NEW ENGLAND

SPIRITUALISTS' ASSOCIATION.

Constitution and By-Laws,

List of Officers,

AND

ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC.

ORGANIZED AT BOSTON,

NOVEMBER, 1854.

GEORGE K. SNOW, PRINTER, 22 COURT STREET.

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Officers of the Association.

PRESIDENT,

ALLEN PUTNAM, Esq., Roxbury, Mass.

VICE PRESIDENTS,

HON. J. F. SIMMONS, Providence, R. I.
ALVIN ADAMS, Boston, Mass.
BENJAMIN KINGSBURY, JR., Esq., Portland, Me.
HARRISON BLISS, Worcester, Mass.
E. MATTOCKS, M. D., Lyndon, Vt.
J. SEYMOUR BROWN, Hartford, Ct.
RUFUS ELMER, Springfield, Mass.
ROBERT WILSON, Esq., Keene, N. H.
B. C. HARRIS, Fiskeville, R. I.
JONATHAN BEAN, Montville, Me.
JOSEPH CRAM, Hampton Falls, N. H.
WARD CHENEY, Manchester, Ct.
REV. ADIN BALLOU, Hopedale, Mass.
REV. DANIEL F. GODDARD, Boston, Mass.

RECORDING SECRETARY,

C. P. WEEKS, Boston, Mass., (9 Court Street.)

CORRESPONDING SECRETARIES,

A. E. NEWTON, Boston, Mass., (5 Washington Street.)
JOHN S. ADAMS, Chelsea, Mass., (or 115 Washington Street, Boston.)
REV. HENRY J. HUDSON, Chelsea, Mass.

TREASURER,

JONATHAN BROWN, JR., Boston, Mass.

TRUSTEES,

PHINEAS E. GAY, Boston, Mass.
H. F. GARDNER, M. D., Boston, Mass.
ALFRED B. HALL, Boston, Mass.
LUTHER PARKS, Boston, Mass.
CHA'S FOSTER, Charlestown, Mass.
JONATHAN BUFFUM, Lynn, Mass.
JOHN BAKER, Hingham, Mass.
CALEB EDDY, Boston, Mass.
GEORGE DARRACOTT, Boston, Ms
EDWARD HAYNES, Dedham, Ms.
HORACE B. WILBUR, Boston, Ms.
JOHN S. ROGERS, Boston, Mass.
JAMES SWAN, Boston, Mass.

COMMITTEE ON MEMBERSHIP,

ALBERT BINGHAM, Esq., Boston, Mass.
A. B. CHILD, M. D., Boston, Mass.
JOHN ROGERS, Roxbury, Mass.
BELA MARSH, Boston, Mass.
REV. HERMAN SNOW, Boston, Mass.

CONSTITUTION.

SECTION 1. The name of this Society shall be "THE NEW ENGLAND SPIRITUALISTS' ASSOCIATION."

SEC. 2. Its object shall be the diffusion of the knowledge of the phenomena and principles of Spiritualism.

SEC. 3. Its officers shall be a President, as many Vice Presidents as the Association shall designate, a Board of Trustees consisting of at least nine persons, Secretaries, and a Treasurer. Five of the Trustees shall be a quorum for the transaction of business.

SEC. 4. The duties of the officers shall be as follows: The President—or in his absence the Vice Presidents, in the order in which they stand in the list, or in their absence a President pro tempore—shall preside at all meetings of the Association, and shall call special meetings of the Association whenever required by five members. The President and Vice Presidents shall be ex-officio members of the Board of Trustees. The Secretaries shall conduct the correspondence of the Association, and keep full records of their proceedings. The Treasurer shall have the custody of the money and property of the Association, and dispose of the same only as the Board of Trustees shall direct. The business and affairs of the Association shall be conducted and

governed by the Board of Trustees, who may enact by-laws, subject to the approval of the Association, and appoint such subordinate officers as necessity may require.

SEC. 5. Any person who believes in the reality of Spiritual Intercourse may become a member of the Association, if his or her deportment and character are acceptable to the Committee on Membership, upon signing this Constitution and complying with the By-Laws.

