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...AT IS SPIRITUALISM?

AND

SHALL SPIRITUALISTS HAVE A CREED?

IN

TWO LECTURES.

BY

MRS. MARIA M. KING,

AUTHORESS OF "THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURE," "REAL LIFE IN THE SPIRIT LAND," "SOCIAL EVILS—THEIR CAUSES AND CURE," "THE SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY VS. DIABOLISM," ETC., ETC.

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WHAT IS SPIRITUALISM?

LECTURE I.

The Spiritual Philosophy has been defined in books, lectures, periodicals, etc., etc., many times since the advent of the Dispensation; different writers and speakers explaining it according to their own understanding of its principles. The various expositions that have been given of it, in this manner, have served to enlighten the people, somewhat, concerning its principles; they have answered the same purpose that the same means do for any system of philosophy or religion, viz: that of calling public attention to it, and eliciting the desire, in multitudes of minds, for more explicit declarations of the principles which are claimed to be Spiritualism, by different exponents of it. There is an imperative demand, at the present day, for concise declarations of the basic principles of the Spiritual Philosophy, by the multitudes who have imbibed a love of it from the meagre knowledge they have gained, in one way and another, without studying the various works on the subject with a view of learning its precise principles therefrom. It is not to be expected that every one who would know of the doctrines of Spiritualism, will take the trouble of learning them from elaborate disquisitions on the Philosophy, or from the scattered essays and lectures which abound, but to which all may not have access.

There is much complaint made by all classes, of the vague, and often incomprehensible manner in which Spirit-

ualism is taught; and there are very many who are repelled from it, because, as they aver, there is nothing to it that they can understand. Teachers of this Dispensation owe it to this class, as well as to all others, to give clear and comprehensible statements of its basic principles; and definite explanations of these. Spiritualism should be brought to the comprehension of those to whom it is taught. It can be, because spiritual things correspond to material in such a degree that they can be explained by the latter. Minds accustomed to the study of physical nature are prepared to understand something of spiritual nature; and Spiritualism, correctly defined, and in language to which mankind are accustomed, is as natural and comprehensible as physical science. It is true, that materialism clouds the human intellect, at the present day, to the degree that the masses are slow to comprehend intricate principles; and this fact has caused it to be believed by many, that the science of Spiritualism is something too incomprehensible to be understood. No valuable knowledge is to be acquired without study; and whoever attempts to gain a knowledge of this system of faith, must study it as he would the sciences, or any other system of philosophy.

Concise statements of the principles of this faith, as different individuals—mediums and others, understand them, will be calculated to awaken a deeper interest in it, in thinking minds, than has hitherto been exhibited by that class. These will see, in such, something tangible for their minds to grasp and act upon, without the preliminary labor of wading through long treatises to find these principles. Spiritualists themselves should have well digested principles as the basis of the faith they profess; and unless they have these, it is worth little to them, or to the rest of the world. They can neither practice nor preach a faith that is undefined in their own minds in its basic principles.

The human mind bases its action and its progress upon principles clearly defined to itself; and, unless it has the power to clearly define its position on certain principles which must govern it, it is incapable of real progress. Its action is too indefinite, when it originates in no basic prin-

ciples, to promote actual intellectual growth; but, under such circumstances, it is continually casting about, seeking to lay a foundation on which intellect can build itself up.

Theories are all-important; for they underlie human action directed to practical ends. It is altogether impossible for an individual to act wisely to any definite end, unless he has a theory in his mind which directs and sustains him in his acts. His reason and conscience will upbraid him for doing what he disbelieves in. Conscience is the monitor which whispers to every individual spirit, that it has certain basic principles which must be its guide while they remain so.

Theories on all subjects are imperatively demanded by the intelligence of the age, as a means of inciting to thought and investigation, and the practical application of principles. Science, Philsophy, and Religion, are equally important, in this age, when the tendency is to discover the reasons of things, the powers which underlie nature's action in all her departments. Theories of the origin of force; of the different qualities of matter; of the action of spirit and matter combined; of the origin of life; of animal and vegetable species; of man; of angels; and of the nature of God; are all necessary in this progressive age, when mind is asking questions regarding these things, and when science is at fault concerning them. When man reasons more of all things, he will be far wiser than he is at present. When he understands better what God is, he will better understand himself, his relations and obligations in the universe; when he understands more definitely of angelic intelligences, he will also know more of his own nature and duties. When science has fathomed the problems of man's origin, and that of species of the kingdoms below him, and the origin of life and force, it will have laid a foundation for rapid progress of the race, intellectually and spiritually; and *not until then.*

Some people have a habit of denouncing theories as being detrimental to true progress. As though intellectual unfoldment were not promoted by thought, and weighing opinion against opinion on all questions that concern hu-

manity! As though theories do not underlie progressive action of the human mind, as truth underlies progressive principles! The habit of thinking to no point, or from no basis, is too common already among the people to need encouragement from any class of teachers. On the other hand, it should be the aim of teachers to insist on the necessity of all having opinions of their own on all subjects; and where any lack the necessary knowledge to form an opinion, they should be taught to seek it—not ignore it.

I propose to offer a Declaration of Principles, which are what I term, the basic principles of the Spiritual Philosophy. In stating these principles, I do not hesitate to declare, that they underlie *my creed;* for as one who has established in his own mind a basis for belief and action, I have a creed—what the English language defines as such. In defining my own creed, I do not define that of any other individual, unless some other one believes as I do. I do not attach any authority to my creed more than *reason* gives it; I mean a cultivated, an enlightened reason. I question the right of none to choose for themselves the principles by which they can walk among men and be good citizens. I concede the right to *none* to deprive *one* of this privilege; therefore I assume the right to state what I believe to be a safe guide to individuals and society; a noble standard under which all may rally, who conscientiously can, for the propagation of the truth among the people.

SPIRITUALISM COMPREHENDS THE FOLLOWING BASIC PRINCIPLES:

1st. It teaches a belief in God as an Overruling Intelligence in nature; and in correspondence with this, that man has a Religious Nature which requires to be cultivated in common with all his other faculties, that he may aspire more and more after God, in whose image he is created; that prayer, either as the spontaneous effusion of the spirit in holy aspirations after truth and divine light, unexpressed in language, or in the expressed desire—the uttered prayer—is a necessary means of promoting progress of the spirit, of developing it to a comprehension of truth.

It teaches that religion is so much the law of man's nature that he must worship and pray; and that law is fulfilled—not changed—by his giving exercise to religious emotions as a means of securing blessing.

2d. It teaches the Brotherhood of man; and that man is his brother's keeper, in the sense that individuals are responsible to each other and to society, and that society is responsible to its individual members; that the civilized and enlightened races are the guardians of those below them, and commissioned by nature as their protectors and teachers, in the same sense that the refined, educated, and influential, are the natural teachers and guardians of the ignorant, the weak, and the depraved.

3d. It teaches equality of rights of the whole brotherhood of man; and allows no interference with individual opinions or acts, any further than the interests of good order in society demand. It requires that the ignorant be taught what is virtue and good order, and the vicious restrained from preying upon society; and, at the same time, educated into right doing. It favors just laws, and proclaims against anarchy and license.

4th. It teaches that all men are under obligatian to adhere to established social forms as far as the interests of good order demand; and that man may not set up his own individuality above law and the common interests of society; that, as mankind are a brotherhood, individual rights can not clash with those of the public; for individuals make up society; and an individual, in warring upon society, must war upon himself; the interests of one being the interests of all, in a well constituted community or government; that social disorders only arise from the abuse of individual privileges.

