

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUALISM

AND

ITS DEMANDS UPON ITS RECIPIENTS.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BY

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READ AND PRESENT TO YOUR NEIGHBOR.

Spirit and matter are, I believe, co-existent and eternal; and if Spiritualism is to be understood as embodying all of spirit and that thereto pertaining, then is it eternal—never began and never can end. But in its special sense, as limited to the fact of a conscious individual existence of each spirit, as surviving the dissolution of its physical body, and a communication between that spirit and another, or others still in the earth form or forms, it must naturally from this definition be as old as the exit from earth life of the first individual in the ages past. The "Book of Job" is said to be of date unknown; but enough is known to place it among the earliest poems of antiquity. The author, however, makes a character, Eliphaz, to say, "In thoughts from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men, fear came upon me, and trembling. * * * Then a spirit passed before my face; it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice." (Job iv, 13 to 17.)

This is an experience ages old, and it is one that has been repeated and varied from that time then, if not from times long

previous, till now all over the wide, wide world.

Forty-five years of mortal time only has the revival called Modern Spiritualism obtained a hearing; and yet, as we frequently call attention, above the strifes and contentions among believers and its friends, notwithstanding the attacks and blows of its enemies, regardless of the listlessness and apathy of many of its recipients, despite the oftentimes rashness and indiscretion of its advocates, even with the burden of obnoxious and extraneous matter thrust upon it by unprincipled individuals, and, also, though unscrupulous deceivers, charlatans and mountebanks ply their trade in its name, yet it stands to-day exerting its influence more powerfully than ever. Men may shut their eyes, may stop their ears, may turn their backs, yet such is the power that it does, despite all opposition or volition, take its hold upon the heart. Spiritualism is in the air, and even the stone walls of convent and closely-shut doors of church have not kept it from within them. Not even the matter-of-fact materialist has been unmoved. Although as impenetrable as adamant has he seemed, yet his hard, cold, dogmatic materialism has changed to plastic,

cool and philosophical agnosticism. And, taking the masses in general, it is a noticeable fact, that those who do *not* embrace Spiritualism, or cherish some form or phase of it, are hard to find. The outspoken Spiritualists, it is true, are limited. The majority, it is found, have become convinced of the error of old opinions and beliefs, and have evidences, to a degree, of the truths of Modern Spiritualism, yet for some one policy or another, wise or unwise—and generally unwise—an open acknowledgment is withheld by large numbers.

But Spiritualism is an established fact in the minds of millions who *are* open, avowed believers.

With the rise of Spiritualism much of dogma has decayed. In its establishment theology has seen and sees a great loss of power, though true religion has ever been the gainer by its coming and development. Once the great cry was, "Beware, beware delusion and lies!" and occasionally we hear a similar cry to-day. But such warnings have always increased the demand to know of the matter, and through this the numbers in its advocacy have grown to millions, and the cause is spreading with unparalleled example.

But the work has been more the work of the spirits than the work of mortals, from the force of Spiritualism than the result of the labors of Spiritualists.

We have never yet had any successful working organization even of the Spiritualists—no mortal band, with binding compact of intention or method, and yet what mighty results have been accomplished on all sides, and what effective influence is felt everywhere. Opposed fearfully, its truths trampled upon, and its advocates libeled and goaded; its believers not only retaliating, but quarreling among themselves—fighting for some vagary or petty position, mediums detrimentally allowing jealousies their sway, and tricksters pursuing their nefarious work, and yet Spiritualism marches on, conquering and achieving. Everybody is simply amazed, especially as the accomplishments of the movement are classified and enumerated.

But my message to-day in this lecture is to the Spiritualists. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear!" Great as the results are, *we*, ourselves, might have done something as a body politic. And, not forgetting how the minority of Spiritualists individually have dared and done; yet the majority, though in individual capacity, could have accomplished greater results. I do not say that the outlook is not, under prevailing circumstances, propitious; but that *we* can assist, and so should do so, in making the movement more promising, as such.

