

**A CATECHISM**  
*of*  
**SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY**

By  
W. J. COLVILLE

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A SERIES OF QUESTIONS AND  
ANSWERS DESIGNED TO CONFER  
LIGHT UPON MANY INTEREST-  
ING SPIRITUAL TOPICS.

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FAMOUS LECTURER, PHILOSOPHER AND MEDIUM



*Yours sincerely  
W. J. Colville.*

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## Biography

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE JUNEVAL COLVILLE

*Poet, Author, Lecturer, Seer, Prophet, Philanthropist*

*October 6th, 1856 — January 15th, 1917*

Always signing himself "Yours truly, Parrot Wildcat," W. J. Colville, was, during his life-time, one of the chief notabilities in the psychic world, also one of the most unique personalities. He occupied a niche in the temple of famous psychics peculiarly his own

. . . Possessing super-abounding vitality and sparkling humor derived from his frank enjoyment in his own mild eccentricities.

When Colville visited the office of London's *Psychic Gazette* shortly before his passing, the editor had an opportunity to interview him. By leading questions, there was extracted from him the following autobiographic story and confession:



"I am a cosmopolitan of mixed nationality. I began my lecturing when I was a mere kitten. At seventeen years of age, I went to America and lectured throughout the Eastern States. I returned to England a few years later and then journeyed to California at twenty-two where I had some success. I lectured on a

great variety of subjects; religious, philosophical, sociological and psychic phenomena.

"I had no particular training. I was educated at an ordinary preparatory school. I reckon my knowledge comes to me largely through spiritual illumination, I rarely meditate. I believe in concentration.

"If anyone gives me a subject to speak upon or write about, my discourse unwinds itself while I speak or write, but not previously. I lecture frequently on subjects presented to me when on the platform.

"From my fifteenth year, I have been able to give impromptu verses on subjects called out by the audience or sent to the platform. I weave a poem embodying all the subjects mentioned, without even knowing what the next line will be. Some of these poems have been published. They are nearly always correct in rhythm, and some have a good deal of substance, while others have but little. Different influences inspire them. In regard to the many subjects offered, I make no effort to remember them.

"As an author I cannot tell you how many books I have written; there are probably twenty of considerable size, and a large number of smaller works. My books unwind themselves in the same way as my speeches.

"One of my most congenial occupations is book-reviewing, of which I have done a great deal. That is considered one of my strong points. Because I can grasp the substance of a book in a very short time, and give a very fair account of it.

"I admit to the full, *spirit-communion*, but I don't allow, in my own case, *spirit-control*. I make a great distinction between communion, which I fully accept, and

control. I do not, however, deny that such a phenomenon, as control, exists.

"I might be described as a hard logician. (Do put that down, please, for I like that)! I have a considerable amount of kind-heartedness, but only a very little of what the world commonly calls sympathy. I have a very strong sense of justice, and positively demand fair play for others equally with myself. That could be viewed as a strong point in my character.

"I have a natural gift for conceiving and delineating character, so that I can write novels with great ease, and make the characters thoroughly alive. That is natural to me. My novels have had a fair sale in America.

"I can write a book of fair size in two weeks, without mental or physical discomfort, sitting eight hours a day at a typewriter, provided I have no other occupation at the time. I never re-write anything, but I carefully correct my own copy. When I have to write a novel I never plan a plot; I never know what is coming, and I am much interested in its development as if I were reading another person's work, and yet every character is to me a living reality.

"I firmly believe that most descriptive writers are in close communion with other entities, so that their minds blend in such near union that it is almost impossible to decide where one begins and the other leaves off. I would call it psychic collaboration. I think that is general experience. I can realize the characters, whether commonplace or superior, while I am writing; I feel I am in company with them as much as if they were with me in the same house.

"I have met a great many distinguished people in sev-

eral parts of the world, and am equally at home with all classes of society, being naturally Bohemian and with very little respect for ordinary conventionalities.

"I have two contradictory elements; a great love of travel and also a great love for stated abodes. I am as fond of comfort as a cat, and at the same time I can live in all countries and endure practically all climates without suffering.

"I have a remarkably wiry constitution, and if at any time I am slightly indisposed I recover almost marvellously, and usually without treatment of any description. I never take medicine in any circumstances.

"I have a strong predilection of favor of vegetarianism, though I am fond of fish and poultry. From choice I am a total abstainer and non-smoker, but have never signed a temperance pledge.

"I have a great love of precision and punctuality, and a positive detestation of unrelieved black garments, and of timepieces kept too fast."

And then the editor asked this question: "Now, Mr. Colville, can you tell us something of your own psychic experiences?" To this Colville answered: "My first clear reminiscences go back to five years of age, at which time I was decidedly clairvoyant without knowing that I was so. My mother had passed into spirit-life in my infancy, when I was far too young to remember her. She used to appear to me frequently, and always in such a natural form that I had no idea, she was not an ordinary person living on earth."

"I would see her as a beautiful, kindly woman, and it seemed to me that she spoke to me as any other person

would. I suppose it was subjective, but I did not know that I was clairvoyant. I only discovered that I was aware of her presence by means of the psychic faculty by being told by others that they could neither see or hear her, and that she had been '*dead*' for several years."

"I saw her out of doors and indoors, by day and by night. I can remember nothing definite of what she said, excepting that she would sometimes tell me what to do. She would also cause me to make predictions, which were completely fulfilled. Her appearances never ceased, but when I went to school and became interested in other things, they became less frequent."

"I do not only see my mother, but at different times, many other forms, and receive communications from a great variety of spirit entities. Occasionally something comes to me very vividly and unexpectedly. I have been warned of danger, so that I did not fall into it. I have also received many predictions which have been fulfilled to the letter."



## *Introduction*

The following Catechism of Spiritual Philosophy is compiled with the simple hope that it may prove of some assistance to Conductors of Lyceums and other organizations, or companies of students who desire to have furnished to them some suggestive hints on topics of great interest and value concerning which public interest is now at white heat. No attempt whatever is made to offer a dogmatic body of doctrine or to supersede the many excellent manuals now in use.

The author's wide experience in many parts of the world, has led inevitably to acquaintance with the kind of questions which crop up almost everywhere and which inquirers into Spiritual philosophy, of all ages, are continually asking. As the recitation of a single chapter in this Catechism occupies only a very short time, it may profitably furnish a few keynotes for discussion on the part of the members of the groups employing it and any leader or conductor may very usefully add a great deal to the brief printed words.

As it is utterly impossible to advance everybody's views consistently and permanently and the author of these pages has made no attempt to accomplish the impossible — the utmost that can reasonably be expected for this modest venture is that it may come to occupy a humble place among many similar and larger efforts to meet the ever-growing demand for information, presented in plain language, as concisely as possible, and offered to the public in convenient form and at a price within the reach of shallow as well as ample purses.

As this meager effort is in response to urgent demands from friends, Spiritualists, students of psychic science in all parts of America, and also across the seas, the author confidently submits it to the friendly criticism of those who have demanded it, and also as a thought-provoker wherever it may be introduced.

W. J. COLVILLE.

# A CATECHISM OF SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY

## *Life Here and Hereafter*

### LESSON I.

Q. *What is your best definition of yourself?*

A. I am a conscious individual spiritual entity, working at present through a physical body which is mine but not I.

Q. *What do you consider the most important work of life?*

A. To develop a noble character, so that whether I remain here or am called elsewhere, I can live at peace with myself and all others.