5th. It teaches that there are such things as vice and virtue; as morality and immorality; as right and wrong; as mankind understand and use these terms; and that there is a distinction between these; that the standard is established in every individual's nature which distinguishes virtue from vice; morality from immorality; right from wrong; but, in many, nature is so perverted that they can not read them

selves correctly; and, consequently, society is under obligation to all its members to establish certain standards as safeguards to the welfare and progress of the people. While men are an imperfect "law unto themselves," it plainly declares, that they must be subject to man-made laws, founded upon God-made laws, as nearly as human legislation is capable of doing it.

6th. It teaches that progress is the law in all nature; and that the human intellect passes through stages of progress, outgrowing forms and opinions adopted in its infancy and ignorance, and substituting for these such as are suited to higher stages of growth; being a nearer approach to truth; therefore, it distinctly teaches, that dogmas and creeds can never be authoritative over mind longer than reason makes them so. Reason sits as judge among the human faculties, according to this philosophy; and this, alone, is authoritative with mind after it comes into full use.

7th. It teaches the equality of the sexes; declaring woman to be as much a necessity to man as man to woman; and that the spheres of the two are so combined as to form one perfect sphere. It points out distinctive duties for men and women, in consideration of the distinctiveness of their natures and the peculiar fitness of each sex for the sphere appointed it.

8th. It teaches that monogamic marriage is founded in nature, and is a divine institution, in as strict a sense as any institution can be said to be divine; that it is the most sacred of all institutions which the intelligence of the Infinite Mind has established; inasmuch as it lies at the foundation of the progress of human beings through the eternity of their existence. It teaches that the coöperative creative principles in nature are embodied and personified in the sexes; and that, in man and woman, these principles have their highest expression. One result of marriage being offspring in the physical state, it demands that parents unite their care for these, eternally. It teaches that offspring are not the only use of marriage, in the physical state; but that the communion of the sexes, as man and wife, creates magnetic conditions which favor progress of

all nature, and that these must be propagated by this means in the first state, and all the states of existence through which spirits pass; that this close relation of the sexes, being, for eternity, sacred to uses which can be subserved by no other means, marriage is for eternity. It also teaches that the intercourse of the sexes in the common affairs of life, as fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances, is necessary to the well-being and progress of the human race; and also affects all nature below man to stimulate its natural action; that the commingling of the sexes in the animal creation also aids in promoting the well-being of nature; and that this law is expressed throughout nature by the equal distribution and the commingling of forms positive and negative to each other, and designated male and female.

9th. It teaches that divorces are not according to nature; yet, are allowable under certain circumstances; which circumstances result from the undeveloped condition of individuals and society in the physical state.

10th. It teaches that men and women should use the utmost caution in choosing life-companions, both for their own sakes and that of their offspring; that hasty marriages conduce to disorder in society, by generating, as they are apt to do, inharmonious conditions in families; that men and women owe it to the generations to come, that they qualify themselves for parentage before they assume its responsibilities.

11th. It teaches that the habits of parents affect their offspring for good or ill, according as these habits affect the life-essences which are transmitted to offspring; that ante-natal conditions decide, in a great degree, the character of individuals—the strength of their propensities to wrong doing, or their love of virtue and right. It teaches, therefore, that every consideration for the good of society demands, that people be educated into correct habits.

12th. It teaches that the character of the civilization of a people depends in, a great degree, upon the quality of their diet; that the essences of food and drink enter into the

nature of individuals, affecting their mentality, morality and spirituality; and that, therefore, a gross diet is utterly incompatible with refinement of morals, intellect, and spirituality; while the opposite is conducive to progress in all that makes man truly manly and Godlike.

13th. It teaches that there are spheres of life, infinite in number, through which man and the elements which clothe outer nature pass on to perfection; that each successive sphere is a link which binds that below it to those above; and that its influence is to elevate elements upon the lower to its own plane. It teaches that it is the prerogative of the higher to reach down and elevate the lower, not push it downward; therefore,

14th. It teaches that the Devil of Old Theology is a myth; and that evil spirits do not interfere with the children of earth to degrade them with their malicious influences.

15th. It teaches that order is so much the law in the second sphere, that the vicious can be restrained for their own good and that of their fellow beings, in that and the lower sphere. This order determines the use of efficient means to elevate the degraded and every other class. It teaches that the progress of every individual receives an impetus upon his entrance into spirit-life, from the fact that conditions there favor this.

16th. It teaches that the death of the physical body releases the spirit, which was its living principle; and that the latter, after a short period of unconsciousness, revives to conscious life, clothed in a body like unto its physical form, but spiritual; that the spirit, now "clothed upon" with spiritual powers which it can use, goes to the second sphere, as to its home; conducted thither by spirits whose pleasure it is to nurse, guard, and teach, the new-born spirit; that the life of the individual continues as if unbroken, but by the single ripple called physical death, and that progress through this sphere ensues, when it is prepared to enter upon life in the third sphere; and thus it passes onward through the spheres, leaving behind it, for ever, physical life, and progressing through successive stages of spiritual life.

17th. It teaches the gradation of spiritual spheres to suit the progressive life of spiritual man; and that the spheres of each grade are infinite in number in the universe; that spiritualized substance emanates from the surface of physical planets of a single system of a certain grade, to form a spiritual surface, which is a sphere, and termed the second sphere, as succeeding the first or physical plane; and that surface forms of the higher grades on these physical planets transmit spiritual essences to compose forms to clothe this spiritual surface; that refined spiritual emanations from the second sphere combine with others from the same grade of spheres, and gravitate to a higher plane, there forming spiritual surface and forms, which is the third sphere; and that thus are successive spheres formed and clothed. It teaches that spirit life is a continuation of the modes established in the first state of being; these modes being spiritualized, and adapted to higher planes of life—the spiritual; that man, as a spirit, forever retains his identity, as all nature does, in the sense that spiritual surface of every grade of spheres is clothed in conformity to physical; that man, in the spiritual state, finds scope for the use of all his powers of body and mind; that his body is sustained by the same modes by which it was in the first state, and his mind acts, also, in the same manner; lower nature being the agent upon which body and mind must draw to support existence, and promote thought and progress; that the spiritual body is not subject to disease, or the contingencies which in the physical state produce death; being magnetic, and therefore repellant to whatever would interfere with its proper condition. It teaches that the change which ushers spirits of one sphere into a higher, is a gradual laying off of the outer elements of the form, until the individual is unclothed entirely of the grosser elements which made its outer in that lower sphere, when it is unfitted to remain longer there, but rises as naturally to a higher, as the spirit, unclothed of flesh, gravitates to the second sphere; that this change corresponds to physical death; being a higher manifestation of the mode of changing spheres.

18th. It teaches that nature is, and God is, from eternity

to eternity; that they are co-existent and reciprocally dependent upon each other for existence; and that all life, all force, and all development, result from the coöperation of spiritual and physical substance. It teaches that God, through diversity, originates the life of nature; God, or the superior grade of spirit, being positive to all inferior nature, and acting upon it as a positive upon a negative, to promote action through attractive and repulsive force.

19th. It teaches that all action in nature results from its trinity and the duality of its forces; that the two principles constituting the duality of forces are the positive and negative, or male and female principles; that spiritual and physical nature coöperate as a dual force, promoting all life and all action, as stated in a former proposition. It teaches that the duality of force is exemplified in all nature by male and female forms coöperating as creative forces, and is expressed to man's comprehension in many forms, by the duality of organs which constitute the whole form or being. It teaches that in spiritual, as in physical nature, this law of duality of force prevails; distinct grades of spiritual coöperating with each other as positive and negative.

