applied and varied till nothing more can be asked. Granting our assumption of the reality of spirit manifestation, we should have the co-operation of such men as Dr. Franklin, Dr. Hare, Prof. Mapes, and other able scientists who are now among the immortals. Is it to be supposed that such men would not be able to suggest such methods as would immensely facilitate the labors of investigators, and convince them of the spiritual origin of the manifestations? With heaven and earth conjoined, what may we not anticipate for the elucidation and triumph of the truth? But we have had no such trial as this. Individuals may have tested satisfactorily for themselves, but the times require something which shall settle the

question in the public mind. When we can point to the mass of facts developed by such an ordeal, the mouth of unbelief must be closed. It would not be the testimony of one man, or one circle, it would be the voice of science speaking through its own devotees; hence, it would be the language of authority. It would also settle the vexed question of "conditions," which not only furnishes a ready loop-hole of escape for all impostors, but a specious reason for satire and ridicule from the world, and is a source of annoyance and disappointment to earnest investigators. Is it not necessary that all these things should be done? Are not multitudes demanding them? If this work was done, and the verdict of such a commission sent forth to the world, should we not witness such a march of Spiritualism in the path of victory as has never been witnessed before? Of course we should. Well, is not this an end worthy of the effort? Why, then, is it not done? The answer is found in the deficiency of general scientific culture, on the part of the people; and from the fact that our Movement is very largely gliding into the philosophic method, and thus ignoring the scientific. Induction is almost scouted, and deduction eulogized. If we critically scan the literature we have, and the general drift of our lecturers, especially of the most eloquent and influential, we shall find abundant confirmation of this position. Davis, as we have already intimated, is no disciple of Bacon. His works are not constructed upon the model of science. They are, as they profess, revelations, the utterances of the seer. It is right they should be as they are. Still, they represent and appeal to only one department of our being. Revelation from the clairvoyant and the medium are wondrous helps in the progress of the race, but unless they are complemented by the demonstrations of science we are thrown back upon the old method of the church. All the utterances of seers and mediums come in the form of dogmatic, or authoritative declarations. We only quote Swedenborg, Davis, or the Spirits, instead of Isaiah and Paul. All the religions of the world pursue this method. They reveal principles, and reason from them to particulars. This is the opposite of the Baconian or scientific method, which reasons from particulars, facts, phenomena, to the principles, power, or cause producing, or inhering in them. It is one of the natural consequences of an imperfect culture, to adhere most tenaciously to

the deductive, or religious method, for it is so very easy to assume premises, or to take them from the sayings of some seer, or inspired person, that the mass adopt the method, and many cultured minds pursue it. The result is, an endless war of logic—a distraction of the general attention from the sober reality of fact, and an absorption in mere hypotheses and abstractions. Milton well describes this condition, when he places the mighty intellects of hell apart from the rest, reasoning of

" Fate, fixed fate, fore-knowledge, \* \* \*  
In endless mazes lost."

And fabled hell is not alone in such speculations; nor is it confined exclusively to the old Church, in its ceaseless wrangle respecting so-called principles; for books are printed, lectures given, to show us how many statute miles it is from the earth to the second, third, even to the seventh sphere of the Spirit-World! One book comes to us from "the top of the Seventh Sphere." And Spiritualists, not a few, busy themselves with such worthless assumptions and speculations, for assumptions they are. When we come to the reality of the subject, of what special consequence is it whether the Spirit-World is some fifty thousand miles away, or beyond the milky-way? The fact that these, and other equally unsupported assumptions, are made the bases of no small part of our printed and oral literature, proves my statement that we are to a large extent involved in the vices of the deductive method.

The general course of the Spirit-World has been in the true direction, for it has abounded in phenomena and has been comparatively reticent in philosophizing. There is purpose and wisdom in this. It is a tribute to science—a placing in the foremost rank of what ought to have the precedence. The wisdom of Heaven thus joins harmonious hands with the tendency of an advancing civilization, and our safety and progress can be ensured only by following these infallible indices of the highest wisdom. When, therefore, we find a seemingly tacit ignoring of a thorough culture in science, and an adoption of the old, false method of theology, it is time to loudly indicate the road to success. I do not wish to be understood as hinting that we can have too much of sound philosophy, but to strongly insist that the exigencies of our Movement at the present needs, not so much the labors of the

deductive philosopher, as it demands the tireless labors of the scientist, and the general culture of the masses. That which has been the bane of the past, cannot be the health of the present. The exclusive adherence of the church to the deductive method, is the secret of all its hideous falsities of dogma. Can it be the conservator of truth to the new dispensation? If we adopt and cherish it, will it not land us in the slough where the churches are floundering, without possibility of escape? Nay, as the deductive method necessarily involves the idea of authority based on faith in the utterances of the seer or prophet, can we escape the fate of subjugation which has always followed that method?

