

HEAVEN AND HELL,

VIEWED IN THEIR RELATION TO
MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

MR. J. J. MORSE,

TRANCE MEDIUM OF LONDON,

IN THE FREEMASONS' HALL, NEWGATE STREET,

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE,

NOVEMBER 27TH, 1873.

*Phonographically Reported by Mr. John Irvine,
Newcastle-on-Tyne.*

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SPIRITUALISM
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ALSO THE
RELIGION OF SPIRITUALISM.

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MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

The Medium (Mr. Morse) having passed into the unconscious Trance State under spirit influence rose, and delivered the following

ADDRESS:—

Prefacing it with a suitable invocation.

Let us ask, first and foremost, what this belief in Heaven and Hell arises from. If we can decide that question, then we may perhaps be guided, in the further analysis of our subject, to a righteous conclusion, which shall lead us to accept or reject the reality of the theological theory as a truth or a fallacy. The whole theory rests simply and solely upon the doctrine of the atonement. That is ever put forward as the hope and rock of your life, the golden standard whereby you can regulate your conduct, the only light to illumine your path, the only thing that is capable of leading you safely through this life to a fairer and better world. Now, if we take this corner stone away, if we take this golden standard down, put out this light, some would be prepared to say that poor humanity would then be without a guide, that the world would be engulfed in a black and dreary darkness, and that the day of your sure damnation would draw near. Not so, the picture will not be dark and gloomy when this corner stone is taken away, not in reality, for we have to ask those good folk—What did the world do before this special scheme of salvation was introduced into it? The world was no worse then than it is now; it is bad enough now all will confess. But it is a fair inference to suppose that it was no worse than it is now, and that people were quite as good and happy then as they are to-day. It would seem, then, if there be any truth in our statement, that this particular scheme is not so essential as it is usually asserted to

be. Be that, however, as it may, the scheme cannot certainly be said to be untested, and as we have said—and which all will be prepared to admit—the world is in a very bad state even now. No question of it; with all the doctors tinkering at its frame, it is still in an unhealthy condition. Poor world! Poor doctors!

Heaven and Hell, based, then, upon the doctrine of the atonement must stand or fall upon that doctrine; and in proportion as we can discover the relationship that it sustains to you as human beings. We have endeavoured to lead you step by step to the consideration of this subject. We have already dealt with the subject of “Disembodied Man,” so that you might rightly comprehend your nature when you come into the spirit world, and you will plainly perceive that there is a marked discrepancy between the statements put forward by us, and the statements put forward by theologians. One or the other must be untrue! As the facts involved are true (the facts were sent by God, and the theories were invented by man, and often the theories invented contradict the facts sent by the higher source) the theory therefore cannot be true, for the whole tenor of our observations is against the existing theological view of the future state.

Let us draw a picture, to illustrate this matter we are dealing with to-night, and we would ask you to call to your mind the case of a mother. How many of you here have hung around a mother's knee listening to her loving words and noble counsel, and at all times feeling that while she lived there was a sure rock to depend upon. That there was some one you could confide your secrets to. That there was some one in whom you could place confidence. That there was always a light in your darkness, always a home, always a tender heart to love you when you were bowed down and broken-spirited, and that in all circumstances of life that bright reality, that sweet word MOTHER was ever before you.

That mother has a son, the pride and joy of her heart, the hope and ambition of her life; for she hopes that when that son grows up he will become a useful man, become an ornament to society, one whose name, power, and example, shall go forward in the world for the advancement of humanity. But the dream is dashed to pieces at the very outset. The sunlight is extinguished, and instead of the fair prospect we have just described being realized, all is dark and dreary. The son becomes a liar, a slanderer, a forger, a drunkard; and, last sad scene of all, almost a murderer! For we know not how many hearts men break sometimes—how many lives are lost in the breaking of these hearts, and the mother feels that all her joys are dashed to the ground! Yet despite of the wickedness of her son—despite that he is all he is represented to be—she loves him only as a mother can—loves him more perhaps than ever—for she feels that he is bone of her bone, life of her life, part and parcel of her! Loves him despite of the odium of the world! She still loves her offspring. But a relentless and vengeful creed here steps