Q. *How do you think we can best develop noble character?*

A. By thinking of the welfare of all our neighbors together with our own, so that in all we think, say and do, we may contribute to general health and happiness.

Q. *What do you regard as the law of life?*

A. The law of co-operative industry. We must all work together that we may unitedly succeed.

Q. *What is a good definition of success?*

A. A state of existence in which all the members of a community dwell together in harmony, all active, all producing as well as consuming.

Q. *Can we all do some useful work and promote the common weal?*

A. We certainly can, but our occupations must be varied to suit our different temperaments and dispositions. We must countenance variety but not tolerate disunion.

Q. *What distinction do you draw between difference and discord?*

A. Difference is necessary to harmony; discord results from abuse of faculty or misplacement of material.

Q. *Do you think there are differences in the unseen world as well as on earth?*

A. I am sure there are, because all spiritual communications on record, both ancient and modern, so testify, and there is every reason for concluding that the visible world is an expression of the invisible?

Q. *What is commonly meant by visible and invisible?*

A. Visible is whatever can be discovered by use of ordinary physical senses; invisible is a term used generally to mean what we cannot see unless we are clairvoyant.

Q. *What is meant by clairvoyant?*

A. Extended vision; ability to see objects made of finer substance than that ordinarily termed material.

Q. *What do you think becomes of us when we disappear from mortal sight?*

A. We leave our physical bodies behind us for burial or cremation, but clad in real bodies of finer substance we continue to live as individuals on another plane of existence.

Q. *Where do you think our so-called departed friends are living?*

A. Not necessarily in any particular place, because they can be happy anywhere if there is work for them to do in that locality.

Q. *Is every one happy as soon as he leaves the flesh behind?*

A. Every one is as happy as he deserves to be, but no happier.

Q. *What causes different degrees of happiness?*

A. Different degrees of spiritual attainment.

Q. *What do you mean by spiritual attainment?*

A. Conquest over self-seeking, therefore delight in the joy of all.

Q. *Is self-seeking wrong or natural?*

A. It is natural in an early stage of human development and only becomes wrong when outlived at the expense of neighborly affection.

Q. *What do you consider a fair definition of right and wrong?*

A. I consider everything right which is prompted by desire to bless humanity as a whole, and I regard as wrong whatever gratifies selfish impulses at the expense of the general good.

Q. *How can we determine what is right and wrong, or beneficial and harmful?*

A. By actual experience of the fruits of conduct, added to an intuitive sense of indwelling conscience, which we all possess.

Q. *Do our unseen friends and guardian spirits give us information concerning right and wrong?*

A. Undoubtedly they do, and they inspire us in the same manner that we help each other mentally and morally in ordinary ways through mental telepathy.

Q. *Ought we to always follow spiritual promptings?*

A. Yes, if they appeal to our inner sense of right, but not otherwise.

Q. *Do we always know when we are spiritually prompted?*

A. Yes, we feel an influence, but cannot always determine from whence it emanates.

Q. *Can we discover its source and nature?*

A. Yes, by observing the effect it has upon us; if it proceeds from a high and holy source, it always brings with it a sense of moral elevation.

Q. *If any of our spirit friends are unenlightened and yet communicate with us, how should we treat them?*

A. Exactly as we should behave toward associates on earth who need our help.

Q. *Is the spiritual world all about us?*

A. Yes. It occupies the unseen spaces in our atmosphere and extends far beyond our visual horizon.

Q. When are we most conscious of the spirit world?

A. When we are asleep and when we are very quiet or in a state of reverie.

Q. Can we escape communion with spiritual beings?

A. No, we cannot; but we can largely regulate the nature of our unseen associations by regulating our desires and thoughts.

## Spiritual Gifts

### LESSON 2

Q. What is meant by spiritual gifts?

A. By a spiritual gift we usually mean some endowment which makes itself manifest spontaneously, without our having sought it, or being subjected to any training to cultivate it.

Q. Name some spiritual gifts?

A. Clairvoyance, clairaudience, clairsentience, are three of the most widely known and highly valued; but there are also many others less generally conspicuous, which are alike useful and beautiful.

Q. How do these gifts usually show themselves and when?

A. A gift often reveals itself in early childhood and seems so natural to one who possesses it, that it is taken for granted quite as a natural and not unusual endowment.

Q. Can such gifts be further developed, and if so, how?

A. As every faculty is strengthened by regular genial exercises, so all spiritual gifts can be further developed in like manner. It is well as first to simply take notice of what one sees, hears, or feels, and encourage a habit of quiet attention to whatever may be revealed naturally.

Q. Do you think a spiritual gift is due to something con-

tained within its possessor, or do you regard it as a result of outside inspiration?

A. It may be due to either of these causes, and is usually due partly to each. Sensitiveness to external guidance usually accompanies the possession of more than ordinary interior development.

Q. How do you suppose we come in contact with our unseen spiritual enlighteners?

A. In the same way that we receive suggestions mentally from friends in the physical body who can teach and help us by mental telepathy.

Q. Do you make any distinction between what you receive from friends disrobed of mortal garments?

A. Not necessarily, because we as individuals do not die; we continue to live after physical dissolution, in full possession of all our mental and physical faculties; therefore we can continue to employ the same mental methods we used formerly.

Q. Do you think it right to encourage mediumship?

A. Certainly it is right to encourage it in any healthy manner, and make use of it with good intent; but we must remember always that our motives largely regulate our communion with the spirit world; consequently we should always seek to get good that we may do good.

Q. Do you regard spiritual gifts as entirely distinct from artistic and other endowments, or are they often interwoven?

A. It is very often the case that a spiritual gift works through an artistic tendency of an ordinary sort; as for example music, oratory, painting, and so forth. In these instances the spiritual endowments transcend average normal capacity, enabling its possessor to do more wonderful work than he could accomplish if left entirely to his own unaided resources.

Q. Do you think anyone is altogether unhelped spiritually?

A. No. We are all constantly in touch with unseen forces, but we are not all equally aware that this is so. A singularly gifted individual is one who is more than commonly responsive



to spiritual suggestions and sometimes capable of clearly beholding and unmistakably identifying spiritual intelligences.

Q. *Do you acknowledge a gift of healing?*

A. Certainly, this is self-evident, for in many instances children as well as adults radiate a healing force without their own knowledge, and this is so powerfully felt by invalids that they soon begin to feel benefited in the presence of such persons.

Q. *To what can you attribute such a beneficent radiation?*

A. Partly to the exceptionally healthy and vigorous condition of the individual, from whom it emanates, and partly to the influence of spiritual helpers who work with, and through this healthy organism.

Q. *Then you teach a doctrine of universal spiritual co-operation?*

A. Decidedly we do, and we endorse the beautiful words of Lucy Larcom in this connection: "Never walking heavenward, can we walk alone."

Q. *Can we walk in any direction without unseen companions?*

A. No, we cannot; for there is a law of attraction incessantly operative everywhere. Our thoughts and feelings have a very great deal to do with determining the unseen company we keep; but we have guardian spirits who are deeply interested in our welfare, and they work to employ us for good in all cases, even when we do not know of their existence.

Q. *Do you think we can help each other to unfold our spiritual gifts?*

A. Certainly we can, for the saying is true everywhere: "In union there is strength." Therefore whenever two or three or any larger number of persons work together mentally, with a common end in view, they form a battery between them which greatly aids the development of all the members of the mystic circle.

Q. *Why do you call it a mystic circle?*

A. Because people can work together to achieve spiritual results, though their physical bodies may be in different places,

often far distant from each other. Distance is no barrier to spiritual intercourse, which depends on spiritual congeniality.