20th. It teaches a Trinity of principles in all nature, all beings and forms, from God to the lowest form of inanimate matter; and that all the phenomena of nature result from the coöperation of these three principles; which are, in man, the interior spirit; the soul-principle or vital forces, which are the spiritual body; and the physical part; and in lower nature, principles which correspond to these; being essential spirit of two grades, and physical substance. Each principle being dual, the action of all nature is the expression of life through a trinity of principles acting upon each other by virtue of the duality of the force composing each one. Individual man is a trinity; but only as male and female—the complete one—acts as a creative agent in nature. This illustrates the principle herein declared. To illustrate further: Spirit acts with the physical part of man's nature to produce vitality; and yet, no expression can be given by the interior spirit, only as it acts and reacts upon the soul-principle and physical body.

21st. It teaches that Deity is Superintending Intelligence within the universe, acting to promote the order therein; and that, by law, the order of nature progresses as Intelligences outworks plans by which it can the better reveal itself through matter. It teaches that there was a period, in the eternities of the past, when the present order of nature was instituted—when Deity began to unfold His present method of manifestation. It teaches that the Trinity of Deity is the trinity of nature; being perfected intelligence acting through an intermediate principle, which may be denominated spiritual magnetic force upon physical nature; illustrated by the manner in which man's intelligence acts through his spiritual body upon his physical body; that the duality of Deity is the duality of nature; being the coöperation of spirit with physical substance for the production of life, and all grades of action in nature. It teaches that God is unity of power, wisdom, and purpose, for accomplishing development and progress; that, as intelligence, He is the fountain of law, order, power, wisdom, justice, and love. It teaches that, as man possesses in his nature the germs of all the attributes of the Infinite, he is destined, through an eternal course of progress, (eternal here being used as a relative term,) to reach the estate where he will exercise the attributes of his nature perfected; and that, as individual man, he will combine his intelligence with that of his fellows on the same plane, and this combined intelligence of the perfected grade, will exercise omniscient wisdom, and omnipotent power, in nature, as God; that the unity of the Godhead being, as stated, unity of power, wisdom, and purpose, is displayed in the unity of action of the highest—the perfected grade of individualized intelligences of the universe; that the only consistent manner of accounting for the phenomenon of mind, organized and individualized, and the phenomenon of its action upon nature in all the different stages of its progress, is to invest it with Deific attributes, and accord to the perfected grade of minds of the broad universe, *together*, the prerogative of Deity.

22d. It teaches that the Infinite Mind is connected with

all nature through grades of forces affinitized and connected, like the links in a chain; and that there is no possibility of separating a being, or an atom, of the universe from the power of this Mind, whose will acts upon all things below It as dictated by Its intelligence; that spirit-communion, or intercourse of departed spirits with man in the flesh, is only a manifestation of the law by which God acts upon nature in its various departments.

23d. It teaches that Mediumship is the universal law of nature, governing in all the phenomena thereof; that all mankind are mediumistic; but that in the present state of mankind in the flesh, it requires special efforts on their part, and on the part of their spirit guardians, to develop medium powers sufficiently to be of practical value in declaring truth to mankind from the spirit world, and illustrating spiritual phenomena of various kinds.

24th. It teaches, that in order for mediumship to be of practical value as an exponent of truth, the law governing its development must be thoroughly understood; that there is a possibility of perverting mediumship to ignoble purposes; since all who use it are not wise; and that, therefore, it is the duty of those who rely upon mediumship as a source of light and truth from the spiritual sphere, to endeavor to make it subserve the highest possible uses, not only as an agent of revealing truth to the intellect of man, but of assisting in the progress of his physical nature—of aiding the healthy in the preservation of their health, and in the acquirement of health by the diseased.

25th. It teaches that circles for producing spirit manifestations, or for the relief of the diseased, are useful, if properly conducted; but, if not so conducted, they are deleterious in the extreme; both to the health of the individuals forming the circles, and to the cause of truth; because the subversion of the perfect law of spirit-control, deprives spirit-controllers of the power to manifest perfectly for any object,—either for teaching important truths in language through the organs of speech of a medium, or by writing through the hand, or for producing convincing physical manifestations, or for healing.

26th. It teaches that magnetism, physical and spiritual, is the force that connects disembodied mind with embodied; that, through different grades of this ethereal element, spiritual beings communicate with physical nature, and with mind embodied in physical forms; and through the latter, give expression to their thoughts; the organs of the physical man being put into requisition for the expression of these thoughts to the senses of physical man. It teaches that this element is universally diffused throughout physical and spiritual nature, and as a graded force which spirits of all grades use to operate upon nature below them, constitutes the arm of the Omnipotent wherewith He sways the sceptre over His universal empire.

27th. It teaches that the ministry of spirits is universal in all departments of nature; individualized intelligences being the agents through which God acts to perform His will upon universal nature.

28th. It teaches the immutability of truth; and that man is to grow up into all truth by searching throughout the bounds of nature for principles, and evidences of principles, which lie scattered over these bounds as thickly as the leaves upon the forest trees, and the sands upon the sea shore.

29th. It teaches, in fine, that truth has been revealed to man as fast as he could receive it; that revelations have been the order since man became sufficiently spiritualized to be inspirational to the degree that he could understand the promptings of spiritual beings; and that, consequently, all systems of religion the race has received, contain more or less of truth, either symbolized vaguely in forms and ceremonies fitted to a gross people, or expressed by the visions of seers or the teachings of prophets; that it comprehends all of truth that every system has unfolded, and reveals truths, new to the race, as it is qualified to receive them; thus making up a grand and perfect system adapted to the present age, and all future ages, as it unfolds itself to meet the wants of progressive man.

I have stated, as concisely as posssible, the basic principles of the system which is being revealed to the world from sages in spirit life through mediumship, as I understand them. As an individual spirit, I have studied these principles on the spiritual plane, and comprehend them by my powers of reasoning and investigating; as those on the earthly plane, to whom they are addressed, must, if they comprehend them at all. I use mediumship as my means of communicating these principles; and mankind are left to judge, both of the worth of the propositions, and the means through which they are presented.

Some principles stated are plainly comprehensible, from the fact that they have been long studied by many, and proved by investigation and experimentation. Others are of a more intricate character, not susceptible of proof as readily as others, and requiring more extended investigation to establish them. I claim, however, that nothing has been stated in the foregoing propositions that can not be established as agreeing with reason and analogy, by the light which nature gives through the variety of phenomena exhibited in her various departments, which man has it in his power to study. For instance: Propositions are stated relative to the nature of force, and of Deity, which seem intricate; and are, in the sense that close study and investigation are necessary to prove them; yet, these are as susceptible of proof as many that scientific men make, based upon their knowledge of natural phenomena; and are to be established in the same manner as the latter, to the satisfaction of reasoning minds. If it cannot be believed, that the Infinite Intelligence has provided the means whereby His children, created in His own likeness, can gain a knowledge of the most intricate principles concerned in nature's action—*which comprehends the principle of Deific Life and action*—then it can not be believed that adequate provision has been made to promote the progress of intellect. If there are secrets in nature which man has not the power to fathom by his intellect, then he is not in the image of God, intellectually; for God compasses all knowledge; and the idea expressed in the phrase, "in the image of God," must

signify that man's powers ultimate in Deific. Whoever sets bounds to the powers of the human intellect, or to its privilege of expanding in the search and acquisition of knowledge, is short-sighted, and puts an unworthy estimate upon humanity and the wisdom of God.