in and says, that son, although dearly loved by his mother, shall be condemned to everlasting torment for the crimes committed in his earth-life ! This falling upon the mother's heart, which is already rent with anguish, increases her troubles tenfold. Her heart is rent asunder, its cords break under the strain, and she passes away before her day, but with her heart and mind still full of love for her offspring, and yet it is said that He who takes charge of all humanity says, this poor son, this wicked human being, this wretch we have described, must be doomed to everlasting death. And why ? Not because of the evil the son had committed. Not because he was the villain we have discovered. Not because he did those dark and dreadful things, oh no. That is only a secondary consideration, for, says theology, had he repented of his deeds—had he believed on this *especial* doctrine—all the black and foul crimes of his past life would have been swept away, and he would have gone to Heaven *through that belief*. But because he *disbelieved*—not because he was a sinful creature—he *must go down to Hell*. Yet we have it asserted “There is no man righteous, no not one.” Now look for a moment at the position this man is placed in. He grew up in wickedness and iniquity ; died in sin, and, according to theology, will perpetually rest in Hell.

It is only but a few years since a *literal* Hell was believed in as an all-prevailing fact. Every one believing in the literal fire and brimstone, the literal stirring-up process, where the Devil, King of Hell, had a band of demons all to himself to torment the poor mortal souls who happened to go there. But in deference to the civilization of the age, in deference to the advanced intelligence of to-day, in deference to the unfoldment of intellect, the belief in a literal Hell is not respectable now-a-days. It has gone out of fashion, and it is said there are only a few people believe therein at the present time ; the ignorant only entertain such a notion. We, philosophical and advanced people, have come to the conclusion that Hell is not a literal place of fire and brimstone ; all its powers and terrors are subjective. Well, if you go on improving hell in relation to your advanced opinions you will soon improve it away altogether ! Instead of discovering it to be such an awful place it will be made out to appear pretty tolerable and easy, and, indeed, people will say, “Well, it doesn't matter after all if we are rascally, we shall not be so badly off.” We are not putting forth our own stand point ; we are only giving utterance to the popular opinion ; we are only showing you that which exists in the ranks of the believers. We are not the makers of this theory ; we only utter that which we find, and we put it to rational men, that if Heaven and Hell can be changed to suit prejudices—can be altered in deference to advanced notions—where is the infallibility of the religion that teaches of their existence ?

Then on the other hand we must deal with the lowest conception of this opinion, that is the literal, a literal devil, literal hell, literal

grimy devils, and literal fire, all going to form this idea of an actual Hell. We must also allude to the question of the soul. The soul is indestructible, and that which is indestructible cannot be destroyed. You of course cannot affect any of its operations or any of its parts. To say that you could would be a contradiction, because injury implies some disturbance of the laws of harmony. In a word, the soul being indestructible, it is utterly impossible to affect it, and your literal fire and brimstone might blaze away as long as it liked *you* would not be injured one particle, for the simple reason that you would all be fire-proof. But "Oh," says some one "oh, my dear sir, you are mistaking the whole theory. We know that the soul is indestructible, we know that the soul cannot be consumed, because if that were the case there could be no eternal torment; but there comes a day when the last trumpet shall sound and when the soul and body shall come together again, then the torments begin!" Unfortunately the theory does not hold ground. What becomes of the soul until the body is resurrected? If it be clothed again in a material *destructible* body, in the course of time there will be nothing left of it at all, and instead, therefore, of the torments being eternal they would be of very short duration indeed, for the pains of hell are something enormous, the frail structure of the human being could not stand them for any considerable time. But then the awkward question is—What becomes of the soul after the death of the body? between that time and the resurrection of that body. As we have on a previous occasion stated our opinion in connection with the physical resurrection, those of you who heard us can at once perceive that we have no belief in the doctrine of the theological hell. However, we must of necessity endeavour to expose fallacies and absurdities. If you do not feel inclined to believe what is here stated well and good. If you are so full in your belief of a literal hell, you are welcome to it; follow it up with all your energies.

We must now go into the regions of happiness, that are not attained for any good deeds, any pure motives and noble lives, not solely for being an honest, upright, noble soul, but simply for doing next to nothing, for having believed in the doctrine of a certain church. Accept that belief and your good deeds become of value in the sight of God, (who is no respecter of persons, mark you); But we have never yet fallen in with any one who could define a good deed to be anything else but a good deed, whether you believed in this, that, or the other doctrine. The motive being good, pure, and simple goodness must be its end and characteristic. And so you come into heaven, changed in the twinkling of an eye. You are not the same beings you were on earth, you are resurrected, possessed of glorified bodies; you are somebody else! You must get out of that difficulty the best way you can, and we confess we are unable to help you for the simple reason that if we found you "over there" you would be somebody else. You have undergone this