Q. *What are the best times and places for definitely cultivating spiritual gifts?*

A. The best time for any of us is whenever we find ourselves particularly free from engrossing exterior engagements. Directly we wake in the morning, just when we are retiring at night, and at any hour of the day when we are truly at leisure we can profitably turn our attention toward spiritual development. The best places for us are wherever we feel quietest and most at home.

Q. *Can we unfold these gifts anywhere and at any time?*

A. If we succeed in becoming inwardly restful and receptive, outward conditions are not matters of any great importance.

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## Clairvoyance

### LESSON 3

Q. *What do you understand by Clairvoyance?*

A. The word simply means clear sight, or more than an ordinary measure of vision.

Q. *What do you mean by vision?*

A. Both physical and spiritual sight.

Q. *What is spiritual sight often termed?*

A. Seership.

Q. *Does clairvoyance enable one to see beyond the limits of the material world?*

A. Very often, but not always. Some clairvoyants only possess extended physical vision and are therefore able to see many

things at considerable distances from the place where they are actually present, but such clairvoyance is purely mundane. *Wordily*

Q. *What kind of vision is it which enables mediumistic persons to describe our spirit friends?*

A. Those who give accurate descriptions of how our friends appeared before transition, but receive no definite information regarding their present state, may only see pictures on the astral atmosphere, but those who see them now as living, moving entities, can behold the psychic body.

Q. *Can a clairvoyant often see the psychic body of a person yet living in a physical body, but asleep?*

A. Yes, quite frequently, because during sleep the inner faculties are temporarily set free and when we are sleeping soundly we are very much in the same condition as those who are no longer physically embodied.

Q. *Can clairvoyants foretell the future as well as read the past?*

A. To a limited extent they sometimes can and do; but as the past has left its record and future events have not yet occurred, the future can only be predicted either by seeing what has already taken place physically or mentally, or by receiving information from intelligences who are resolving to carry purposes into effect.

Q. *Can clairvoyants read our minds?*

A. Sometimes they can, very readily, especially when we are thinking of something very earnestly, for then we make definite mental images or produce thought-forms which are distinctly outlined.

Q. *Do thought-forms travel in the atmosphere?*

A. They certainly do, and they often so closely resemble the persons who project them that they are true photographs; they are also frequently correct representations of ideas which we hold tenaciously.

Q. *Can clairvoyance be cultivated?*

A. Assuredly it can be, especially by concentration upon

some place, person, or object with whom or which we desire to come into close mental contact.

Q. *What are favorable times for developing clairvoyance?*

A. Whenever we feel restful and disposed to turn our attention away from external objects and meditate upon spiritual themes.

Q. *Can we develop clairvoyance in broad daylight?*

A. Easily and beneficially in many instances. In order to do so, whenever climate is suitable, it is well to sit comfortably out of doors, under a tree preferably, with back to the light.

Q. *Can we develop clairvoyance in darkness?*

A. Yes, and often healthfully, provided it is the natural darkness of night. But artificially darkened rooms in daytime, where atmosphere is stuffy, are sometimes injurious; especially to sensitive persons.

Q. *Is it wise to form a circle for developing clairvoyance?*

A. Yes, provided it is a circle of friends mutually interested who meet in a wholesome place and whose aspirations harmonize.

Q. *Has diet any effect on seership?*

A. Whatever food has the best general effect on health, tending to nourish the body properly, without over-stimulation, is the diet to be prescribed. Heat is quite unnecessary, and often distinctly harmful.

Q. *Has clothing any effect on seership?*

A. Clothing must be comfortable, sufficiently warm, but never burdensome. White garments are always admirable, and any color which is specially friendly to the wearer may be worn with advantage; unrelieved black is never permissible.

Q. *Are we ever clairvoyant while sleeping?*

A. Frequently, and if after retiring at night we place ourselves in a mentally receptive attitude by calmly desiring and quietly expected visions during sleep we are very likely to obtain them.

Q. *Is clairvoyance often entirely spontaneous?*

A. Yes, and whenever it is so it is apt to be more definite, reliable, and convincing than when induced by any outward methods.

## Clairaudience

### LESSON 4

Q. *What do you understand by Clairaudience?*

A. Clairaudience simply means clear hearing, precisely as clairvoyance means clear sight.

Q. *Is everyone clairaudient, or can everyone become so?*

A. As clairaudience signifies unusual ability to hear sounds ordinarily unheard, everyone cannot be at present in a clairaudient condition, but it is possible that all persons may be able to cultivate clairaudience if they so desire.

Q. *Are children in these days sometimes clairaudient as they were in days of old?*

A. Decidedly they are, and it often happens that when they are so they are greatly misunderstood, and a genuine spiritual endowment is mistaken for some form of disorder.

Q. *How does clairaudience generally manifest itself?*

A. By a natural appeal to the sense of hearing, but in such a manner as to produce no such impression upon the common outer atmosphere as to render the sounds intelligible to the ordinary ear.

Q. *Do you think that all sounds heard clairaudiently emanate from spiritual entities?*

A. As we are all spiritual entities here and now, and always

in possession of psychic faculties, it is quite reasonable to decide on the basis of varied evidence that though we often receive communications from our spirit friends clairaudiently, we also sometimes receive telepathic messages in the same manner from persons still in the flesh.

Q. *How can you scientifically account for clairaudience?*

A. In the first place by acknowledging that there are many rates of vibration beyond those we ordinarily detect. Scientific instruments have frequently recorded impressions made by sound undetected by the most diligent listeners.

Q. *Have we not also inner bodies which can be impressed by vibrations which cannot be recorded by even the most sensitive of material instruments?*

A. Such is undeniably the case; therefore we must acknowledge different phases of clairaudience as of clairvoyance.

Q. *What attitude should we take toward what we hear clairaudiently?*

A. A perfectly simple and natural one. We should attach no more importance to a message because it reaches in one way than though it reached us in another. We should take notice of what we hear but not follow blindly any advice that may be offered.

Q. *Are we not obliged to pay some attention to what we hear clairaudiently?*

A. Certainly we are not. We can either heed or not heed any communication regardless of its nature and method of delivery.

Q. *Do we not sometimes hear clairaudiently much that is simply the commonplace of the astral plane, as we hear much in the same manner physically?*

A. That is unquestionably the case, therefore when we merely hear what seems of no value to use we can pass it by unnoticed.

Q. *Do not sensitive persons sometimes suffer annoyance clairaudiently?*

A. Probably they do; but the annoyance is unnecessary, for they are no more compelled to pay attention to what they hear in that manner than though they heard similar sounds physically.

Q. *If we wish to cultivate clairaudience, what is a good course to pursue?*

A. One very good method is to select a particularly quiet place and time and put one's self in a calm, listening attitude; then in this silence many sounds may be distinctly heard which cannot be heard when noises are all about us.

Q. *Are important spiritual messages often given clair-audiently?*

A. They certainly are, and it is always well to make a record of anything we hear which is of an unusual character. Definite warnings are often conveyed in this way, and though it is never wise to accept any communications blindly, we should not hastily dismiss information which may prove of value, if we give it due consideration.

Q. *From what sources do you think such tidings usually proceed?*

A. Very generally from our immediate spirit friends, who are often called unseen helpers. We are all attended by spiritual friends and guardians interested in our welfare, even if we know it not; when we are specially sensitive in any direction we become consciously aware of the presence and guidance of these helpers.