Propositions like those I have stated are calculated to awaken thought and stimulate investigation upon the most important questions that can engage the human mind. The principles involved in the Spiritual Philosophy are, emphatically, what concern man in every department of life. They are what he must understand and act upon as he progresses; and are what are so perfectly adapted to his nature and necessities that he can not progress in sound knowledge and true wisdom without making them his own. "*Know thyself*," is the first command of nature to man, in whom is revealed, by his handy-work, the image of Deity. What can stimulate human beings to improvement like a knowledge of what they are and are to become, according to this Philosophy? Allied to Deity! "Heirs of God, and joint heirs" with one another to the empire of the universe! When once aspiring man becomes convinced that his destiny is indeed to be so grand, he is stimulated to use his best endeavors to press forward towards it. As long as he says: "I am a worm, and destined to eternal ignorance of the source of my being and its Author, and of the eternal laws which originate in God and control all nature," so long are his aspirations chilled, and his efforts to progress weak, and almost fruitless. *A worm, he will grovel; an aspirant after Godlike wisdom and power, he will soar.*

The sources of life, whence spring the living forms that people nature in all her realms, the forces which impel and stimulate action throughout the universe, are unrevealed to man in the theology of the present age; and in its philosophy and science, likewise. Materialism yet so beclouds the human understanding, that religion is deeply tinged with superstition; and philosophy is blind to the real causes of things. Spirituality, as an element of force in nature, is not recognized by materialism; and hence, philosophers

and scientists stumble over the most important problems which the intelligence of the age is discussing. The principle, *that spiritual force acts with physical for the production of all life and motion in nature*, IS THE CORNER STONE OF SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY; the multifarious modes of action in nature being dependent upon it. The interdependence of mind and matter, of God and the physical universe, and of spiritual and physical forces, are as plainly taught by the Spiritual Philosophy as any other principle; and whoever is inclined to question the practical value of this philosophy, should consider whether there is any practical value in science, or in the modes which are established by Divine Wisdom for carrying on the operations of nature.

Spiritualists are exercising what knowledge they possess of their philosophy, in investigating spiritual phenomena, and illustrating them to the world; and it is all-important that they understand, fully, the extent of the obligations resting upon them to see that no perversion of the laws of mediumship, and of magnetic force, shall be allowed to interfere with the progress of true Spiritualism, *where it is possible for them to prevent it.* Perversion of the law of mediumship, and of the uses of the magnetic forces which spirits use to produce manifestations, *is, to-day, hindering the progress of the cause of truth; and threatening the very life of Spiritualism.* Multitudes are asking the questions: "Where is the fault? What is the cause of the great conflictions in revealed Spiritualism, and of the unreliability of Spirit-communications?" MISAPPLICATION OF THE LAW OF MEDIUMSHIP, is the greatest fault that Spiritualists have committed, and continue to commit; and this will appear evident to all who thoroughly investigate the matter.

The world needs a *theory* of the method of Spirit-communion that can prove itself to be the true one, by applying means to remedy the existing inconsistencies in Spiritualism. Circle manifestations need to be regulated by the law that decides the influence of magnetic forces upon the human organization for good or ill; and mediums need to be controlled by a just sense of what is due to themselves—their character for integrity and morality, and what is due

to those who are asking of them communications or manifestations from the higher life, and also by a correct knowledge of the law of development. When Spiritualists—mediums and all others, are properly instructed in the law of mediumistic development, the psychological laws, the constitution of the human mind and brain, and the adaptability of certain constitutions to the practice of mediumship, and the unadaptability of others; then, Spiritualism will have secured a strong basis; the rotten, crumbling stones having been removed from its foundation, and replaced by others adapted to the place assigned them in the structure.

Spiritualism is Law, Order, Morality, Virtue, and Religion; but it is sadly misunderstood by multitudes, who despise it as a Godless system; having a tendency to demoralize, and propagate disorder and license in society. *Let it be understood what True Spiritualism is!* I would exclaim in the ears of all believers in the faith; and then the pure gold will be discerned from the dross—the true from the spurious, in what is taught as this sacred philosophy. Let it be understood, that Spiritualism recognizes that man is a Religious Being, who must *worship and pray*, as one means of promoting his progress; and recognizes him as *responsible to his brother man and to society*, as well as to *himself;* and it can no longer be said, with a shadow of truth, that the system teaches that man sets up his own individuality as a God to worship, and as above all obligations to constituted authority in society.

I call attention, particularly, to the necessity of *a clear explanation of what Spiritualism is.* I am well aware that it is to some what it is not to others; but this fact should stimulate every one who has a system of principles clearly defined in his own mind, which he calls Spiritualism, to show to the world what this is. Be they few or many, *let the creeds of Spiritualists be declared*, that the world may know what they are, and choose between them. This will be a means of awakening a degree of thought and investigation of the Philosophy that has not been secured, as yet, by all the means that have been put in practice by Spirit-

ualists. It will give an impetus to the progress of the cause, such as it must receive before it can achieve a victory over its most powerful antagonists in the scientific and religious world.

Principles, declared by individuals or societies, serve as *nuclei* around which minds gather for the purpose of investigation. A system of principles attracts such a grade of minds as it is suited to; and if there is any truth in it, its advocates will be benefited by it, in a measure; it will be a stepping-stone to them to a higher and better. Opinions that are not established as authoritative by the mere power of a Sect, State, or as of Divine origin, but only recommended as being founded in reason and nature, are rallying points for classes of men, from which they start out upon a progressive career. In this career, they may often diverge from the straight course in which truth would lead well constituted minds, from the fact that there may be errors in their creeds, and that their minds may not be well balanced; nevertheless, those think to some purpose who *think from a basis of principles*, and must progress, intellectually, from the exercise of the faculty of thought *directed to an end.*

Principles need not be vague or unmeaning, as expressed by Spiritualists, or any others. Nature gives clear light upon all questions of her philosophy; and students who are in earnest search for this light, who eschew bigotry and prejudice, are sure to find it. The principles of nature, which are the principles of true Spiritualism, students of nature can discover, clearly defined, if their powers of comprehension are well developed. They may not discover them fully revealed in musty tomes which disclose the wisdom of philosophers of past ages, neither in the theories of philosophers, scientists, and theologians of the present; but they may search all these for hints of important truths, and combine these hints with the knowldge they can obtain from the study of physical nature, revelation, and the phenomena of mind, and thereby establish truths and principles to their satisfaction, which they can define in a clear and comprehensible manner. Thus, *clear and comprehensive statements*

of the principles of Spiritualism, can be given, by those who have carefully studied them; having minds capable of discriminating between what is truth and what is error in the received Spiritualism of the day; and thus avoiding inconsistencies and contradictions in their statements of principles.

To gather up the scattered elements waiting for combination and proper organization, is the work which awaits Spiritualists in the near future; a work which can not be long deferred. *A beginning must be made soon* upon the living structure which is designed to replace the crumbling edifices which are founded, in part, upon the ignorance and superstition of the people. Knowledge is increasing; and, in enlightened lands, ignorance and superstition must, ere long, be succeeded by intelligence and enlightened reason; and then there will be ample scope for the influence of a system such as Spiritualism promises to be when it is well understood by an intelligent people.

SHALL SPIRITUALISTS HAVE A CREED?

LECTURE II.

I shall preface my remarks by giving my definition of the word CREED. It is that of Webster; viz: A DEFINITE SUMMARY OF WHAT IS BELIEVED.

The question of organization is agitating the minds of Spiritualists, at present, to a considerable extent; and also that relative to the expediency of declaring the principles of the Spiritual Philosophy plainly to the world. These questions have been forced upon Spiritualists in consideration of the status of Spiritualism, and the evident necessity of the inauguration of some strong measures to give an impetus to the movement, and to insure its permanence and ultimate success. For twenty-two years the phenomena of spirit manifestations have been exhibited among the people; and mediums and others have been explaining the principles of the Philosophy; and multitudes of people have been convinced of the reality of spirit communion, and of some of the important principles connected with it. This period has been one of disintegration of old sects, to some extent, of tearing away the old supports upon which multitudes have leaned, preparatory to supplying new and stronger ones. It has been a period of transition; during which, confusion was, necessarily, the order.