We learn from the successes of the past, and equally may we learn and profit from

its mistakes. The end of all such attainment is the improvement of the present. Nearly all Spiritualists freely express their wishes for success to the great cause. They exchange congratulations with each other over every progressive step in our spiritual movement and rejoice in jubilee as the great progress is reviewed on our anniversary occasions. But in view of the many failures of the past among Spiritualists, not unmindful of many successes; because of the great indifference and apathy of the large number of Spiritualists as to practical work in the movement, without overlooking the active efforts of others; you will allow me to ask a question which often dwells in my thoughts, and which to-day wells from my lips, as to whether these merry and well-sounding wishes so glibly expressed were and are really meant, or whether they merely found expression and now are recorded as complimentary lip utterances, in accord with much of custom in the rut of flippant flattery. If Spiritualists are actually sincere (?) in their expressions of hope and good will, another question presses further, and that whether they should not do all in their power, by word and by deed, at all times—even now—to make these wishes so far as possible actualized. I often think as I find professed Spiritualists everywhere, many in the churches as well as out, the majority living, almost, in non-recognition of any existing society in their community, and not a few influential and well known Spiritualists *away from their home*, perchance at some great camp in summer—Onset, Lake Pleasant, Cassadaga or others—their flag flying at the peak, who *in their towns and cities* are close-mouthed and close-fisted, indifferent to any appeal to a movement in their midst, but paying liberally to some fashionable church, and lending their influence in its direction, the flag that was hauled down at the camp folded and put away—I often, I was to say, what a vast difference after all there is between saying, "I am a Spiritualist" and truly being and living a Spiritualist. I know it requires no little struggle to attain the true life and our true relations to each other. It is very easy to go with those of the generally accepted opinion, the customary belief, and the popular crowd, flattered and smiled upon; but it requires true manhood or true womanhood, as the sex might be, to turn at duty's stern promptings and independently face the prejudiced and opposing throng to receive its censures, its frowns, or be met by its antagonism on the one hand or ostracism on the other, many times.

Remember the old copy-book maxim of boyhood days, "A dead fish can swim down stream, but it takes a *live* one to swim up." If we live up to our highest convictions, we

certainly do well, act nobly—angels can do no more.

I have come to think the time is now here when every Spiritualist is called upon to consider the practical bearing of the gospel he professes. It is the appeal of Spiritualism to his inner nature—it is the demand of Spiritualism upon the body politic of Spiritualists. It certainly is a matter to be greatly deplored, to see so many theoretical and selfish Spiritualists, and to find so few practical ones.

As a movement and power we know that Spiritualism had been of no effect in the world, had not spirits out of the flesh been aided by spirits in the mortal. Mediumship has been, and is, the only channel for spirit communication, and the ex-carnate ones have been and are dependent upon the carnate co-laborers—none other than the Spiritualists—to express to the world their thoughts and their ideas of action. We certainly know this fact, and yet in great measure overlook duty in view of it. Having attention called to it, in the line of my duty and at my hand, may I plead that you consider well and resolve wisely for the future, and then put your resolution into execution. I am not demanding boisterous and lawless action from you, nor would I desire you to fly unnecessarily into the face of prejudice; but I do ask for men to be men, women to be women, for each to be natural, rather than hypocritical, for human kind to stand by principle and its practice rather than by policy and its following.

Death seems to pass a sponge over all that has gone before. It seems a total breaking off from all that life has hitherto consisted in. Friends, home and its associations, wealth and pleasure, all at an end. The body, the habiliments, the objects of pleasure and gain, all left, while life has gone, the spirit fled. But does man take nothing with him, when, from the verge of earth-life, he goes into the great beyond? Verily, verily, his past life is just the one thing that he does take along. He takes himself, and that self is the product of all his past experience and acts. As an oak bears in itself the results of every shower that through long years has freshened it, of every gale that has toughened it or stripped it of its boughs, of the sunshine that has fed it, and the drought that has parched it, so man, when he stands at the end of his earthly career, is what he has been made by all his joys and sorrows, right and wrong acts—both of commission and omission. He takes into the other world his own character. The life to come and the life that now is are parts of one another. They are closely related. The man is not the same that the boy was, but what the boy was entered into

the man as a part of him; and in the same sense, the spirit man is not the same as the earth-man, but what the mortal was and is enters the immortal, the spirit as a part of him in the future life. I believe there is not an act or neglect, not a word or thought but casts its influence forward into the to-morrow that lies beyond the tomb.

Now, do we really desire greater success for Modern Spiritualism? Would we enjoy its blessings more—have it felt more effectually as a power for good? Then let us make it this success so far as we can, by our best words, our best acts, our earnest co-operative efforts, and our liberal contributions. I do not limit, let me say, contributions to mean money alone. I mean that so far as we have that to spare—and Spiritualism demands that when we are paying out to and for that which antagonizes it; but among other things all can contribute one thing, and that, too, whether we have money or not, and that is manhood or womanhood.