Q. *If we hear unpleasant and unrighteous utterances, how should we treat them?*

A. Either pay no heed whatever, refusing to let them cause mental disturbance, or else (which is still better) send forth mentally directly opposite statements, thereby conquering evil by good.



## *Who Are the Prophets and What Is Prophecy*

### LESSON 5

Q. *What do you understand by prophecy?*

A. Prophecy is commonly regarded as the gift which enables one to peer into the future and foretell coming events, but it also has a much higher significance.

Q. *What is that higher significance?*

A. A deeper insight than the ordinary into the constitution of the universe, so that by means of added knowledge of universal law we may be able to live nobler and more intelligent lives.

Q. *Are there prophets today?*

A. Assuredly there are, but they are not always known or honored and the gift of prophecy is sometimes only imperfectly revealed.

Q. *What type of man or woman is usually a prophet?*

A. One who is entirely fearless of the opinion of others; one who is willing, if necessary, to be martyred for the sake of conviction.

Q. *Are not children sometimes prophets?*

A. Very often, and it is easier for them to exercise their gift than for older people, because they are franker as a rule and far less readily affected by the opinions of those around them.

Q. *Are prophets highly sensitive?*

A. Exceptionally so, but not in the common meaning of the word. They are especially responsive to inspiration from exalted spiritual sources and therefore less readily influenced than ordinary by the thoughts and wishes of persons around them.

Q. *Can we cultivate the gift of prophecy?*

A. We can, undoubtedly; but chiefly by giving free rein to whatever inspiration comes to us. When we are impelled to deliver a message we should freely utter it, but that is not saying that those who are addressed need blindly follow an exhortation.

Q. *If prophets can foresee the future, is not that a proof of fatalism?*

A. By no means. The fatalistic theory is that every event in the life of every one is so pre-ordained or pre-necessitated that no room is left for individual initiative. The prophetic idea is only that there is an unalterable connection between causes and effects.

Q. *How, then, do you explain the admitted fact that prophets actually foretell events which do afterwards occur precisely as they have been foretold?*

A. If one is sufficiently clairvoyant to see below the surface of the ground and watch certain varieties of seeds sprouting in the earth, it is not difficult for him to predict the nature of a coming harvest; in like manner a prophet often sees what is already going on in the psychic realm and which must eventually bring forth physical results.

Q. *Is it not sometimes the case that prophets become aware of the purposes of intelligences who are designers or architects in spirit life?*

A. Such is the case frequently; for that reason it is often stated that events are foreordained and they frequently are in the same sense that we plan a building and draw a sketch of it prior to its material erection.

Q. *Has fortune-telling any connection with prophecy?*

A. To reply to that question fully would require an elaborate treatise on the meaning of the term employed but as fortune-telling is usually described, we should pronounce it far inferior to prophecy.

Q. *Why and how do you consider it inferior?*

A. The general impression conveyed by fortune-telling is an art practiced by gypsies and other peculiar people who undertake

to tell their clients just when they are to marry, receive money and meet with other changes in their affairs, without giving them any salutary suggestions how to improve their conduct.

Q. *Then you esteem prophecy as useful as well as wonderful?*

A. Decidedly, otherwise it would not be worthy to be classed among spiritual endowments, every one of which is intended for some good end of service.

Q. *How can we make practical use of prophecy?*

A. In exact accordance with the wise old saying "To be forewarned is to be forearmed." If you know that rain is coming though you cannot prevent its falling, you can prepare yourself to meet it so as not to be inconvenienced by it.

Q. *Are there not some events so far inevitably alike in their nature and consequences that we can do nothing to alter their efforts?*

A. Unquestionably there are, but the actually inevitable is only alluded to by prophets when giving demonstrations of their power with the ultimate intent of preparing the minds of those whom they convince to receive useful teachings and warnings.

Q. *Are there prophets who can foresee the end of the world?*

A. No doubt there are, but in two senses widely different from popular misapprehension. The end of an age, period, or cycle can be foretold as readily as we can foretell any event in astronomy, and the "end" of the world in the higher meaning of the phrase signifies not the destruction of our planet, but the object for which it exists, which object will yet be made clearly manifest.

Q. *What sort of life must one lead to be a reliable prophet?*

A. Absolute freedom from all insincerity is essential at the outset, and it is also conducive to the further development of the prophetic gift to live much in retirement, at least at intervals, and be often "alone with nature."

Q. *Do you consider prophecy the highest of spiritual gifts?*

A. Yes; on account of its being an expression of all-round spiritual insight, and also by reason of its wide applicability to general human edification.

## Psychometry

### LESSON 6

Q. *What is Psychometry?*

A. The word literally means psychic measuring, as it is derived from psyche and metre or metron.

Q. *What, then, constitutes a psychometer?*

A. To psychometrize necessitates the development of usual faculties to an unusual degree. A psychometer is sensitive enough to detect or discern the auric emanations which surround and penetrates all objects in varying degrees.

Q. *What is the aura?*

A. The human aura, or as it is sometimes called, simply atmosphere, is an emanation proceeding both from our inner and outer bodies; it necessarily partakes of our qualities, both psychical and physical; it is therefore possible both to delineate character and to diagnose temporary conditions by means of it.

Q. *Wherein does the psychometric faculty differ from clairvoyance or clairaudience?*

A. Clairvoyance means definitely clear sight, clairaudience signifies clear hearing. A psychometer is technically speaking clairsentient, as the faculty implies general unlocalized sensitiveness.

Q. *Can we cultivate this interesting ability?*

A. We certainly can, though some persons can do much more readily than others. Professors Denton and Buchanan, whose works on psychometry are standard, experimented for many years with specially sensitive persons and found that constant, regular practice developed a natural ability greatly.

Q. *What is a good way to test one's powers?*

A. Take a letter (contents unknown to you), or any article

you choose to select, with whose history you are unacquainted; hold it in your hand or place it tightly on your forehead, then make yourself as receptive as possible and pay close attention to whatever impressions come to you spontaneously.

Q. *What conditions are most favorable to success in these experiments?*

A. A quiet place, a sense of leisure, freedom from mental and bodily fatigue, and above all absence from active self-suggestion. When we confess perfect ignorance of the article we are testing, and allow impressions to come to us without criticizing them, we gain the best results.

Q. *Is psychometry always reliable?*

A. Not at first to any large extent in many instances, but some sensitives are immediately successful. It is always desirable to keep a thoroughly open mind and allow results to prove themselves without excitement.

Q. *What, do you think, are the limits of psychometry?*

A. We know of no limits except to some one's present development of the faculty. There is a book of record and remembrance co-extensive with the universe, and this volume opens gradually to our view.

Q. *Why are public attempts at psychometry often very imperfect?*

A. Because when many articles are presented for examination from different persons, their distinctive auras become confusingly interblended. Occasionally some one who is a very strong individual naturally sympathetic with the sensitive, receives a convincing reading, but it is always difficult to give satisfactory information to many persons at a single function.

Q. *What is a good method for increasing psychometric ability?*

A. Let a small select company of earnest students form a group, meeting in a quiet, harmonious place, at regular intervals. If one of the company is particularly sensitive, this fact will soon disclose itself. Let yourselves be perfectly natural, and give forth whatever comes to you, making no claims for it but

allowing its accuracy to be proved or disproved by subsequent experiences.

Q. *Is the exercise of this ability a strain on a sensitive?*

A. It never involves injurious effort if the psychometer takes the matter easily. Undue strain is due to mental anxiety which also hampers and often neutralizes the success of an experiment.