We may fancy that there is no danger, because we have failed to read its portents, and may find ourselves fast bound, before we have suspected our peril. Indeed, do we not see a constant effort to force the old exploded standards and canons of church morality upon the new-born children of the Spiritual Dispensation? Many writers for the BANNER OF LIGHT and RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL, seem to think that the old notions of moralism are as true and sacred as the sublimest revelations from the unseen world. Such also is the fact with not a few professed Spiritualists. The result is that the honest convictions of thousands are fiercely denounced as *immoral*, and we have in our midst scandal exalted almost into a science, and personal denunciation and criticism holds a high position in our cherished practices. Is there any sense, any consistency in this? Where is the law or standard infallibly defining right and wrong? Who possesses, or who has revealed it? The church points to the Will of God, revealed, as is affirmed, in the Bible, as the only standard. Spiritualists refuse to abide by that rule. But if that is rejected, what else have you, but the individual judgment and conscience of each person, that is, so far as their personal conduct is concerned? This latter is the practical standard which most adopt. Why, then, do we so vehemently denounce our brethren? What right have we to dictate another's conscience, or denounce his conduct, unless we know him to act contrary to his own convictions? We start out on the broad assumption of the most absolute personal freedom and independence, we oppose with desperate earnestness all forms of organic action, ignore with the most edifying self-complacency the sacred canons of the world's morality, and then turn round and



outdo the church itself in the opprobrium of mutual denunciation. We settle questions of individual and social morality with the dash of a pen, as though every principle was clearly defined, universally understood and admitted. Our social, domestic and political institutions and customs are all outgrowths of the church. We affirm with unhesitating positiveness that the church is rotten and false, that institutions are the great curse of humanity, and yet if any one calls in question the divinity of Marriage as it is, Banking, the System of Trade, etc., etc., there is a howl of rage uttered at once, and the unfortunate victim is denounced as Free-lover, Communist, or some other name of contempt.

These, and numerous cognate facts, too plainly prove our lack of culture in science—our ignorance of the scientific method ; and as clearly demonstrates our subjection to the old religious, deductive, dogmatic method of the Church. We assume certain principles, either from impression, the spirits, some medium, or from the prevalent notions of the world, and without waiting to test them by experiment we proceed to construct systems, and insist that people shall conform thereto under penalty of all the disgrace we can heap upon them. Nothing can be more certain than that the whole moralism of the world must be recast in the human consciousness. That there is a principle of absolute justice is disputed by few, but what it is, the true method of its application to personal conduct, is still in dispute. We can never settle it by mere dogmatic assertion of principles and deductive reasoning therefrom. Safety and progress are only possible through the rigid method of experimental science, going hand in hand with the philosophic one ; in other words, by complementing *deduction* with *induction*. We cannot look at this aspect of the question too carefully. Having the great basic fact of a New Dispensation absolutely demonstrated, it is worse than folly, it is madness, not to see the consequent facts, and give them due weight. The great basic idea of Spiritualism, revealed, and demonstrated in, and by, its manifold phenomena, is pregnant with annihilating power to all the old forms of ideal thought. If all spiritual phenomena are strictly natural, the entire structure of present religion and authoritative morality is swept away, as with the besom of destruction. "Old things are passed away, and all things are made new." All the ideas of the human soul are

*depolarized* and *repolarized*—it becomes a new man. Consequently, there must be found new standards, new canons and formulas for the enunciation of spiritual and moral teachings. With the overthrow of the false idea of the supernatural, disappears all the gods, goddesses, and devils of the olden time. The pantheon of superstitious, ignorant faith is cleansed at once of its idols, and men and women alone are seen to be its inhabitants. Think as we may, this is a tremendous change. It necessitates a change in the entire literature and thought of the world. To suppose this can be done without herculean labor is fanaticism: while to attempt it in the one-sided method of defunct theology is to commit suicide.