It must be apparent to every thoughtful mind, that the conditions which have existed within these years, have been a necessity of the situation; that order could not be at once elicited in the new sect, which was composed of learners only, and which was continually adding to its numbers

neophytes from the prevailing sects, who could not, at once, define their belief, or understand the doctrines of a system which was so new to the world that none fairly understood them. It required years of investigation of the phenomena, to convince some minds of its reality; and years to substantiate the fundamental principles of the Philosophy, before a foundation could be laid to a system which might be to the people a substitute for the prevailing ones. Transition, according to nature, signifies confusion preparatory to higher order—a tearing away of the old, preparatory to the substitution of the new.

In view of what has been done, and of the existing condition of things in the ranks of Spiritualists, and of progressive minds outside this body, it becomes a matter for serious consideration, whether disorganization shall continue to be the condition throughout the sect, or whether the time has not arrived when organization of the scattered elements and forces, on a sure basis, should commence in earnest. It is a law of nature, that elements, or material in a confused mass, disintegrate rapidly, and, ultimately, dissolve and disappear; serving no purpose but to diffuse their constituent parts throughout surrounding nature; whereas, if they are properly combined, after being gathered, they will form a durable structure, which will serve some purpose in nature better than the diffused, fragmentary elements could. There is a possibility that the elements which have been gathered during the past few years by the dissemination of Spiritualism throughout the land, of which may be formed an organized power which shall exercise a vast influence for good over the generations to come, may be left too long unorganized, and so be dissipated. A possibility of this, I say; for unless the appropriate means are put in operation to organize, and thus properly utilize this mass, it must be dissipated into "thin air;" and the good which might have accrued from its proper use, be deferred.

The cry of, "no creeds or declarations of principles for Spiritualists;" "no organizations but for business purposes," is reiterated with such pertinacity by many throughout the ranks, that it would seem that the whole body has deter-

mined on the one course, which can result only in the complete disintegration of the whole mass, and the dissemination of its elements among the sects who are waiting, with open arms, to receive them. An opinion seems to be prevalent among Spiritualists, that it is heresy to progressive ideas, to declare distinctive principles, as such; to say to the world, as a sect which has principles that make it a unity, and separate it, in a sense, from the rest of mankind, "we believe thus." As though it could be in opposition to *freedom of thought and religious belief* to possess distinctly defined opinions, and to declare these to the world!

What is Spiritualism? is the grand question which should interest Spiritualists; for it would seem, that with the mass, it is either *nothing that can be explained*, clearly, comprehensibly, and briefly, in a Declaration of Principles or Creed, *or something which should not be so explained.* It is plain that it is either something or nothing. If something, the world is demanding to know what; if nothing, every consideration of human welfare demands that it be henceforth discarded. It is useless to point to dissertations on the philosophy found in books, courses of lectures, newspaper articles, etc., etc., as being sufficient to define it to the world. People demand brief, definite declarations of the principles of any faith which they are asked to accept; for without such, they can not comprehend them.

The fear lest Spiritualism be construed into an authoritative, or binding creed, is so great in the minds of many, that they overlook the important truth, that a system that does not commend itself by the consistency of the doctrines it teaches, is worth nothing. Spiritualism can only commend itself to sensible minds, as being something definable and practicable. If such can be persuaded that *the name* is all there is of it worthy to be promulgated, they will seek some other system of faith whereupon to build up their spiritual natures—one which defines itself with sufficient clearness to enable them "to give a reason for the faith that is in them."

I make the assertion, broadly and plainly, in the face of facts demonstrative of its truth, *that in organization on a basis*

of Principles, plainly declared, is the salvation of Spiritualism. There is common ground upon which all Spiritualists can meet and agree, and there is common ground where distinct classes of Spiritualists can meet and agree. That all who are called by this name, *can not agree on one set of principles*, is very well understood; and, therefore, it becomes evident, that there are *distinct sects* comprised within the great body of believers in spiritual manifestations. If these sects do actually exist, where is the propriety in seeking to disguise the fact? Can the world be made to believe that the great mass of Spiritualists are *one in opinion, and laboring to build up one faith?* As things are, does it not rather appear to the outside world that Spiritualism "is a house divided against itself"—that the undeclared sects, which compose the great body, are as actually warring against each other as though they were called by different names, or had each declared a distinctive creed? There is the spectacle of the sect that adopts the doctrine of pre-existence and re-incarnation, contending against the one which opposes this dogma; of that which accepts the doctrine of Demoniacal possessions opposing itself to that which rejects this doctrine; of that which believes in the existence of God and a religious nature in man, opposing that which declares the opposite; of the opposing parties upon the questions of social reform, etc., etc., etc. Does it not appear that the effort is vain to suppress creeds in Spiritualism, since the intelligence of the people impels them to form opinions on the various subjects presented for their consideration?

Sectarian Spiritualism, as well as sectarian Christianity, results from the diversity of minds composing the mass of the people who accept these systems of faith. Minds do not comprehend principles alike; and the effort to force them to do this, is cramping to the human intellect. The Church of Rome has tried for centuries, to force one creed upon the people of Christendom. It declared that there must be unity of belief throughout the Christian world; and in its effort to compel this unity, it applied all the

power of the civil arm, of a bigoted priesthood, whose will was law among the people, and of superstition, which could be wielded by priests and potentates according to their pleasure. The blood which has flowed in desolating torrents, the persecutions which have raged, causing such inconceivable sufferings to humanity in Christian countries in past centuries, bespeak the effort of a powerful sect to establish a single faith throughout Christendom, and the world. It was utterly inconsistent with the ideas of this sect, that any should differ from them; or, if differing, should declare the difference. When Christianity was Popery, and the power of the civil government and the sword was exercised to make all the people Christians, there was a "harmony" throughout the ranks of the believers which amounted to stagnation.

It was a thing far easier of accomplishment in the dark ages, when the Romish Church held universal sway in Christendom, to cause the people to accept, unquestioningly, a name and a faith, than it is at present; although then, there were those who would suffer all the torments malignant fiends could invent, before they would sacrifice their principles to a name, or to a dogma, made authoritative by the will of man. In the present age, intelligent people, especially in a free country, can not be coerced into professing a faith which is not theirs—which their reason and conscience forbids them to indorse. Thus it happens, that all Christians, at the present day, are not Papists. They dare be something else, if their reason forbids them to follow the ancient creed. Thus it happens, that all Spiritualists do not accept the same doctrines. When it is attempted to suppress Declarations of Principles, to coerce a sentiment in the body that forbids Spiritualistic organizations declaring their creeds, it is, in fact, reinstating the old method pursued by the Romish Church, of forcing a unity of opinion upon the mass of believers. If the same means are not resorted to, to secure this unity in the former case as in the latter, the same principle is involved; as must appear on a close scrutiny of the subject. A public sentiment that forbids individuals or societies declaring plainly

their opinions or creeds, rules of order, &c., is a "Thumb-screw and Rack," potent to perpetuate the rule of ignorance and authority, in an age that calls for free discussion of all principles.

It is nothing short of the grossest wrong to individuals and societies, that they should be debarred, by any means, from declaring their sentiments, freely, to the world; that they may be understood and appreciated for what they are. Whoever understands what Spiritualism is, in the view of millions of intelligent people who reject it, and what it is in reality, must feel that there are good reasons why consistent Spiritualists should wish to declare their principles; indeed, an urgent necessity for them to do so. No individual who is not a hypocrite, is willing to "sail under false colors," to use a homely phrase. No one who attaches any value to opinions and truths, is willing to be charged with believing what appears to him to be error, and dangerous or foolish doctrine. How many have forsaken the ranks of Spiritualists and taken refuge in the churches, to escape the odium of being misunderstood on principles vital to the welfare of society, the annals of Spiritualism will tell; they are very many. How many in the churches, who have accepted the revelations of Spiritualism, but would not come out and declare themselves Spiritualists, for the same reason, appears from the statements of thousands who are of this number. All this results from the delay of the different classes of Spiritualists in stating their creeds.

