



A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE HISTORY, PHENOMENA, PHILOSOPHY, AND TEACHINGS OF

# SPIRITUALISM.

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## THE TRUE BASIS OF SPIRITUALISM.

INSPIRATIONAL DISCOURSE delivered by W. J. COLVILLE.

CAVENDISH ROOMS, LONDON, SUNDAY MORNING, JULY 12, 1885.

In again taking up the thread of our ministrations in the British Metropolis, we have resolved to commence our present series of efforts by asking and endeavouring to answer the oft-repeated question: What is the true basis of Spiritualism?

Though it is now more than thirty-seven years since the attention of the American public was first called to Modern Spiritual Manifestations, it appears that there are still many millions of fairly-educated people in the world to-day, who are as ignorant of the real import of a spiritual revelation, as though no voice had ever sounded from the immortal world, or if no messenger from beyond the grave had ever appeared among men, to demonstrate the continuity of man's existence beyond the grave. Indeed, so dense is the thick darkness which enshrouds almost all the schools of modern science, philosophy and religion, that not one of these three powerful witnesses to many forms of truth, is capable of giving other than an evasive or dogmatic answer to the oft-reiterated question: What is your knowledge concerning Modern Spiritualism?

Science, ever agnostic to all things spiritual, is continually endeavouring to reduce Spirit to matter, and failing in the attempt, denies altogether that there is any spirit, of which mortals can know anything. Herbert Spencer, one of the brightest scientists and oldest philosophers of the day, among the agnostics, frankly acknowledges the existence of an Eternal Energy, which he pronounces the Unknowable; but though such an admission may be the only correct position concerning the alpha of existence, and the ultimate of man, from the standpoint of the great evolutionist, there can surely be no light, information, consolation or satisfaction derived from such a conception of the universe. The scientist, who has what may be termed spiritualistic predilections, ably discourses upon the scientific basis of Spiritualism; but Spiritualism has no basis in material science, and can have none, because the things of the Spirit must be discerned spiritually, or not at all.

We admit fully that if the word *science* be used to signify knowledge, there is no objection to applying it to the basis of Spiritualism, as Spiritualism is founded upon fact, and no one can be a true Spiritualist unless he has facts upon which to build a philosophy; but the *facts*, which underlie a genuine

Spiritual Philosophy, are *spiritual facts*, and these facts cannot be duly estimated except by persons whose development is such that they have means at hand for apprehending spiritual realities.

We are not at all anxious that everybody should at once become a Spiritualist. Perhaps there are many who are as yet so wholly unprepared for spiritual truth, that it would be sheer folly for any one to endeavour to instruct them in the first principles of Spiritualism, because such teaching would be altogether beyond their ken. We never aim at making proselytes, we have no desire to drag in everyone to our meetings, but we do feel it to be both a duty and a privilege, devolving upon all who are themselves enlightened, even partially, to throw open their doors and afford opportunity to others, to come and drink freely of the waters of spiritual knowledge. The Spirit and the Bride ever say Come! but only those who are thirsty will feel the need of coming, or the desire to come. Thus our policy is ever to invite all, but to compel none. Let all be invited to the spiritual banquet, let the tables be spread with the choicest viands and beverages at your command, but let no one be forced to partake of any dish or beverage for which he feels no craving.

Spiritualism has come into the world designedly as a supply to meet a pressing demand. Wherever a human heart or mind is longing and crying out for consolation and guidance, there ascends a prayer for revelation to the spheres of Spirit. Though spontaneity has been, and still is, one of the most remarkable and characteristic features of the spiritual manifestations of to-day, this seeming spontaneity is, after all, an answer to the world's prayer for truth. Thought is a substance infinitely more durable and powerful than the hardest material substance. States of mind have far more to do with spiritual results than all outward conditions put together. You may have the most approved tables and planchettes, as aids to spiritual development; your rooms may be filled with the odours of the rarest exotics; faultless music may be supplied; even fasting and ablutions may be resorted to; coloured glass may be procured; special robes may be worn at all seances, and every condition that art or ingenuity can devise may be complied with, and yet there may be no spiritual response. The one absolutely needful condition may be unobserved, even unknown, and for that reason the seance in the palace