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SPIRITUALISM.

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W. J. COLVILLE'S FAREWELL.

SPIRITUAL BROTHERHOOD.

An Inspirational Discourse, delivered by W. J. COLVILLE, in Neumeier Hall, London, Friday, September 19, 1884. A.T.T.P. in the chair.

On this, the last occasion of our speaking before an English audience prior to our resumption of work in America, left in June of last year, for an indefinite period, that we might minister among you for a time, we have selected, in accordance with the desires and feelings of many friends, "SPIRITUAL BROTHERHOOD" as the theme of our Discourse; not a novel, startling, or sensational topic by any means, but one eminently calculated to suggest and bring forth ideas and truths of the utmost importance at all times, and peculiarly necessary to be enforced at the present critical juncture in the history of Spiritualism in England. And not only here, but in all parts of the world wherever Spiritualism has obtained any footing, the question of how best to fraternize for mutual aid, protection, and advancement, and for the furtherance of the general work for the common good is a peculiarly pressing and prominent one.

We shall endeavour, in this our valedictory address, to emphasize the fundamental points of agreement among all Spiritualists, rather than enforce any views which may be said with any degree of fairness to appertain to side issues. Many points, often called side issues, are far more important than those who seek easily to dismiss them, sometimes with a sneer, can in their present supercilious mood easily discover; but at the same time it cannot be denied that far too much time and strength among Spiritualists and others is unfortunately wasted in what are little better than useless dissensions; for while some truth may be discovered and brought forward by them, they generate so much acrimony and bitterness between persons who should have only kind words to say of each other, that the good coming out of them is often sadly counterbalanced by the harmful effects of heated disputation and resentful feelings among those who in a common cause should fight shoulder to shoulder against a common enemy.

To love all mankind is a duty, and without universal love there can be no permanent happiness and safety among mankind. Because you do not count all men your neighbours, and love them as yourself, you have to pay dearly for your hostilities by supporting standing armies and navies, and a most expensive and intricate police and detective force; not to mention judges, solicitors, and the innumerable officers who are supported entirely at the expense of man's inhumanity to man. When all men love each other, war will be impossible. When you regard no one as your enemy you will make war on none, and to this blessed consummation every

war draws you somewhat nearer, for a warlike policy is suicidal. Every war teaches you how horrible a thing is war, and the very perfection of your machinery for destroying life, renders you at the same time more invincible and more loath to set that destructive machinery in motion, knowing how deadly it is.

Universal Brotherhood is the ultimate of brotherhood, and nothing less than this can rightfully be regarded as the goal to which humanity must ever aspire; but until the Golden Age has come, until the true millennial day shall dawn, lesser brotherhoods may be formed and kept alive for the express purpose of cultivating those kindly sentiments, one towards another, which are the only true bulwarks of defence for any nation, community, or individual. And even when the reign of universal love shall be fully established, associations of kindred minds may still exist, as smaller circles within the larger, and those who are especially attracted by mutual tastes and sympathies must ever enjoy peculiarly close and sweet unions, even in the immortal world, when they shall have reached the estate of angelhood, and attained to the celestial degree of spiritual life.

Whatever cultivates benevolence, sympathy, regard for others, and desire to serve them, is good because it does so; or to state the proposition otherwise, to reverse it and express a more interior truth: whatever cultivates a spirit of mutual affection and esteem, does so because it is good. Things which are good in themselves must of necessity produce good results. The good results cannot be said to make the source good whence they spring, but they are evidences that the source is good, for good fruit gives evidence that the tree on which it grows is good, that its root is sound and healthy.

This is avowedly an age of expediency. The utilitarian bears the palm in every centre of the modern world. Romance, spiritual fervour, ecstasy, intuition,—all are banished from the severe schools of modern culture, in which rationalism has taken such deep root that Spirit is only tolerated when admitted at all; while in modern seminaries, religion is either dwarfed in the swaddling-clothes of a demeaning superstition, or kept outside the portals of the college of modern thought, because it deals with fancies and imaginations, and not with the stern and sober facts of science, as science is interpreted by its modern representatives.

If Spiritualism comes into this age, daring to question the supremacy of matter, and dispute the theories of every physicist of the age, who bases all his conclusions upon a conception of the material universe as the total sum of existence; if, not only arraying itself against the materialism of schoolmen, it provokes the ire of ecclesiastics by denouncing sacerdotalism, making war upon priestcraft, and wresting from the hands of the clergy the monopoly they have so long enjoyed;—is it surprising that antagonism should be declared, both by scientist and theologian, against the new revelation