Humanity will have creeds. Every human being possessed of common intelligence has a creed, which he modifies as his intelligence increases. There is nothing so horrible about creeds as many are led to suppose, by the hue and cry against them. They are simply the *opinions adopted as a basis of faith and action for the time.* Without such a basis, progress is impossible; for he who believes nothing knows nothing; and can know nothing until he has come to some conclusions in his own mind.

In my former lecture on this subject, I stated the proposition, *that theories are all-important*, underlying, as they do, human action; and theories upon all subjects which con-

cern humanity. A theory, or in other language, a creed, which is an expression of opinions conceived by investigation of any subject, can not, in the nature of things, be authoritative, only over such minds as accept it by the force of reason. Over such, it is authoritative so long as reason makes it so, and no longer. When a new basis is formed, the mind forsakes the old and accepts the new, being still impelled by reason. *Spiritualism distinctly disavows authoritative creeds*, such as have enchained mind in the past; at the same time that it proclaims the necessity of tenets as a platform upon which individuals can stand while they are further investigating nature's principles, preparatory to grasping more truth to incorporate into their platform of principles, or to serve as a new platform, higher, more comprehensive than the former.

The examples the world has had of the dwarfing, cramping tendency of authoritative creeds—that style which derive their authority from other sources than man's reason, have put progressive minds on their guard against them. Spiritualists repel the thought that a creed shall ever be established for them that will become authoritative in a manner to supersede the necessity for thought and reason, and investigation of all principles. This danger must of necessity be incurred, in a degree, in the present state of society, whenever an individual or class of minds receive opinions on any subject. The tendency of the human mind, in its weak, undeveloped state, is to rest upon an opinion, or a set of opinions, rather than incur the labor of sounding those principles to their depths, and laying a new foundation on higher ones, if these prove untenable. It is always by dint of urgent effort on the part of advanced minds, that the masses can be induced to think; and therefore, by common consent, as it were, the means that have been used by the Church to make creeds authoritative, have succeeded with the masses. Intelligence alone will redeem a people from the danger of succumbing to creeds. Schoolmen have established creeds—dogmas, which have retarded human progress in common with church creeds; but how could it have been avoided? Scientific men base conclu-

sions upon phenomena; and these conclusions become authoritative with the masses, as *originating with wise men.* Shall not wise men continue to study and declare to the world their conclusions upon all subjects, that there may be a basis for thought and action for society? Surely they must; or stagnation would result.

A system that declares its foundation principle to be progress—perfect freedom of the human mind to change its opinions upon all subjects, and establish new creeds as it passes from stage to stage in its progressive career, obviates much of the danger of its principles becoming authoritative among men. It will be, indeed, a protecting ægis to those who adopt it; for while it spreads out a solid platform upon which humanity can stand, it forever points onward, and beckons all men upward, to broader, firmer standing-ground.

Freedom of thought and opinion is promoted, rather than hindered, by the promulgation of opinions by the great variety of minds which make up humanity. Thought and investigation are awakened by the examination of different creeds; and individual minds expand in the light they draw from these, and become prepared to improve their own platforms of principles. The chain once riven which binds men to creeds *made authoritative by superstition, the civil, or ecclesiastical arm,* and they progress through the influence of another class—those creeds of which minds are required to judge before they accept or reject them. It is by comparison of opinions, dogmas, and systems of philosophy, science, and religion, that men become wise, at length. By experimenting, and studying the effects, the influence, of different systems and creeds, individuals learn important lessons; and it is by combining knowledge acquired in this way with that attained by studying nature's laws and principles, that the mind is enriched with all necessary knowledge.

The discussions which arose among theologians after the Reformation had broken the power of the Papal despotism sufficiently that men could begin to think for themselves and express their opinions, elicited light, impelled to

thought, and created a desire for greater freedom of opinion, and better advantages for studying everything that would give light upon the Scriptures, the theology of the Church, Church history, &c. *A new era dawned upon the world, when sects separated themselves from the Romish Church and declared their creeds*, which differed from each other, and from that of the Mother Church. The latter had been so all-embracing, that it contained nearly as many Indfidels—Atheists and Deists—as it did believers in God and Revelation; as many who had no heart in Christianity, as of those who were, from principle, devoted to the doctrines of the Romish Church; and all these had been compelled to silence on the subject of their differences of opinion; the result being stagnation of intellect among the masses, as stated in a former connection.

Who, at the present day, that is not a bigoted sectarian of the old school, deplores the establishment of sects at the period of the Great Reformation? Who will say, it had been better if unity had been maintained throughout Christendom in place of the diversity of opinion which has since prevailed among Christians? What mind whose intelligence is not warped and overshadowed by bigotry, but will acknowledge that the divisions in the Protestant Church have resulted in the promotion of intelligence, freedom of thought, and truth, among the people of the different countries where this faith has prevailed? Luther, with his iron will, contended that the consecrated wine and bread were the actual blood and body of Jesus; and strove to make his opinions authoritative among his brethren, who, with him, dissented from Rome; but neither his will nor his logic prevailed with the firm Swiss Reformers; and thus *a schism* was created at the very outset of Protestantism. Very few Protestants in America now regret the obstinacy of Zwingle and his associates. Most Protestants now know, that the dogma which Luther maintained with such obstinacy, was a superstition of the Old Church, and inconsistent with the progressive ideas of Protestantism. It is safe to believe that the dissent of some of the Great Reformers from Luther's system, *saved Protestantism from becoming*

another despotism in Europe. The Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Episcopalians, Wesleyans, and other sects, successively, and in concert, exercised their influence to prevent the establishment of any one form of Protestantism as *the* Protestant Church of Christendom.

In reviewing the history of Protestantism, and the progress of the people of Christian Europe and America since its establishment, the conclusion is irresistible, that sectarianism has been a blessing, in the sense of its favoring *the expression* of the diversity of opinion, which, necessarily, has existed among Christians. It has developed freedom of thought, starting out as it did upon the idea, that it was man's right to interpret Scripture for himself. This principle, which is *the great idea* of freedom, has overcome civil and ecclesiastical despotisms, since it obtained a foothold at the time of the Reformation; and is marching on, a resistless power, destined to overcome everything that opposes it. It prevails by virtue of the tendency of the human mind to reason for itself on principles, and establish principles to guide its action. Freedom of thought *signifies liberty to choose the principles by which one shall be guided;* not the liberty to disregard all opinions and principles, and remain devoid of any. The doctrines of sects are to be judged of by their merits or demerits; and received or rejected, as different minds measure their worth. The statement of a creed, *is a presentation to the world of certain principles or propositions of which mankind are asked to judge.* If this is heresy to the principles of Reform and Progress which Spiritualism teaches, *then Spiritualism, as it is taught, is heresy to true progressive ideas.*

The attitude Spiritualism assumes, in view of the most consistent of its opposers, is that of a ship without a helm. It has thus far proved itself a staunch vessel, able to breast terrific storms, even, without such an important safeguard; yet there are storms which threaten it, more terrific than any it has yet braved; and to believe that it can outride these unprovided with something it has, so far, lacked, is to overlook the threatening dangers—to disregard premonitions which tell that a change of policy is necessary. While

the work of gathering material for an organization was in progress, it was proper to defer organization until sufficient could be gathered of the right quality to organize; but now that this sufficiency has been gathered, and there are multitudes of intelligent people waiting to see Spiritualism organized and declared, in order that they may find in it a home, and a people with whom they may cast their interests and influence while going on in the search of truth, it is suicidal to wait longer. *The harvest time has come in the vineyard of Spiritualism;* and if the harvest is not gathered, it will surely be wasted; wasted, I mean, to Spiritualism.