vast change, as we have said, in the twinkling of an eye, and your occupation will be the singing of hymns—praising the Lord continually. Now, the old theory of heaven was that it is a very beautiful place, the exact nature of which you are not prepared to describe. There are precious jewels, golden harps, you are there taking your ease, waving palms, and singing hosannas to the Lord! This was the old conception of heaven not very many years ago, but that also, in deference to the intelligence of the present age, has become modified very considerably! Very few ministers indeed, whose duty it is to instruct you in these matters, take the trouble to enquire as to what heaven is really like! It is altered and fashioned to suit the notions of the age—to suit the times. There can be no infalibility in a religion of this kind, indeed you will perceive in a moment, if you think of what is said to be your occupation in heaven that it could not by any possibility fit the nature of man—that it cannot be true! Now heaven and hell as believed in, and the consequences pertaining to that belief, stand before you, and please to most distinctly understand that we take no responsibility upon ourselves for this portion of our argument. We did not discover or make it. We speak it as it is supplied to us. It is not our argument—it comes from the ranks of its believers.

We now take up the question in relation to Spiritualism, and say, so far as Spiritualism is concerned, it distinctly, emphatically, and conclusively repudiates the whole scheme from beginning to end—thoroughly and completely repudiates any connection therewith—thoroughly and utterly places out of conception the theological idea of heaven and hell. Now we dare say many are alarmed and say “Spiritualists do not believe in heaven; they do not believe in hell; they are a godless set of individuals, without any religion, without any morality, without any incentive to goodness; they go forward taking life as it is, and trust to providence that all things will come right.” Well, really, a very sensible way of proceeding, for if you have faith in providence, you can surely trust that providence, and feel that it will lead you aright, and feeling that, what need is there for form or formality? If you have a faith in God, who is all-adequate to govern the physical universe, surely you can trust that God to look after your happiness—trust Him to see to the welfare of your soul, which is much more important to you than the world around.

But though we distinctly and thoroughly repudiate all theology and its heaven and hell, do not think for one moment that we believe there are no heavens and no hells. Do not think that we are blind to, or ignore the fact that sin and degradation exist in your midst; that there exist upon the face of your earth a great many individuals whose inner lives would scarcely bear the light of day. We know full well it would be no very hard matter for any individual to name a round dozen of his acquaintances, whose acts, thoughts,

and deeds, were far better left unknown, for they would not stand the light of honest investigation. Here is the painful fact before us. We admit the existence of vice, and crime, sin, and misery, of all descriptions in your world, and that it also exists in the midst of the professors of that crowning and glorious religion called Christianity. The reason why we are not prepared to say. The fact is quite sufficient for us! On the other hand we are equally prepared to admit that there exist in your midst honest and upright men—those of the lowly and meek—those whose hearts breathe the most practical charity—who go forward ever labouring for the advancement of their fellow men, oft parting with that which they stand sorely in need of themselves, but yet they cannot find it in their hearts to see others worse situated in life than they are without offering relief. These are the martyrs of to-day, they form the modern army of the apostles of truth, who live and move amongst you though they have no title attached to their names. They go forward ever doing good, ever helping those that are bowed down, imparting happiness and peace at every opportunity, though in the name of no ecclesiastical system whatever. And they do good, they bring comfort and happiness to those to whom they minister. Is all this nothing in the sight of God, the almighty and all-wise Father? Has he so little regard for happiness and peace, as to refuse to accept the offering of those we have described, because it has not been practised in the name of some ecclesiastical system? Then, if such be the case, we cannot worship at such a shrine, we cannot bow down to such a God, for our God is a God of love, appreciating goodness from whatever source it may come, from the poor beggar in the street, shoeless and starving, as well as from the mitred bishop or the learned student,—wherever it is found. Truth, goodness, and purity, these are the offerings we conceive most acceptable in the sight of God! Shall there be no heaven then for those who live a life of purity and peace, for those who in the higher walks of life have striven to act in accordance with their conscience, for those who have warred with the Devil and the flesh, and have often felt as if they were standing on a precipice, feeling as if the ground were crumbling beneath their feet—standing on debatable land with no hopes, no sure footing? Shall there be no rest for the weary and broken-hearted—nor reward for those whose lives were one continual sign of peace—one continual day of well doing, though they were not what are called religious people? Shall they have no reward for the self-denial they practiced without the realms of theology? If there is no reward for these—if no merit is attached to a good deed because it is done outside of the powers of theology, then we say that good deeds are a mockery, purity a delusion, and the living of a noble life a waste of time.