Should any ultra-idealist object and say that this course is too outward and sensuous, this is my answer: The inner can never be developed without the outer—the soul without the body. If souls could be personalized without the body, no bodies could be formed. If the intuitive, spiritual nature could reach the altitude of self-conscious realization, and thereby cognize the vast realm of relationship, materiality would never be its garment even for a time. But that is impossible. Sense is the great laboratory where the soul's demonstrations are made, and where alone the crucial test can be applied. Shall we ignore this, and launch away into the land of dream and reverie, chasing the flitting forms of fancy, and refusing to submit them to the ordeal of analysis? If so, we leave the only road of safety.

I have already instanced the necessity existing in reference to mediumship and the manifestations, which cover all that mystic realm lying between the spiritual and the material. This certainly is of acknowledged importance. The world cannot be convinced without demonstration. We owe it to the world needing it, and also to the world waiting to receive it, as we furnish the requisite instrumentalities. That these manifestations may have their due weight, renders a tolerable comprehension of the recondite science of human magnetism, as well as of the common facts of electricity and electro-magnetism, an absolute necessity.

But, not only is there a necessity in this direction, but in many others. Perhaps no subject is more thoroughly involved in mystery, to the general mind, than the history of the various forms of religion. It is the interest of the ruling aristocracy

therein—the clergy—to keep the masses of the people in profound ignorance on this point, for, in this way alone can they palm off their shallow falsehoods upon their credulity. They have so long controlled, nay, I may say, *made* the literature of the ages, that the grossest perversions of history and falsifications of the world's chronology are honored as truths, and pass unchallenged by the multitude. To expose these falsehoods, and strip off the concealing mask of priestly hypocrisy, requires large and varied scholarship on the part of writers; and to comprehend fully, and intelligently appreciate the work when done, requires culture on the part of the masses. And to command the sources of known information will tax to some extent our pecuniary acquisitions. The knowledge, thus within reach, must be given to the world in order to the progress of Spiritualism. The church will never give it. We must do the work, or it will remain undone. The present culture and educational appliances are mostly under clerical control, and we must create a new system of education, or the preliminary work already done by Spiritualism will, in a measure, be lost.

Those who educate a nation's children, shape its destiny. No class are more thoroughly awake to this fact than the clergy, and hence the untiring assiduity with which they labor to keep the educational appliances in their own hands. We ought to be able to see as clearly as they do, and work as zealously for the true as they toil for the false. In every city, village and town we ought to form ourselves into schools or lyceums, not of the children only, but of all, old and young. Libraries should be collected, scientific apparatus procured, and a course of study at once entered upon. Lectures of instruction would be given, and we should very soon find ourselves in the full tide of successful experiment, with the great world following hard after us.

When the acquisition of knowledge is made a pleasure, as our philosophy teaches that it should be, instead of being an onerous task, then will the rapid progress of the race be ensured. But such a marvel can never happen under the old regime. Life is duty—its motions a task—its necessity for labor is its fearful curse. Can we look for a change on the part of those whose interest lies in the direction of such grim and gloomy views? Of course not. Our Dispensation lifts “the vail of the covering cast over all people,” and shows us the “Sunny Side” of man in the clear sunshine or

truth. Life is more than duty, it is one grand song of jubilee—a triumphant march of soul through the fields and forests of Materialism to the shining land of immortal beauty and love. There is no curse of deity mantling the universe with a thunder-cloud of woe and wrath, nor concealed secrets reserved from the prying curiosity of man under fearful pains and penalties; but the whole boundless world is one vast flowery field, where man may freely gather from all its nectar, sweets without fear; and the more he discovers, the more he seizes, the better God is pleased. This most important teaching we must give the world, for, to a great extent, the nightmare of ages holds it still in its fearful spell. We must break that spell and set the people free. It is our safety, as the opposite is our destruction. If we are truly in the new, it is not only our safety, but it is our happiness. We cannot avoid doing this work, for “it is life, and health, and peace.”

Discovering, as we have, that the world's enlightenment in the truths of Spiritualism, constitutes the living spring of deathless joy, we can but drink largely therefrom by giving ourselves most heartily to the glorious work. Thus are we most perfectly tested. If our pretensions are genuine, our affirmation will be given in the effective, practical work performed, while if we are only lip-deep Spiritualists we shall make a great ado by words, while real effort will not appear. We shall stand with the sneering query, “what good has it done?” mantling us with merited shame and contempt.