I claim that every Spiritualist should respect Spiritualism enough to aim at strictly moral, upright and honest life on every bearing. Without elaborating, let me simply say, first, because it is right; second, because we are mediums, or are coming more or less in contact with mediums in our investigations, and an immoral atmosphere is alike loathsome and detrimental to the better classes of spirits we desire, and who are thereby deterred from visiting us, for the inexorable law as to like seeking or attracting like is absolute; and, third, because communications partake in lesser or greater degree of the channels through which they flow, as light is colored in passing through different hued glass, as the sweet is bittered from its contact with quassia.

Then, again, it is desirable that Spiritualists who are at work in the great movement be even better workers—more agreeable amid their many natural disagreements on many points—more tenacious of Spiritual truths and their promulgation, than sticklers for any particular hobby, except as it might be in right time and place.

For the same many reasons that it is foolish to expect to accept all the teachings of mortals unreservedly, so it were folly to attempt to affiliate with all the teachings of spirits. We must differ, and spirits must differ in their many ideas relative to questions of reform, theory, theology, morality even, and religion. Let us reason. Let us discriminate. But let us, as well, be humane—be charitable. What if some do desire to be known as Christian Spiritualists, while others see Spiritualism as anti-Christian? What if some claim themselves as Bible Spiritualists, at the same time others spurn such a title for themselves, although

Spiritualists? What if some do believe materialization demonstrated, while others believe it a mere personation at best, or transfiguration, and yet others still claim it in any light an impossibility? What if some spirits and mortals do maintain reincarnation a truth, while others, both spirits and mortals, insist it cannot be? What if some Spiritualists and even spirits do believe in a limited future existence, while others believe in eternal life? Suppose some Spiritualists do entertain the belief that Jesus once was, and others claim as they reason that the whole thing is a myth? What matters it if some must believe that there is such a thing as obsession, at the same time others argue the contrary? We are differently organized, and we are decidedly individuals, and it is not to be expected we can see all these and other things alike, at least, not until we arrive at like states of mental growth or with evidence strong enough for conviction. We must differ. But here is my thought. Must we allow our arguments pro and con to bring us to harsh words, calling names, libeling individuals, or dealing blows? Alas! Alas! it need not be, should not be. I deplore the fact that so much wrangling has been and to-day is, in our ranks—that journal is arrayed against journal—that societies exist in many places back to back, speaking bitterly of each other—that certain ones won't affiliate in the main work, because their chief thought, hobby, or representative man, speaker or medium, cannot have head place—that one medium is so jealous of another medium he won't work in the same society. It is retarding. It is detrimental.

There is need of resolution and need of resolute action. Although it is impossible for any one to have the all of truth, yet it is by no means improbable that each has some what of truth. Truth is sacred above all things else, and we should be willing, if needful, to sacrifice all for its sake. I would have Spiritualists then stand for the exact truth, as facts, law and revelation have established it in the individual mind. And in expressing it, compare it willingly with that which another as dutifully advances, discuss the merits, and no matter how severely we may or must criticize each the other's thought or position, not forget we each have rights, and get to vilifying, striking blows, or severing relationships.

As we look back over the highway of history over which humanity has marched, we count those the grandest who stand out from the mass, distinguished by the one fact that they rendered their age a service and helped mankind. "By their fruits" shall and must men be known. This is the standard by which we are now measuring men

aspiring to greatness; and, too, the great movements which sweep over our land.

We are passing through, and have for the past few years, as Spiritualists, the sieve of renovation, and much chaff has blown from our wheat. Spiritualism in its last revival burst upon the people like a flood, and at one time seemed to sweep almost all in its tracks, and it is not surprising that there was plenty of drift and rubbish to come down the current. Floating upon the rivers and streams of society are always fanatics, impostors, hobby-riders, and lawless so-called reformers, and when great tidal waves of progress come they drift easily, to say nothing of their steering, into the great flood-flow of the new movement. Unprincipled and iconoclastic, they pursue their work under its name, and eventually become discovered as the very pests of the cause. So in the great spiritual movement, certain such as these found themselves in or sought to become recognized as the expounders of Spiritualism, and when once fully known as such, they dropped the main issue and tried to carry Spiritualists on their hobbies.

Severe ordeals have Spiritualists passed through in connection with reform movements, and notably in dealing with the problems of Social Freedom; also in connection with mediumship, especially with the materialization phases, inasmuch as so many unprincipled and mercenary ones jump at imitating results in genuine mediumship, and for pelf cater to the over-credulous, and take their chances as they feed the wonder-seeking in the community. The avaricious and simulating medium, let me say, also, who prostitutes his mediumistic powers for any reason whatsoever, is, in my estimation, no better or more excusable than the unscrupulous critic or imposing charlatan.