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## Elementary Psychology

### LESSON 7

Q. *What do you understand by Psychology?*

A. Psychology is derived from two Greek words—psyche and logos—meaning respectively soul and word. Psychology therefore signifies a word concerning the soul.

Q. *What other meaning has psyche?*

A. It also stands in Greek for butterfly, which was the expressive emblem of the soul in times gone by, when all language was eminently pictorial, and therefore highly allegorical.

Q. *What is properly meant by soul in our vernacular?*

A. Soul is used to express many ideas and to cover many planes of consciousness, but when we use it in connection with psychology we give it the widest possible interpretation, employing it to cover the entire field of conscious human activity.

Q. *Can we not speak of animal psychology?*

A. We can in a lesser degree, because all living creatures manifest some degrees of emotion and intelligence, but as in human life all lower lives are included, we find nothing in animal consciousness that is not duplicated in ourselves, and it is with humankind that we must deal in the most intimate and essential manner.

Q. *What is meant by comparative psychology?*

A. The study of human life in comparison or contrast with other forms of life; also the study of different races of humanity, considering their typical points and phases of agreement and difference.

Q. *What is understood by experimental psychology?*

A. Properly speaking, all investigation of the psychical side of human life, which includes sensation, feeling, imagination, memory, and will.

Q. *Do you include clairvoyance and other distinctly psychic faculties in a study of psychology?*

A. Is it right thus to include them, but recently most treatises on psychology have left out all consideration of these interesting and important but often much contested human abilities.

Q. *Where would you begin a study of psychology?*

A. With the root-question: What can we know about ourselves?

Q. *How would you proceed to answer this important inquiry?*

A. At first by simply asking the students to question themselves fearlessly regarding their own interior feelings, such as their desires and remembrances.

Q. *What do you consider primal in all human experience?*

A. Some expression of love or will.

Q. *Do you regard those terms as synonymous?*

A. Legitimately so, as they have been used by Swedenborg and other eminent psychologists.

Q. *How would you begin to analyze yourself?*

A. First by honestly asking myself what it is that I care most about, thereby discovering the basis of my conduct.

Q. *What do you learn from elementary self-analysis?*

A. That I am the possessor of certain definite inclinations which I am determined to gratify.

Q. *What does this discovery lead to as regards one's relation with other human entities?*

A. It soon convinces us that we are members of a great race or family for we quickly discover that our essential longings are identical with those of our numerous companions.

Q. *What do you consider the chief common demands of children?*

A. In addition to the desire for actual physical necessities every child demands affection.

Q. *How would you advise instructing a young child?*

A. By making a study of the child, and then seeking to respond intelligently to all natural aspirations.

Q. *Do you regard all children equally endowed with desire?*

A. Fundamentally all have the same root-desires, but these are not evenly manifested in all cases, and when we consider incidental desires we find wide differences.

Q. *Do you regard a child's natural desires as good and to be gratified?*

A. Certainly, in all essential particulars.

Q. *But do we not find undesirable promptings as well as desirable longings in most children?*

A. Possibly we do, but these are only imperfect or perverted tendencies. All unalloyed natural cravings are justifiable.

Q. *As we become educated, do we not outgrow certain tendencies?*

A. The word educated is from the Latin verb, educere, which means to lead out; education therefore is not cramming or substituting, but unfolding.

Q. *Do children generally know what is good for them?*

A. They certainly feel their immediate needs; this is clearly manifested in the first cry for food which escapes through an infant's lips.

Q. *Do young children discern anything beyond the external side of existence; have they any psychical experiences?*

A. A great many very young children are highly endowed

psychically, and it would be well for their elders in many instances to pay heed to the visions of the little ones.

Q. *How would you teach a young child?*

A. Chiefly through the agency of imitation; the faculty of mimicry is largely developed at a very tender age. It is by setting good examples and exerting a pure influence, far more than dogmatic declarations, that we make useful impressions upon the very young.

Q. *How would you start instruction on some definite subject?*

A. By seeking to unfold an opposite tendency. All children are naturally inquisitive and constantly ask about what they see around them. To answer definite questions as usefully and intelligibly as possible is to start a child's education in the wisest possible way.

Q. *If any desire appears immoderate, how would you temper it?*

A. By seeking to unfold an opposite tendency. The most effective way of checking any tendency to excess is by calling attention to some desire to faculty which is as yet neglected.

Q. *Do we all understand children?*

A. We certainly do if we employ our memories, for all adults have passed through childhood.





## Destiny and Fate

### LESSON 8

Q. What do we understand by *Destiny*?

✓ A. A very good and useful definition of destiny is that it signifies whatever we are capable of attaining unto by dint of persevering industry.

Q. Then you do not teach that we are fated to any definite result?

✓ A. Such words as fate and fortune are largely misleading, because they imply that we are compelled by outside pressure to do whatever is foreordained, without volition of our own.

Q. What do you consider foreordination to mean when correctly defined?

✓ A. Simply the fixed and unalterable relation between causes and effects.

✓ Q. What do you think of the famous sayings "*Character is Destiny*?"

A. We regard it as a wholesome, bracing saying, calculated to inspire courage and confidence in our individual and collective efforts to live nobly.

Q. Do you think there is any truth in *Astrology*?

A. There is a mighty truth involved in the ancient science of the stars, but we must remember the wise saying of the most intelligent among astrologers: "The wise man rules his stars; the foolish man obeys them."

Q. How can anyone rule the stars?

A. No one can rule the actual stars, but we can all learn to rule those elements within ourselves which correspond with the stars. The personal pronoun "his" affords the clue to the meaning of the declaration.

*pre-nology*  
Q. What may a horoscope truly indicate?

A. It may outline the essential characteristics of the native and also mark the general course which he or she will inevitably pursue, precisely as phrenology indicates the special attitude of any child whose head may be intelligently examined.

Q. Then you allow that we are born with different tendencies, and that our paths in life can be, to some extent, foreseen?

A. Certainly we do; but this admission is only that each one of us has a special place to fill in the economy of the whole, and that the training of youth should be an intelligent agreement with natural proclivities.

✓ Q. How would you illustrate freedom and destiny as co-existent?

A. By considering agricultural pursuits in the first instance. Every need may bring forth only according to its own kind, but we may learn to choose what kinds of seed we will sow in our gardens and thus determine the nature of our harvests.

Q. Supposing one is told of an astrologer or a seer that a certain voyage is inevitable, would you credit the statement?

A. It is quite possible that impending travel may be foreseen, foretold, and the weather to be encountered on the journey may be forecasted, but granting all of that, one's enjoyment of a voyage or discomfort during it may depend on his own interior condition.

✓ Q. Do you believe we can change our destiny?

A. Not in the sense of radically altering our inherent capabilities, but surely to the extent of developing new phases of character which bring about new consequences.

✓ Q. You teach, then, that every individual has limited freedom?

A. Decidedly, and that freedom grows with experience. We are never free to change natural law or to alter the constitution of the universe; but we can so increase our knowledge of universal law and order that we may bring about results lawfully (through setting law in motion) which seemed hitherto impossible.

Q. *Would your idea of destiny endorse the claim that "knowledge is power?"*

A. Knowledge certainly confers power. We often use four terms in the following order: Experience begets knowledge; knowledge begets power; power begets liberty. With every fresh experience we add to our knowledge, and through that added knowledge we gain added power, and the power to use knowledge is liberty.