SEC. 6. There shall be an annual meeting of the Association, in Boston, on the Tuesday preceding the last Wednesday of May; at which time the officers named in the third section shall be chosen, and when, also, shall be chosen five persons to constitute a Committee on Membership.

SEC. 7. The Trustees shall meet at least once a month, and as much oftener as the By-Laws may provide; and they shall keep full and careful records of all their doings, and lay the same before the Association at its annual meetings.

SEC. 8. Auxiliary Societies may be formed upon such terms as the By-Laws may direct; and at all meetings of the Association such auxiliaries may be represented and vote by their delegates—each auxiliary to have one vote for every ten members of their own association.

SEC. 9. This Constitution may be amended at any annual meeting.

BY-LAWS.

SEC. 1. There shall be an Executive Committee of five Trustees, whose business it shall be, in the recess of the meetings of the Board of Trustees, to control and manage the affairs of the Association, and to keep regular minutes of their proceedings.

SEC. 2. The Trustees of this Association may demand and take security from their Treasurer, from time to time, for the faithful performance of the trust reposed in him, in such manner as to them shall seem fit.

SEC. 3. In case of the death, resignation, neglect, or refusal to act, of any of the Officers or Trustees of the Association, the Trustees may, at any regular meeting, appoint any other officer or officers in their stead, who shall hold their offices until the next annual election, and until others shall be chosen or appointed in their places.

SEC. 4. The Trustees shall have power to fix the amount and compensation of officers and agents as shall to them seem meet, and to change the same as to them shall seem proper.

SEC. 5. The Trustees shall meet at least once in every month, at such time and place as they shall from time to time appoint.

SEC. 6. It shall be the duty of the Trustees to take charge of, and exercise a general superintendence over, the business and affairs of the Association, and to direct and control the action of the several officers thereof in the discharge of the respective duties prescribed by the By-Laws, or otherwise assigned to and devolving upon them respectively.

SEC. 7. They shall keep regular minutes of their proceedings, and shall report to the Association their proceedings at its annual meeting, or oftener, if required.

SEC. 8. The names of the several Trustees present at any meeting for the transaction of business, shall be entered in the minutes of the proceedings of such meeting.

SEC. 9. A meeting of the Trustees may be convened by a member of the Board of Trustees, or by any five members of the Association, upon their written request for such meeting, stating the object thereof, communicated to the Corresponding Secretaries, whose duty it shall be in such case to notify the Trustees of such required meeting, and of the object of the same; and in case of the absence, inability, or refusal to act of the Corresponding Secretaries, then notice may be given by said five members in writing.

SEC. 10. The Secretaries shall be a Recording Secretary and three Corresponding Secretaries.

SEC. 11. The Recording Secretary shall keep minutes of the proceedings of the Association, and a list of members. He shall have the charge and custody of the Seal. He shall also transcribe the Constitution and By-Laws in a book to be provided for that purpose —the By-Laws to be written, leaving alternate blank leaves or pages for conveniently transferring thereto, in proper connection, from the minutes, such amendments as may be from time to time adopted; and shall give to all members of the Association, as application may be made for that purpose, the opportunity of subscribing their names to said Constitution and By-Laws, in the book so provided.

SEC. 12. The Corresponding Secretaries shall act in conjunction as Committee of Correspondence.

SEC. 13. The Committee on Membership shall consist of five, and shall hold stated monthly meetings. The times of such meetings to be designated by the Committee, but not to be more than three days prior to the stated meetings of the Trustees; and the members present at such meetings shall constitute a quorum for business.

SEC. 14. The application of all candidates for admission shall be given to the Recording Secretary in writing, with their occupation and respective places of residence, which shall be filed by the Recording Secretary, and the latter shall enter such names on record, and deliver a list of names so entered to the Chairman of the Committee on Membership.

SEC. 15. The Committee on Membership shall report in writing at each stated meeting of the Trustees, or at any other meeting when required, the names of candidates approved by them; the acceptance and adoption of which report by a vote of a majority of the Trustees present, by ballot, shall elect the approved candidates; and such report, when accepted and adopted, shall be entered on the minutes with the resolution of acceptance. Any candidate or candidates reported for approval by the Committee, may, at the request of any Trustee, be balloted for, separately or jointly, and a vote of a majority of the Trustees present shall be necessary to elect the candidate or candidates thus balloted for.