But understand me, for I believe every subject should be treated—religious, theological, political, reformatory, social or moral—but *properly* and in time and place. I believe, too, in materialization, as in all other phases of mediumship, and I would protect and have protected all mediums; but in doing so I would knowingly or excusably cover up no fraud.

While we should ever declare spirit communication and manifestation as a fact, and while we should proclaim spiritual truths, and while we should aid and encourage all phases of mediumship, yet at the same time we should stand for exact truth and purity of character.

Why, the fact of spirit intercourse once proven, then Spiritualism urges as its grandest and first aim all acceptants to harmonious relationship and co-operative action. Its first religious and practical teaching is the

principle of true brotherhood, and then, second, a strictly personal responsibility, and so from the start insures the most scrupulous morals and religious practices. If our interest ends with the external manifestations of spirits—with seances, communications, tests and wonders—we have no clear view of the grand practical aims of our philosophy.

The one great and pressing need to-day among Spiritualists is unity of action, co-operation, associate efforts—a great demand of Spiritualism is for organized work among Spiritualists.

It is a matter of joy, it is a matter of congratulation, that not a small number of representative Spiritualists have organized into a National Association, and it is to be borne in mind that this organization is broad enough to embrace all Spiritualists in the United States, and that the call is extended to all. All surely must admit that an organized and incorporate body is needful for protection, for commanding respect, for redress, for better action, and more effective promulgation. Such the present National organization aims to effect. It has recognized the fact that it would not do to organize on any really creedal basis, with long-drawn articles of belief, for to these all Spiritualists could not agree. The only creedal consideration is that which underlies the sole basic principle of Spiritualism. Not a Spiritualist but what believes in spirit-communication and manifestation, for this fact was demonstrated or believed in before the name could be applied. This bare fact of spirit existence and return, embodied in a statement, is all that is necessary so far as belief and agreement to the same goes. And so far as I understand the National Organized Movement, it is simply and solely for business and purely practical benefits to the body politic of Spiritualists.

There have been, previously, a few efforts to secure organization, and they have failed to accomplish aught. But in those efforts were patent reasons why failure should be, and so far as seen, the present movement has endeavored to avoid the features so feared by the many in past efforts at banding.

We are individuals indeed and believe in individuality. We have been afraid of sectarianism, many of us having learned a sorry lesson from connection with the Church, and so any approach to this is avoided in the new movement. No silly attempt was made therefore to organize Spiritualism, as has been made in times past. Spiritualism cannot be organized, proscribed or limited, controlled or directed, to suit any set of liberal minds or of conservative thinkers; for it is the exclusive property of no one, or of no body of believers—no, not even of the entire body politic of Spiritualists. And then, too, as to

Spiritualists as thinkers and workers in union, they need no leader endowed with the authority of pope or bishop. We need no liege—not even a Jesus. Individually we may and must think of Jesus as we will, consider him an elder brother, or even a lord and master, if one pleases, but in an organization he should have no place whatever, any more than God in our United States Constitution. Not Christian, not Bible, nor either scientific Spiritualists, though we may individually class ourselves among one or the other, must we in general organization proclaim ourselves, but simply Spiritualists. We have nothing to prove, certainly, that Spiritualism organized, *i. e.*, controlled by men, under the dictation of mortals, allowing it a possibility and in sway, might not become as great a despotism as any consider Catholicism or Protestantism to have been. I am glad to note that the new National Association would avoid these wrecking rocks. I am free to say I believe the call for organization is opportune, and I am convinced that times are ripe for such unitary and harmonious action, and feel to say further that in my estimation Spiritualism demands it.

Spiritualism should be presented by competent lecturers, exemplified by honest mediums, demonstrated by positive manifestations, not only in every city, but in every town throughout the United States, and our efforts should ever be bent in such direction. Our best literature should also be extended through some system to all these places. Our lecturers and workers should always find a welcome in every place, sought, encouraged, and pleasantly environed, instead of finding themselves left apart and treated as strangers. All duty is not fulfilled simply by meeting the financial and legal obligation. Each individual Spiritualist interested in their coming should consider it devolving on him or her to see that nothing is lacking for their comfort, cheer and best work. Our mediums, whether physical, mental, clairvoyant or healing, should have sure encouragement, happy and moral surroundings and just protection so far as we can devote our attention.