Q. *If anyone complains of adverse fate and declares himself chronically unlucky, what would you say to him?*

A. The wisest thing to say would be something calculated to stir within him a consciousness of growing power to meet old conditions in a new way. We would recommend a study of Emerson, Epictetus and other philosophers, ancient and modern, whose philosophy is specially encouraging to individual initiative, and at the same time reconcile with the obvious fact that some people have to encounter difficulties foreign to many of their neighbors.

Q. *Do you teach that our attitude to environment is more important than any circumstance itself?*

A. That is precisely what we desire most of all to emphasize. We are in different positions in the Grand Man, but all situations are good places when rightly comprehended. A truly successful career is possible in all circumstances and it is the part of wisdom always to seek to find the good in an existing situation rather than cry out against, "hard luck," or some other fabulous entity, belief in which depresses the believer.

Q. *What do you consider the most direct method of finding one's vocation?*

A. By seriously and honestly practicing self-examination with a view to discovering our deepest affections and most decided aptitudes. Then doing whatever comes to be done as the right occupation for the immediate present, but never losing sight of the vision of accomplishing the special work we feel most in love with and best adapted to perform.

## Practical Cooperation Rudiment of Education

### LESSON 9

Q. *What do you understand by the term co-operation?*

A. Working together in such a manner that the activities of every individual in a family or society accomplish the largest possible result with the least possible exertion.

Q. *Is co-operation demonstrated in Nature, or is it only a human device?*

A. The human body in a perfectly natural condition is the most complete example of co-operative industry, because it is composed of many parts or members, each having some special function, and all working unitedly in a state of health, which is the only natural condition.

Q. *How is it, then, that we hear so much of competition as "the life of trade?"*

A. Competition is a much perverted word as now generally employed. It originally sprang from the same root as "competent and competence," words connoting only desirable conditions. The search for individual competence is entirely consistent with universal co-operation.

Q. *How would you illustrate this concept?*

A. By drawing the largest circle describable on a given surface, and writing around it the words Universal Co-operation. Then by drawing a number of smaller circles within the great circle, terming each one of these individual competence, suggesting thereby that society is constituted of a number of healthy, successful units.

Q. *How would you exemplify this proposition in educational work?*

A. By instructing every scholar that no prize can be given to any child except as a reward for accomplishment, and in like manner that no prize can be withheld except for incompetency. There cannot justly or reasonably be any "competitive" system of training if degrees or diplomas are conferred solely in acknowledgment of qualification.

Q. *How can this principle be actually applied?*

A. In the simplest way possible. Teach a child that he will earn rewards through industry; that if he passes an examination he will receive the honor to which he is entitled and that no favoritism to anyone will ever be shown.

Q. *Do you consider such teaching illustrative of the operation of order in spirit life?*

A. It is the exact method in which law operates throughout all the spheres from which any tidings have been received.

Q. *Then you agree with the saying that the Golden Rule contains a noble moral code?*

A. Certainly we agree to this; but there is sometimes difficulty in explaining exactly what is meant by doing unto others precisely what you wish others to do to you.

Q. *How would you simplify the general application?*

A. By insisting that we must cultivate neighborly affection to the extent of mutually placing ourselves in a generally humane attitude toward all our fellow beings, and as far as possible toward all sub-human creatures also.

Q. *What do you regard as the greatest drawback to success in general?*

A. Ignorance of the true method of co-operation and false belief in the necessity of competition. There is a widespread fallacy afloat that one man's gain is another's loss, and until that error is destroyed no real progress can be made in economics.

Q. *Ought everybody to work for a living?*

A. Certainly, and no normal man, woman, child or animal ever wishes to exist in idleness. Aptitudes are various, therefore

occupations must be diverse, but employment at some remunerative work should be the happy lot of all.

Q. *What do you mean by remunerative?*

A. We include under that general caption all kinds of activities which redound to the welfare of humanity as a whole—literary, scientific and artistic, as well as domestic, mechanical and mercantile pursuits.

Q. *Would you never encourage rivalry between children?*

A. Never. But we should encourage the stimulation of individual initiative, together with co-operative execution of designs. An architect is fully as necessary as a builder, but we do not need so many architects as builders.

Q. *How would you help a child to find his proper occupation?*

A. By watching him in play, and carefully observing what sort of activity is his spontaneous choice.

Q. *Would you take no account of sex in industry?*

A. None whatever: only individual capacity should be regarded. Whatever any boy or girl can do best and loves to do most is the right occupation for that individual. Give every child a free opportunity for self-expression and the spirit within will prompt in the right direction.

Q. *What would you say of mischief and of objectionable habits?*

A. There is no mischief or bad habit other than an expression of misdirected energy. It is the rightful work of the parent, guardian or teacher to discover how to turn a child's wandering forces into their normal channels.

Q. *Do you consider every child capable of profiting by educational advantages?*

A. Certainly; but education and forcing are never properly synonymous. All children are not equally bright, but all are educable to some extent, and employment of some healthful and useful sort can be found for all. Extremely sensitive children, and adults also, learn far more through the agency of silent in-

fluences and helpful examples, than by any routine methods. Many so called dull pupils are the brightest of all when treated wisely in accordance with their special ideas.

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## *Declaration of Principles*

### LESSON 10

1. We believe in Infinite Intelligence.
2. We believe that the phenomena of Nature, physical and spiritual are the expression of Infinite Intelligence.
3. We affirm that a correct understanding of such expression, and living in accordance therewith, constitutes the true religion.
4. We affirm that the existence and personal identity of the individual continue after the change called death.
5. We affirm that communication with the so-called dead is a fact scientifically proven by the phenomena of Spiritualism.
6. We believe that the highest morality is contained in the Golden Rule "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye also unto them."
7. We affirm the moral responsibility of the individual, and that he makes his own happiness or unhappiness as he obeys or disobeys Nature's psychic laws.
8. We affirm that the doorway to reformation is never closed against any human soul here or hereafter.

Q. *What do you understand by a Declaration of Principles?*

A. Simply an announcement to the world that we entertain certain definite views which we are capable of intelligently ex-

pressing, and that we have some decided and intelligible convictions.

Q. *Do you consider any formulated expression of ideas binding upon all Spiritualists?*

A. Decidedly, and it is literally impossible that all Spiritualists should consider themselves bound by any possible verbal covenant of agreement; but it is, nevertheless entirely reasonable for a definitely organized society, duly incorporated, to put forth a manifesto.

Q. *Is the above declaration subject to alteration at any time?*

A. It must be, because it only claims to be an expression of the views of a majority of the individuals now composing the body known as National Spiritualists' Association in America. In Great Britain, and in several other countries, there are organized Spiritualists whose declarations though similar are by no means identical with the foregoing.

Q. *Wherein consists the difference (if there be any) between a declaration and a creed?*

A. Actually in the present instance there is not even a verbal difference, as the word believe is equivalent to creed, but while creeds are often supposed to be dogmatic, declarations are not considered so inflexible.

Q. *Do you consider the expression Infinite Intelligence justifiable?*

A. Though the finite human mind cannot define infinity, which must of necessity be immeasurable, the adjective infinite is an entirely permissible one, because it properly means boundless, and we can set no limits in thought to universal intelligence.

Q. *Do you regard the second proposition equally valid with the first, and can you pronounce it in harmony with science?*

A. Science only signifies knowledge and the more our knowledge of Nature is enlarged the more convinced must we become that rational order is universally displayed. There is no hard and fast line to be drawn between spiritual and physical, for this is a living universe and the terms material and spiritual only connote our idea of two distinct modes of expression of a power,

force, energy or substance beyond our power to accurately define.