SEC. 16. All candidates proposed and not formerly reported on by the Committee, or, on the rejection of the report, the candidates recommended, may at the same or any subsequent meeting, be elected members on a separate ballot, by a vote of five-sixths of the members present.

SEC. 17. Notice shall be given by the Recording Secretary to each member duly elected, informing him of his election, as early as may be thereafter, and in this notice shall be contained a request that such member will avail himself of the earliest convenient opportunity to visit the office of the Association, acquaint himself with its regualtions, and subscribe to the Constitution and By-Laws.

SEC. 18. Every person who shall be admitted a member, shall pay to the Agent, upon his admission, one dollar, as an initiation fee, and shall pay annually thereafter one dollar yearly dues—the same to be payable on or before the second Thursday of May, annually; and the name of every person delinquent in making such payment shall be reported by the Agent to the Trustees.

SEC. 19. The refusal or neglect of any member to pay any dues or any other indebtedness, for three months after the same shall be payable and demanded, shall be considered, and be, a withdrawal from the Association, unless an excuse in writing, satisfactory to the Trustees, be submitted and approved at a stated meeting; and no member who shall be in arrear shall be privileged to debate or vote on any subject, or at any election, or have the privilege of membership.

SEC. 20. Any member may be suspended or expelled from this Association for improper conduct, or a refusal to comply with any of

the By-Laws or Regulations of the Society, by a vote of two-thirds of the members present at any stated or special meeting of the same, provided he shall have been duly notified of said meeting and its purposes, and furnished with a copy of the specification of charges which shall have been presented against him, and allowed sufficient opportunity of defence.

SEC. 21. Persons may be elected honorary members, by a majority vote of either the Trustees or the Association ; and such members shall not be liable for any dues or contributions to the Association.

SEC. 22. Any Spiritualists' Association in New England may become auxiliary to this Society by agreeing to pay into the treasury of this Association its surplus funds, and sending to the Secretaries for Correspondence a copy of its Constitution and Annual Reports ; provided the Trustees at any regular meeting shall accept its application.

SEC. 23. Every auxiliary society, to the amount of its contributions, shall be entitled to such aid as shall be deemed best by this Association.

SEC. 24. Any person may become a life member of this Association by being elected as prescribed in Sections 13, 14, 15, 16, above, and paying to the Treasurer the sum of twenty-five dollars, and shall thereafter be exempt from the payment of annual dues.

SEC. 25. Propositions for adding to, amending or altering these By-Laws, may be submitted in writing at any regular meeting of the Trustees, and may be acted on at their next regular meeting ; and if two-thirds of the Trustees present shall concur in the same, they shall become valid and binding as a part of the By-Laws, subject to the approval of the Association.

ADDRESS.

CITIZENS OF NEW ENGLAND:

It is computed that nearly *Two Millions* of people in our nation, together with hundreds of thousands in other lands, are already believers in *Spiritualism*. No less than twelve or fourteen periodicals are devoted to the publication of its phenomena and the dissemination of its principles. Nearly each succeeding week brings, through the press, some new books treating exclusively upon this subject. Every day, and much more than daily, lectures upon Spiritualism are given in the presence of audiences quite respectable as to both numbers and character. Circles are held by day and by night in nearly every city, town and village throughout our country.

Belief that spirits speak intelligibly to man is already working widely and deeply; it is fast gaining power for either good or evil. It asks, and it may well *claim*, attention from every considerate mind. It is in our midst; it is at work among us. Is it a *friend* or is it a *foe* to man? Examine it; try it; learn its nature; learn its purposes; learn its effects; and *when well informed*, answer the question, and shape your treatment of the subject. Such is the call to every influential mind. And the call is for *prompt action*. Resistance (if resistance be called for) must be speedy or it will be useless. Soon the strange faith will have grown too strong to be resisted. Already it makes itself the companion of the farmer in his fields—the mechanic