It is in the nature of men to seek association with their like; association of such as *believe alike*, is as natural as that parts proportioned to each other unite by a fixed law of nature. Organization is the law everywhere in the universe. There is not an atom, an element, or a fluid, of any nature, but what acts strictly under the law of organization of force. The diffused ethers of space, which seem to be scattered broadcast, without reference to law or order, and fulfilling their offices, as it were, haphazard, are organized forces, in the sense that each separate grade is subject to attractive force originating at its own central source, and circulates as a current for the use of forms; serving nature's purposes by diffusing itself in obedience to the attractive forces of matter. Magnetic and electric fluids, the atmosphere, water, and earth, are organized; flowing in regulated currents, or stratified according to grade and position of qualities.

Nothing in nature is done at haphazard; every atom and form having its appropriate place in an organization as perfect as Infinite Wisdom could conceive. The "stupendous whole," which is the universe, is a harmonious whole, by the law of organization; which regulates every grade of action in nature, and causes all action to tend to harmony of the whole. Concerted action is only possible through organization; which assigns particular duties to individuals, and plans that all the work of an organization shall tend to one object, or the accomplishment of certain ends.

The world has multitudes of examples of the power of organizations to accomplish what they set themselves to do.

The Roman hierarchy is, to-day, a power which makes even free Americans tremble for fear of what it may do. It has been an *organized power* from the period of its establishment till the present, and its strength has consisted in the *perfection of its organization.* The subtle forces it has ever been able to exercise for the propagation of its Religion and its Power, have been centralized in the Head of the Church, and have drawn their life and support from thence. The Jesuit Missionary in the wilds of North America, the jungles of India, and the islands of the sea, is but an arm of this grand machinery, extended to "the uttermost parts of the earth," to gather mankind into the fold of the Church. Here is despotism displayed in all its strength; and yet, here, also, is equally displayed, the power of perfect organization.

There is not a church in Christendom but has derived what prosperity it has enjoyed through the efficiency of its organization. Sabbath-school unions, Missionary unions, Tract Societies, Educational Associations, are all doing powerful work, in the one way in which such work can be done—*by associated, organized effort.* Colleges, Theological Seminaries, Sabbath-schools, Tracts, Missionaries, and Churches, are steadily exerting their power in sustaining Christianity, and propagating it. Spiritualists are the most inconsistent, and inefficient great sect in the enlightened world, in their mode and means of propagating the interests of their faith. They number thousands, at least, not to say millions; and the taunt is cast at them, that they have not a single school or college under their patronage. It is a deserved rebuke to the great body, with whom is wealth and intelligence enough to enable it to meet, on an equal footing, any sect in the United States. This great body of intelligent, earnest people *are waiting to do the work which is waiting for them.* How shall they do it? At random, or without system? Shall they meet the vast, organized, well disciplined and generaled armies of their opponents as a rabble, each one fighting on his own responsibility, and after his own plan? By warring in this manner, they

can only *annoy* the opposing hosts, *without doing them any great injury.* This is evident; for the latter have all the enginery of war well directed by disciplined soldiers, marshaled under leaders in order of battle; while the former lack all the enginery, the discipline, and the ordor, necessary to an army.

There is but one way in which Spiritualists can successfully contend against organized Christendom for an equal chance among the people to propagate their doctrines; and that is, *as an organized force.* It is vain for them to expect to succeed in establishing a New Religion on a firm basis, without using the means to educate the people into it that other sects use for propagating their doctrines. They need teachers, trained and educated for their work as thoroughly as those of other sects; they need organized effort to establish schools where this training can be secured; and they need funds to carry on the machinery of their organizations, like other sects. Money is a power; but *it is a power that Spiritualism utterly lacks, to-day*, with all the wealth in the hands of individual Spiritualists. There is no treasury wherein the widow can cast her mite, or the millionaire his thousands, for the upbuilding of the cause of Spiritualism on a firm foundation; and so the cause goes begging in vain for that support which it must have. The hundreds of thousands that are yearly contributed by Christians to support one of their organizations for the promotion of Christianity, are a severe comment on the laxity of Spiritualists in the matter of doing their duty as intelligent people, who believe they have a Religion better adapted to humanity than Christianity.

There is latent power in this great body that is waiting for expression; executive ability as great as that in any organization in the land that makes its power felt in society. The question is, who shall set the ball in motion? Who shall devise a plan that will be acceptable to the great body? It is as plain as that twice two make four, that no one can devise a plan that will suit the whole body; because, as has been distinctly stated in the course of these remarks, *there are opposing sects in Spiritualism, as in Chris-*

tianity. Catholics do not organize to support and propagate Unitarianism; neither Methodists to propagate Universalism, or any ism but Methodism. Spiritualists may convene in National and State Conventions, year after year, to eternity, endeavoring to organize the incongruous elements which compose the entire body in the Nation or in the State. *It can never be done.* This effort is like mixing up a variety of ingredients that will not affinitize, and striving to force them into a compound. Any amount of mixing and stirring will not force a chemical union of such opposing elements. It is like mixing oil and water, which will not unite chemically; but, intermixed in the same vessel, these two elements are lost, in the sense that they will serve no proper use. The mixture is neither good for oil nor water, or any other purpose, but to be submitted to a process which shall radically change, or separate the ingredients.

As the result of the effort to organize incongruous elements, pursued year after year, disaffection and inharmony is spreading in the great body, and multitudes are leaving the ranks and joining other sects, or disavowing Spiritualism without so doing. This is a state of things to be deplored. Spiritualism is strong enough to retain the staunchest, strongest minded, who are now bitterly complaining of this state of things, and see no hope for a change by the methods hitherto pursued; but it can retain them *only by being to them a foundation of principles, upon which they can stand and work to some purpose*, for the overthrow of superstition and ignorance, which oppose themselves to Spiritualism on every hand. There are multitudes *who will have principles to go by, and to be judged by, before the world;* and these are complaining of the delay of the great body, and its various, so called, organizations, in declaring themselves—their principles—plainly to the world. "We would be understood," say they; "we would know for what principles we are contending, or have the world know. As things are, if we labor under the broad banner of undeclared Spiritualism, we may be but contending against errors of Old Theology to build up equally great errors

which pass under the name of Spiritualism. We will shut our mouths and hold our peace, rather than be instrumental in propagating error."

There are opposites in Spiritualism which can not be reconciled; and the effort to make it appear that Spiritualists are *harmonious, or a unity in belief*, is a species of dishonesty, which their doctrines do not sanction. What can not stand upon its own merits, in the shape of doctrine, ought to perish, for the good of community; and what is calculated to stand the test of stern inspection, should, for the same reason, live; therefore, it is imperatively demanded that the world know what the various sects of Spiritualists believe. It has a right to know what these doctrines are, that it may have the benefit of what is good and saving in them. The light of Spiritualism is "hidden under a bushel," as long as the different sects do not declare themselves, and become identified as to their distinctive doctrines.