Q. *Do you consider the third proposition a fair statement of true religion?*

A. It appears to us to be a very comprehensive and reasonable definition of a kind of religion that may well become universal, and indeed it seems only fair to admit that a correct understanding of universal order and life in harmony therewith is the underlying purpose of all religious systems calculated to help forward human progress.

Q. *Can you give any reasonable interpretation of the word religion?*

A. In its best sense religion means that which unifies. One excellent definition of religion is to be found in the New Testament, in the epistle of James, where pure and undefiled religion is resolved into purity and philanthropy. Swedenborg has left on record the following magnificent sentence, "All religion has reference to life, and the life of religion is to be good." Thomas Paine in "The Age of Reason," defined religion simply as doing good.

Q. *Do you regard Spiritualism as a religion?*

A. It may be more accurate to say that Spiritualism is a comprehensive philosophy of life having religious aspects. It is also a fact that many sincere and earnest Spiritualists have organized themselves as religious bodies. On the other hand there are some equally conscientious and convinced Spiritualists who dislike the word religion and feel much more friendly to the terms science and philosophy when applied to Spiritualism.

Q. *Do you think it probable that Spiritualism will prove to be the coming or next religion to be widely acknowledged?*

A. We are convinced that the religion of the near future will proclaim much that is now called Spiritualism, but we are not by any means certain that any particular title will be applied to the religious organization of days to come. The fact of spirit-communion is being continually demonstrated to the satisfaction of scientific investigators, and in the near future science and

religion cannot remain as far apart as they have appeared recently.

Q. *Do you consider the philosophy of Spiritualism calculated to supersede dogmatic theology?*

A. Certainly to a very wide extent, because dogmatic teaching is wholly authoritative and has to be taken on trust from teachers, while the rudimentary fact of spirit-communion is constantly forcing itself phenomenally upon the attention of the world, altogether aside from definite Spiritualistic propaganda.

Q. *Do you think it possible for a large majority of Spiritualists to become organized into a solid denomination?*

A. We should hesitate to pronounce any opinion as to the percentage of Spiritualists who are definitely organizable; but we are quite sure, judging from present indications in many places, that organized Spiritualism is solidly gaining ground and has a great and useful mission to fulfill. It seems, however, impossible to restrict Spiritualism itself within any organization because spirit-communion is unconfined.

Q. *Does Spiritualism throw any clear light on the origins of the various religious systems of the world?*

A. A knowledge of spirit-communion in these days makes it easy for us to understand how patriarchs, prophets and other inspired and mediumistic persons received messages from spiritual being, and often mistook their immediate guides or directors for the Almighty. Every Bible becomes intelligible in the light of modern spiritual communion. We need to study all scriptures impartially, and we should be ready to treat all religious systems courteously; at the same time we are not warranted in blindly accepting any doctrine or in following any personal lead. Reasonable religion is fully compatible with the freest possible exercise of mental faculties and with unrestricted enjoyment of intellectual liberty.

Q. *Do you consider religious ceremonies conducive to true religion?*

A. That depends both upon the nature and suggestiveness of the ceremonies themselves, and yet more upon the influence they exert upon those who employ them. Andrew Jackson Davis saw many beautiful ceremonies performed in the spirit spheres, and

many contemporary sensitives frequently witness them. Unity in sentiment regarding fundamentals by no means necessitates uniformity in ritual observances. Any observance which helps to spiritualize and harmonize those who engage in it is for that reason commendable.

Q. *How would you advise teaching religion to children?*

A. Largely by replying to their own questions and by means of nature studies and object lessons; far more by encouraging them to think and feel for themselves than by forcing upon them any ready-made opinions.

Q. *Then you would treat a declaration of principles elastically rather than rigidly?*

A. Certainly we should advise a liberal and expansive policy with reference to all formulated statements, otherwise we cannot avoid falling into the errors of dogmatism.

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## Scientific and Philosophical Aspects of Spiritualism

### LESSON 11

Q. *Considering the fourth article in the Declaration of Principles we are now reviewing, what do you understand by the continuation of the personal identity of the individual?*

A. The language unmistakably conveys the idea of survival of all that renders a particular individual identifiable in the same manner that we can identify individuals whom we know in the flesh by mental or spiritual means.

Q. *Do you consider "return" a proper word to employ? We notice it does not occur in the Declaration.*

A. Though spirit-return is a popular and time-honored phrase,

it is not strictly accurate, as there can be no return when there has been no departure.

Q. *Do you teach, or do you infer, that this Declaration teaches that when we drop our physical bodies we remain where we were prior to physical dissolution?*

A. By no means is such invariably the case, but in frequent instances it undoubtedly is so for an indefinite period, until we have outgrown all intimate and affectionate attachments to the scenes of our terrestrial existence.

Q. *For how long do you suppose attachment to earthly scenes continue?*

A. It would be absurd to attempt to fix a time limit, because time as not a necessary factor in the life of the discarnate entity. As long as any strong interior attraction binds an individual to a special locality that individual will be held thereby the law of attraction, which works irrevocably, but whenever the attraction to that locality ceases through the birth of a powerful attraction in some other direction, the bond is immediately loosened, and the entity gravitates whithersoever the drawing force most powerfully allures.

Q. *What have you to say about occupations in spirit life on the basis of the statements you are now elaborating?*

A. Occupations in the spirit world are regulated entirely by preference and concomitant adaptability. Whatever we can do best we love to do most, and as there are no artificial reasons operating in the spirit world to force us into uncongenial grooves, we find ourselves doing just those things for which we manifest the most pronounced affinity. It does not actually follow that we take up with entirely new work, but we invariably continue such work as we pursued mentally, or desired to engage in, while living in physical surroundings.

Q. *Do you consider it reasonable to teach that work we do mentally while on earth, which we have no opportunity to externalize, is really accomplished spiritually, and will confront us as a finished or progressing product when we cease to live physically?*

A. We know from abundant clairvoyant and kindred testimony that such is actually the case, and we further know that

ideas sent forth resolutely on the mental plane actually take shape and produce results far beyond the scope of external observation.

Q. *What precisely may we understand by the word communication; wherein does it differ from "control"?*

A. The word communication is a much better, and also a much wider, term than control, as the former includes all kinds of friendly intercourse between individuals on different planes of existence, and does not imply coercion or dominion exerted by one mind over another. Communication is a word that provokes no reasonable opposition and excites no needless controversy, and it has the advantage of clearly expressing a rational idea.

Q. *What can we properly include under the title phenomena of Spiritualism?*

A. Phenomena is so amply inclusive a word that it can legitimately cover many phases of manifestation of spiritual power and presence, some mental and some physical. By mental phenomena we mean clairvoyance, telepathy, and indeed all surprising occurrences which bring conviction of mental or spiritual intercommunion. By physical phenomena we signify all wonderful occurrences which appeal to our consciousness through the instrumentality of one or more of the five physical senses.

Q. *What can we understand by "scientifically proven"?*

A. The scientific method of investigating all things is purely experimental; a scientific mind is one that is always open to evidence and ready to pass unbiased judgment upon any phenomena which may occur.

Q. *What do you consider the best attitude of mind in which to approach the subject of physical research?*

A. The term just employed is one that can legitimately cover inquiry into all phases of spiritual phenomena. No opinion should ever be formed in advance, but the mental attitude of all engaging in research should be that of dispassionate investigation.

Q. *Can you define the nature of satisfactory evidence?*

A. It is clearly impossible to decide for others, therefore genuinely scientific students content themselves with observing phenomena and recording what they have witnessed, taking the same general position as that taken by Charles Darwin in the field of natural science.