in his work-shop—the sailor in cabin or forecastle—the judge on his bench—the senator on his legislative chair—the clergyman in his desk—the philosopher in his study; it goes with man through all his varied walks in life, and it nestles fondly with woman, whether in the kitchen, the nursery or the parlor. Nor is it a mere companion—it assumes to be *teacher* and *helper*—it tells of matters beyond death and the grave, and concerns itself with things of deep and universal interest. It gains a ready hearing, and sows its seed of truth or of error, of fact or of delusion, on many a fertile spot. Its words are already moulding the condition of millions of immortal souls, not while they shall dwell in the body merely, but after they shall have gone to the invisible mansions in the Father's house. Things *material* also are made its topics; it out-travels the astronomer in his remotest journeyings to suns and systems in the distant heavens; it scans the composition of the planets, and descries their vegetation and their various inhabitants with a minuteness which the most powerful telescope fails to furnish in the observatories of science. The chemist's laboratory never reaches such thorough analyses of matter as the teachers in Spiritualism are daily describing. Statements are made which more than hint at such knowledge of the properties of matter, as will help man in all the daily avocations of life: such as will aid the agriculturist, the machinist, the mechanic: such as will lessen our toils and improve our modes of life. These new teachers pass beyond the bounds which have hedged in, not the astronomer alone, but the geologist, the mineralogist, the chemist, the physiologist—the man of any and every science. Statements are made about properties in matter which have escaped man's detection—but which, when described, can be used by him. The finer properties of his own organs are set forth, and he is taught how to turn them to advantage in the preservation or restoration of health. It is not the future and distant *alone* that the

clairvoyants are describing; but the near and the present also. This earth, and all things upon it, are being analyzed and unfolded and made of higher use. These statements hint at some few of the teachings which are working their way into thousands of minds, where they will effect changes for better or for worse.

But there is something more than *teaching*. Spiritualism *works*. The sick and feeble feel its touch, and are healed or strengthened, in numberless cases; and this, not by miracle, but by the use of natural means, under the direction of an eye that looks through the human organism, sees the difficulty, and sees where and how to apply the remedy. And beside the curing of disease, we have "signs;" ours, too, is a generation seeking after signs; and we have them in the movements of tables and chairs by invisible power—in the music from pianos, drums and trumpets, where no visible performer is near—in audible voices—in distinct vision of the departed, and in many other ways. All these things must indicate that the public mind will be roused to observation, and that it will receive these wonderful words and works as being *in fact* what they claim to be, unless some other producing cause can be demonstrated. Here is the world's work. The phenomena, many of them at least, are generally admitted. They claim to be the work *of spirits*; and such claim must stand good, unless the world can show some other adequate and probable agent. To show such an agent is the duty of every one who apprehends harm from Spiritualism.

We who now unite to form an association, are firmly persuaded that the spirits of the departed come to us; that they write and speak for our instruction and improvement. We believe that they work in harmony with God's universal laws; in harmony with his kind designs; and that, in lending our aid to this cause, we are co-workers with the All-merciful One, and with his good angels.

Such is our faith. Therefore, if there be anything of manhood in us, sneers and scoffs and ridicule are not the instruments that will be likely to change or stay our course. Facts and sound argument we think we can give for the faith that is in us; and we trust that we shall be ready to admit the fair and full force of all facts and sound argument that shall be brought to bear against our belief. But those who would shake our faith are asked to discover, and distinctly describe and define, some other power than spirits, which can cause all the varied, wonderful phenomena of Spiritualism. Faraday, Rogers, Dods, Beecher, and others, have tried—and, if they have satisfied *themselves*, they obviously have failed to satisfy the great mass of reasoning and thinking minds. Their several efforts are so far failures as that they cannot be called successes. *Time is strengthening the claims of the spirits.* Their powers are confessedly adequate to the works performed; while their opponents fail to show any other adequate power. All such failures imply difficulties; and repeated failures give suspicion of impossibility. The foundations of Spiritualism stand as yet unimpaired by the efforts that have been made to shatter them. Still, however, we would invite to new efforts in the same direction, provided they be manly and honest. *If we are in error*, we must become sufferers. For our own good, as well as for the good of the world, we ask for the most extensive and thorough investigation that can be given. True, we should be sorry to let go our hold upon a faith that throws so much pleasant light upon both the present and the future world; that is so full of consolation in hours of bereavement; so full of power to substitute joy for sorrow; so beautiful in its revelations of the Heavenly Father's works and laws; so emphatic in its declarations that we all must reap that which we sow; so cheering in its exhortations to duty; so clear in its justifications of the ways of God to man. We should be sorry to part with this

elevating and purifying Faith—and yet, if it be error, if facts and logic can prove it unsound, we hope to be ready to exchange it for something true and therefore good.