Some places like Willimantic, Somerville and Stafford, Ct.; Georgetown, Ballston and Watertown, N. Y.; Sturgis, Mich.; Anderson, Ind., and Greenwich and Boston, Mass., own their own halls, churches or temples. Several others lease for a year or a series of years for all time, like Haverhill, Mass., and Columbus, Ohio, and so control and sublet during the week when not in use. But every place by this time should own one or control one and in it, too, maintain our cause by lectures, conferences, lyceums, sociables and well regulated seances, etc. In them should be

libraries, established not alone for the Spiritualists, but as well for the interested and inquiring in the community about. The young should have proper spiritual and liberal instruction. We need public benevolent and educational institutions. Let Spiritualists in various places take pains to see if Spiritual literature of merit is to be found in their public libraries, for public libraries like public schools and public institutions, are all supported proportionately by our taxes, and have no legal or moral right to discriminate against any denominational book or periodical, *as such*. Is there a public reading room supported by your money with the others, and the Christian Union, the Congregationalist, the Gospel Trumpet, the Zion's Herald, the Christian Register, the Methodist Advocate, or the Salvationists' Battle Cry are there, be interested enough to see if some representative paper or papers on Spiritualism, Liberalism and Free Thought, like the Banner of Light, Religio Philosophical Journal, Light of Truth, Progressive Thinker, the Investigator, or the Truth Seeker, are there; if not, then ask for them, and insist that they shall be there. It is your right.

Individuals can do much toward these things, but associations can do better. And a thorough working organization can effect most. These things are demanded in the name of Spiritualism. The work is demanded of you who are Spiritualists. Find then the place amid all, not merely where you would like to be, but rather where you are most needed, and then go earnestly to work.

As most of these things can best and soonest be accomplished through organized work, I recommend organization. And as a National organization is now formed and is eager to get rapidly into effective working order, I would commend it to your notice and careful consideration.

Now feeling the importance of what I have been presenting to you, allow me a brief recapitulation for easier recall in consideration.

First, Spiritualism demands from each individual Spiritualist, a careful consideration of the practical bearings of its teachings.

Second, it demands a scrupulous discrimination between what it absolutely teaches, and what certain unprincipled, lawless, and some thoughtless advocates assert it teaches.

Third, it demands the establishment of collated naturally revealed facts, the exact truth in accordance with the facts, and a sacred devotion to everlasting principle.

Fourth, it demands a true manhood or womanhood, as the case may be, on the part of every individual, especially if a Spiritualist, and pre-eminently if a medium.

Fifth, it demands a strict accountability from each for all his deeds done, words spoken and thoughts entertained, since an equal responsibility naturally obtains with each human soul.

Sixth, it demands a pure platform; not only exemplified in its teachings, but in the lives and character of its teachers, and that too whether they are free-will, inspirational or trance instruments, in other words, whether mortals or spirits.

Seventh, it demands a just and sure protection of mediumship, an unqualified denunciation and renunciation of all known charlatanism, mountebankism and fraud perpetrated in its sacred name.

Eighth, the establishment of training-rooms for the children, of inquiry-rooms for the young and mentally growing, of lyceums for friendly disputation and conference, of seance rooms for best demonstrations, of libraries for the communities about, and of houses or halls its own for lectures and illustration.

Ninth, it demands not only individual effort, but co-operative action, from a harmonious brotherhood and sisterhood, that it may not only attract the attention of a part, but command the admiration and respect which are due from all—nothing short of organization can accomplish this.

Surely, Spiritualism demands much at our hands. Let us find our needful places, one and all, if we have not already, and go earnestly to work. Let us look for them most carefully, and think carefully, and then resolve carefully, and may I say solemnly, for then I feel all will act nobly and in such a way as to accrue ever to the honor of Spiritualists, the sooner triumph of Spiritualism, and to the happiness of humanity.

Yes, I pray you, one and all—

"Build up the cause! Make the foundation strong!

Firm as the solid eternal;
Chase all the shadows of error and wrong
Away with the truth rays supernal.
Give of the light that is blessing thy life;
Let it shine, too, for some other:
Low o'er the darkness of sorrow and strife,
May be 'twill reach some sad brother.

"Build up the cause! Cast thy bread on the wave,

Patience wait the returning;
Lowliest truth may be mighty to save,
Coming to hearts filled with yearning.
All that you give shall you gather once more
Grown into blossoms of beauty.
Fair 'neath the light of the 'evergreen shore'
Waveth the harvest from duty."