But multitudes will cry, "we shall be as sectarian as Christians if we make Declarations of Principles." I answer: In one sense you will be; but your sectarianism will be vitally different from theirs, from the fact that Spiritualism ignores *binding creeds;* acknowledging *no authority*, in matters of faith, but *reason.* It only asks its votaries to adhere to certain principles while they can conscientiously; to maintain membership with an association having a set of principles, only while they adhere to those principles. It is somewhat in advance of a certain Association of Spiritualists, that adopted a resolution to the effect that a certain article adopted by the Association should *never be amended;* so far assuming to fix a permanent dogma, or tenet of a creed, to bind the Association *for all the future.* This is surely unprogressive Spiritualism, if there can be said to be any such anomalous thing. Binding people—associations or societies, to disavow creeds or tests of membership, is after the same sort as binding them to any other doctrine. Here is an example of well-intended effort defeating itself, or the object it aims at acomplishing. If Spiritualists attempt to make their principles binding or

authoritative, as of Associations, men, or angels, they will fail entirely; from the fact *that the very spirit of Spiritualism is utterly opposed to this.*

Rules of order, and Declarations of Principles, by Associations, interfere with no one's liberty, in any sense. Every lover of order and principle, on due consideration, must consider them indispensable to the prosperity of any society. Individuals consistently associate in organizations, *to work to the same ends;* not to each work to a different end, or to undo the others' work. A company of builders who should associate to erect an edifice, having each a different plan, and each being resolved to work by his own plan, will illustrate the efficiency of an Association composed of Spiritualists of every shade of belief and variety of purpose. Such an Association would be, ostensibly, for building up Spiritualism; but it can build up nothing but discord; its chief work is to propagate inharmony. Every one will be at enmity with every other one in some sense, and be tearing down his work; either publicly or secretly. The "house is divided against itself;" and the outside world rejoices in it, because it sees, in the continuation of this state of things, the salvation of the old sects; or imagines it does. It requires but little foresight to understand, that the longer this condition is continued, the feebler will be the power that Spiritualism can exert in society as a regenerator.

I say, therefore, to Spiritualists; DECLARE YOUR PRINCIPLES TO THE WORLD; ELEVATE YOUR STANDARDS IN VIEW OF ALL THE PEOPLE; THAT THERE CAN BE NO MISUNDERSTANDING YOUR PRINCIPLES; *and invite all to rally around them who can.* Then the trumpet of Spiritualism will give no uncertain sound, as it marshals its hosts to battle for right and truth. Then it will prove itself a power to oppose and overcome prevailing errors and wrongs.

The good that will come from drawing distinctive lines between the different sects of Spiritualits, is the same that comes by drawing a distinctive line between Spiritualism and Christianity, between Spiritualism and Mahomedanism, Mormonism, or any other ism, that is not the system dispensed by the angel world as the Spiritual Philosophy. If studying and comparing opinions, and the different systems

of philosophy, science, and religion, the world affords, is useful as a means of directing mankind into the truth, then nothing can be a more effectual means of promoting human progress than for these distinctive lines to be drawn. Mankind can not consider and discuss the different opinions held by Spiritualists, until these are declared. The opportunity for "free discussion" of all principles, which Spiritualists talk of so much, they withhold, while they withhold declarations of their faith as distinct sects.

The standards once elevated to the public view, and the greatest obstacles are removed, which now hinder the progress of true Spiritualism; the most effectual weapons wielded against it by its opposers, are wrenched from their grasp. There will be found to be the Purest Morality, the most Exalted Devotion to the cause of Human Rights, of Law and Order, and the Holiest Religion, in Spiritualism, that the human mind is capable of exercising in its present condition. It will be known to favor progress in every direction; and to go hand in hand with every cause that human intelligence and philanthropy favors in the present age. It will be found to be no stickler for names, but for *principles;* and will reveal itself hidden under many false names in the present age, when progressive minds are making discoveries of truth which former ages disavowed, or never thought of. The truth is, *Civilization as it advances, is tending directly towards the unfoldment of the True Spiritual Philosophy; and there is no power in the universe that can prevent the triumph of True Spiritualism.*

The Spiritualists of to-day, can, it is true, give into other hands the work of organizing True Spiritualism, or the True Religion of Nature, be that called by what name it may. They can defer doing their own proper work until it is taken out of their hands by some people or sect calling itself by another name. Many are saying that Spiritualism will not be permanent with the name it bears, because of the load it has to carry which does not belong to it. If this shall prove true, *the more shame and sorrow to the present generation of Spiritualists.*

It lies with Spiritualists to decide, whether they will be the standard-bearers of the system that is to embrace

all the truly intelligent and enlightened in a future not very far distant, and push on the advance of civilization, by keeping their standards in view; or whether they will throw away the banners heaven gives them, and allow them to be trampled in the mire of sensuality, error, and a worn-out theology, for want of the energy and foresight to make it distinctly known that they are in advance of the rest of mankind, as regards the foundation principles of their Philosophy.

Heaven uses men as its instruments to promulgate truth, and advance civilization; and with men is the responsibility of discovering and putting in operation means to promote the progress of the race. With the *leaders* of the people is this responsibility, and they cannot cast it off. Intelligent Spiritualists have more light than any other class of people; because they accept that which the Revelations of the day afford, to add to that which they gain from the sources upon which the rest of mankind depend. They are called upon to use their superior advantages to promote a degree of progress that could not be secured without the light which the Revelations of the day afford. The advanced Christian sects are seeking to dispossess Spiritualists of their position as the advance guard of Civilization; and they will succeed, unless the latter change their tactics.

Names are said to be of but little consequence; but when a name comprehends the substance or meaning of a thing, that name may be considered essential. Language is significant, and should be comprehensive. *Spiritualism—the Spiritual Philosophy*—these names comprehend the substance of what must be the Religion and Philosophy of the great future, when the intellect of the advanced races has unfolded to a clear comprehension of truth. It can not be otherwise, in the nature of things. Therefore, I affirm, that *Spiritualists should cling to their name, and make it a name of power in the land, and make their doctrines those of the progressive minds of the advancing age.*

Progress would be stayed, if it could be that Spiritualists could prove false to the trust committed to them by God, and the wise in spirit-life. Its sun would be eclipsed, for a time, until some should take up the standards which they had ingloriously thrown down.

I have not intimated that I despair of Spiritualism surviving its present confused, disorganized condition. I have pointed out the dangers which beset it, as a means of arousing the thoughtful to the use of the sure means of saving the ship from foundering. O! the hopes and the hearts that would be wrecked, were this ship to fail of reaching its destined harbor! It is heavy freighted with the hopes of humanity; and its going down would be like the settling of a pall of darkness upon the race, that centuries could not dissipate. I declare, by the power of an Inspiration I receive from the Celestial Spheres, *that this bark can not go down* in the stormy sea which it is bravely buffeting in search of a secure haven; for there is a power that rules the waves, and that will say, "Peace, be still, and let my beloved outride your surges in safety; that humanity's hopes be not blighted in the bud!"

To you, Spiritualists, who are the vanguard of progress, the practical workers in the ranks, is committed the work of giving an impetus to a cause whose well-being is vitally important to the interests of the race. You are the instruments God and the angel world will use to organize from Spiritualism as it is, a Spiritualism that will be a power "to overturn, and overturn, and overturn," until society is reorganized on a basis where progress will be possible as it is not now. I reiterate the sentiment to you, that *the child of hope is born* which is to be a savior unto the race—*the system is inaugurated* which is to overcome, finally, all opposing systems, and to establish the reign of righteousness, peace, and good will on earth. I will "cry aloud and spare not," for the promotion of the sacred—the God-ordained truths of Pure Spiritualism; and I repeat the sentiment so often expressed in this lecture, *that the time has arrived when Spiritualists should declare their doctrines, and begin the work of permanent organization.*

With Him who is All-wise, All-powerful, rest the interests of this holy cause; and with Him is the means to insure its perpetuity and its rapid progress among the people in the near future. Let our aspirations be to Him for wisdom to do well that which He has committed to us to do.

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