Q. *Do you think it likely that all honest scientific inquirers will become convinced of the reality of spirit communion provided they diligently and patiently continue to investigate with honest sensitives?*

A. The large probability is that all such open-minded and intelligent investigators will become satisfied to some extent of the certainty of communion between two or more individuals still in the flesh without the employment of ordinary material methods; then having convinced themselves of the reality of telepathy or mental telepathy it will be but a simple single step to reach forward to obtain convincing proof of communion with incarnate as well as with incarnate individuals.

Q. *Do you consider it safe to affirm that scientific minds as a rule have become satisfied of spirit communion when they have investigated without prejudice?*

A. The most conservative answer that can be fairly given to this inquiry is that a large percentage of such scientists have given open testimony to their conviction that occasionally, if not frequently, evidences are forthcoming which furnish convincing proof. An excellent book for general readers who desire expert scientific testimony in condensed form is "The Survival of Man," by Sir Oliver Lodge.

Q. *How would you treat cases of simulated mediumship?*

A. Though it is always regrettable that fraud should be intermingled with genuine phenomena, we must remember that each phenomenon must stand or fall on its own intrinsic merit, therefore if we find some manifestations genuine we must not refuse to admit their evidential value because we have to exercise judgment and penetration in sifting the precious from the spurious.

Q. *What importance would you attach to an alleged spirit communication?*

A. That question must be settled precisely as we settle all

similar questions pertaining to the reliability of individuals in all relationships of life. Judge all messages from unseen sources as you would judge tidings from men and women in ordinary mundane ways. It is a great error to suppose that because a communication is genuine it is therefore a revelation of higher spiritual import. All that is often demonstrated is that communication actually exists between the so-called living and the miscalled dead.

Q. *How would you reply to persons who tell you that it is wrong to encourage spirit communion?*

A. We should simply insist that all facts in nature can be employed for good, though all can be abused. If motives are pure and discretion is exercised no wrong can be perpetuated.

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## *Practical Spiritual Morality and Unending Spiritual Progression*

### LESSON 12

Q. *You have mentioned in Article 6 of the Declaration of Principles that the highest morality is contained in the Golden Rule; what is the significance of this title?*

A. Three distinct moral codes have been formulated called respectively Rule of Iron; Rule of Silver; Rule of Gold. The Iron Rule bids us render evil for evil; the Silver Rule counsels us to return good for good; these two rules may possibly be obeyed together. The Golden Rule, while it by no means rules out the Silver Rule, completely overthrows the Iron Rule, by substituting the excellent counsel to return good for evil, instead of evil for evil.

Q. *Do you consider this highly idealistic rule practical, and compatible with bravery and due regard for self-respect?*

A. We can prove to demonstration in all practical affairs that it embodies the only course of action worthy of a truly noble character, and it is moreover a perfect fulfillment of the highest self-respect. Nothing can be more self-degrading than to follow vile examples, and nothing nobler than to set a good example and establish a wise precedent in places where immortality and vulgarity now prevail.

Q. *What would you say about the tenses of the verb in this good counsel?*

A. The future tense is of necessity highly prominent, because all moral and spiritual teachers and exemplars must be pioneers, blazing trails for those to come after them.

Q. *Can you give some concrete example of how the Golden Rule may be ordinarily applied?*

A. We can well agree with that noble veteran naturalist and Spiritualist, Professor Alfred Russel Wallace, who, in his latest book on practical topics, has declared that no human being is wholly bad, but there are widely different degrees of goodness. If some of us know ourselves to be further advanced than some others mentally, morally and spiritually, then it surely becomes us to assume the role of teachers and reformers, rather than that of censors.

Q. *Are there not difficulties in applying this Golden Rule on accounts of wide differences in temperament and disposition?*

A. Not if we grasp its fundamental teaching which concerns the general spirit of our behavior without designating the precise attitude to be taken toward any particular affairs.

Q. *Are there not other forms of statement of the Golden Rule than the one you have quoted?*

A. There are several, and all are worthy of earnest consideration. One very beautiful version bids us feel toward others as we wish others to feel toward us, and this is indeed a basic necessity, for conduct is only an externalized expression of previous feeling, in most instances.



Q. *Is there not also a negative version?*

A. Confucius is reported to have advised his followers never to do anything to others which they would be unwilling that others should do unto them. This is a wise and necessary counsel, but less powerful and inclusive than an affirmative command, because mere abstinence from wrong action, though negatively praiseworthy, does not reach the moral attitude of positively benevolent action.

Q. *If you teach individual moral responsibility, do you regard it as anything more than relative and progressive?*

A. A moral responsibility could not be absolute and stationary except in the case of a Being incapable of change. As we know ourselves to be students in the colleges of the universe we are necessarily convinced that our responsibilities grow with our general advancement, therefore we come to regard actions (cruelties for example) as sinful, which we formerly regarded as innocent, and which we usually took as matters of course.

Q. *Do you think we have any common ground on which to stand when seeking to practice morality?*

A. There are certain feelings common to practically all the human beings we are likely to encounter, which serves to advise us how to fulfill this noble precept. Everybody likes to be thought and spoken well of, and to be encouraged to do his level best, while nobody enjoys being scandalized and discouraged. We may not be able to act with infallibly good judgment in all circumstances, but we can certainly endeavor to put ourselves in the place of others mentally, and behave to them as we would like to be treated were our positions mutually reversed.

Q. *Does the Golden Rule apply to the treatment of children equally with adults?*

A. It certainly does, and it may fairly be added that everybody ought to largely understand children, because all adults have been children. Did we call to mind our own childhood more frequently than we generally do, for the express purpose of learning better how to guide children, we should be far more intelligently sympathetic than we now usually are.

Q. *What do you understand by "psychic laws, mentioned in Article 7?"*

A. Psychic is derived from the Greek word, "psyche," meaning soul. A psychic law is a spiritual law, and as the whole universe is essentially spiritual, there are no other than spiritual laws. The adjective, "Psychic," in our judgment, is applicable to universal law in general, of which particular "laws" are only partial manifestations.

Q. *If, as Article 8 declares, the door to reformation is ever open, can you conceive of a penal system in the universe which combines punishment with moral education and with clemency?*

A. We do not like the word punishment and see no warrant for using it in reference to the outworking of a perfectly equitable system of moral and educational administration. Painful consequences following upon erroneous conduct serve to correct errors, and while wise discipline may involve suffering, it is never arbitrary or vengeful.

Q. *Do you think it possible to frame and administer a reformatory code on earth in consonance with the code operative in the higher spiritual spheres?*

A. It ought not to be difficult to do so, and indeed in these days of rapidly increasing enlightenment it is surely being done. All that is actually needed as a foundation for such a code and system is to teach and enforce the certainty of retribution for all possible conduct, and to perpetually keep in view the welfare of humanity as a whole, which necessarily includes a particular culprit as well as his victims.

Q. *Can you reconcile capital punishment with spiritual philosophy?*

A. Decidedly not, and it is an honor to organized Spiritualism in many places that they have definitely engaged in outspoken outcry against the death penalty, which is a vestige of barbarism having no rightful place in communities calling themselves civilized. Improved environments, both moral and physical, are needed to deter from crime and encourage growth in righteousness. It should be regarded by us all as a high duty and a glorious

privilege to assist unrisen to rise, and if there are fallen ones among us who have lapsed from a holier and happier condition, no other methods than those combining love with wisdom can ever prove effective in this or in any other section of the universe.



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