But while others are urged to investigate, we, who have passed beyond disturbing doubts, feel a call upon us to *prepare* for some systematic course of effort to disseminate the truths which we value. Association is the *customary* and therefore almost the *necessary* step. We therefore associate; not that we fail to see that association may tend to sink the individual—to lessen his personal efforts—and dispose him to follow where others lead, rather than judge for himself. But though there be dangers, there are benefits also; and it should be our purpose to shun the former while we avail ourselves of the latter.

Perhaps we shall find but little to do *at present* in our associated capacity. Spiritualism has sprung up—an infant giant—and in less than seven years has made its power felt in all parts of the civilized world. This it has done by its own inherent energies. Unaided by associations, but availing itself of individuals, it has pushed its way to the homes and hearts of millions.

And yet we may by our association be instrumental in spreading knowledge of what the wonderful child *has done and is doing;* and thus perhaps we may prepare the way for his more ready reception and more beneficent action among individuals and private circles. It is obvious that the efficient actors—the moving powers—are hidden from most of us. We should be no more than humble co-workers with the *unseen.* Our province is to follow, rather than to lead; to execute, rather than to plan. At present, perhaps, we may think it best to do little more than put ourselves in readiness for calls that may come to us from the yet silent *future.* But should we be thus passive, we may yet accomplish something—perhaps much. The world does not understand Spiritualism, and ignorantly makes it imply

much that has no necessary or natural connection with it. The ultra doctrines and plans of any who profess belief in Spiritualism, are regarded as the outgrowth of that belief. As well might these ultraisms and eccentricities be charged to Christianity, for the same agitators are believers in Christianity also. The *fruits* of our creed, the earliest of them, have yet scarcely matured—while the later have not been fairly formed. Their quality we argue from the wisdom and beneficence of the God who sows the seed. Where He is sower, we feel that it is safe and wise to admit the seed into the grounds which He has allotted to each of us. Our creed is simple. *Spirits do communicate with man*—that is the creed. The legitimate consequences of belief in that single fact, are all that can be chargeable upon *Spiritualism*. All else that Spiritualists may believe and do, belongs to them as individuals, and not necessarily as Spiritualists. We seem to be saying but little; yet it may be no small matter to utter *unitedly* the five simple words—*spirits do communicate with man*. Such utterance implies the facts that we disclaim all connection with any sect, party, or ism; that we are only young disciples in a new school, waiting for more knowledge and education before we are fitted to plan and execute new schemes for the world's good; that we would be patient learners from intelligences of greater experience and wisdom than we now possess. There may seem to be, and there is, much of the world's impurity floating on the waters of *Spiritualism*—but its action is superficial and does not destroy the pearls which are imbedded at the bottom. Those pearls—the affectionate appeals; the wise counsels; the cheering descriptions of the spirit-world; the unfoldings and extension of human science; the exposition of the laws of both physical and moral health—these and other similar pearls are rich enough to compensate for the disagreeableness of the obloquy that follows the divers in this sea.

Spirits do communicate with mortals. Perhaps they always have been our guardians and helpers; we doubt not that they have; but now they have learned to be our *teachers.* Is it indeed so? Does the disencumbered spirit indeed come to our firesides and our closets, freighted with the wisdom of a higher sphere? Can we sit as learners at the feet of aged travellers returning from beyond the hidden bourne, and listen to their tales of love, purity and bliss? Our ears *have* heard them; our hearts *have been* filled by them with holy aspirations; their words have made life's pathway brighter; and thrown around its close a winning halo of light.

Calmly but firmly we would put ourselves in readiness to help extend a faith that opens the doors of immortality to the skeptic; that gives new life and strength to the believer; that sees departed friends stretching down the helping hand to bear us onward and upward to plains of clearer light and higher joys—and it is in such a work, men and women of New England, that we ask your co-operation. "A wide door is opened unto us, and effectual, but there are many adversaries."