But we know from the solemn testimony of facts, from realities we shall bring before your notice, that there are heavens, and that

there are hells in the world to come, but in no sense, not in the remotest particular, are they in any way related to the heaven and hell of theology. Have you never known a thoroughly bad and dissipated man in the world so covered with sin and iniquity that it was almost impossible to see any portion of the real man in him? Doubtless you have seen such; and have you never known such a man, at some moment of his life, even when forsaken by everyone, manifest some spark of kindness and affinity for a creature perhaps more wretched than himself, it may have been an animal in distress, lying gasping for breath on the road side, or it may have been a human being almost dying for a morsel of bread? Have you never heard of such a one sharing his last crust in a case of this kind. Have you never heard him put forth a kind word, speak soothingly to those who needed it? Why is such a thing not quite common in your midst? There never was yet a human being so utterly and completely depraved that he could never on any occasion do a good action. There never was yet, there never can be such a being, and if theologians were in earnest they would admit the fact and put it forward as one of the grandest evidences of the power of God, working through even the lowest of humanity. Shall there be a time, then, when this poor degraded being—but who, low and degraded as he is, can yet do a good action—shall be transported to hell and there bound down to all eternity? Why, you have only to think for a moment of the illustration we drew of the mother, who clung to her child despite all his iniquity, who loved him so truly, so fully, so completely, that she could not find it in her heart to condemn him. Shall God, then, the father of us all, the greater parent, the brighter and nobler one, be so harsh and vengeful in his nature, that a human mother, frail and weak as she was, shall be his moral superior? This may sound to some an harsh and unwarrantable statement, and some will say there is no comparison between the mother and the Deity. Perhaps not, but in this case we prefer the mother to the Deity. If the human being can establish a standard of morality that will teach the rendering of justice and mercy to all, proportion punishment in accordance with the nature and degree of the offence, so also will God, the greater power, and the creator of that human being, also proportion reward for good done, and punishment in accordance with the nature of the offence committed—and greater justice than this cannot be conceived.

Now, the teaching of Spiritualism, and the relation it bears to this subject, will come prominently before you. The teaching of Spiritualism is contained in a few words, and the few words are:—That every human being is responsible for his own actions. In other words, you are rational beings, possessing rationality, and are responsible for every motive you put forward and the results arising from that motive. Some may object to individual

responsibility, and to those we can only say that if they are not afraid to put forth certain motives they should certainly be in a position to bear the consequences. We speak very plainly on this subject, and of necessity, as it is a question that affects all. If you are not afraid to create causes, surely you should not be cowardly enough to refuse to bear the consequences. If you make pit-falls for your fellows to fall in, and fall in yourselves, who is to blame? Only yourselves! Therefore Spiritualism proclaims individual responsibility.

Now to apply this case more closely to our subject. We stated that the theological heaven and hell had no existence, but that there were heavens and hells in the spiritual world, and now we shall vindicate our statements. Man, as we have shewn, enters the spirit world a rational and thinking being, in possession of his memory, and of course his past experiences will be present with him in his new condition. Thus we shall find in the spirit world all classes of beings, all degrees of individuality. For we cannot be blind to the fact that all degrees of people are continually passing into that world. Now, supposing that in this vast congregation there are all kinds of sects, and that there are also Materialists, Spiritualists, Idealists, Transcendentalists, Brahmins, Jews, and Mahomedans, altogether in heaven—altogether mind—all in the same society—what a mixture there would be! The spiritual Tower of Babel over again! What a clashing of opinions, what a fire of words, what a cross-questioning, what an awful stew! (A Voice: "Imagination.") It may be imagination, and we certainly hope it is imagination, but it is no imagination to die; it is no imagination going into the next world and there find yourself the same being you are now. Imagination, good friend, will not hold ground, or you might as well say your existence is imagination, and all that you see around you is imagination also. Supposing, then, in heaven there are all the people we have named, all muddled together, we ask how could they be happy? How could they have peace? How could they gain wisdom this vast congregation? How could they worship God, the great father, unless they are full of happiness and kindness, all of one accord, united the one to the other? Why it would be simply impossible. Therefore we admit the point of imagination here, it would be imagination to suppose that such a thing could exist, for the simplest of all reasons it is utterly impossible, inasmuch as like associates with like in heaven even as like associates with like in the world you live in. When you come into the spiritual world you will mingle with those of kindred sympathies, the same belief, the same ideas, as yourself. Thus Spiritualism teaches that there are distinct and separate conditions in the spiritual world, and that each separate condition and state has its like inhabitants. "In my father's house are many mansions," said that bright and shining star in times gone bye, whose light, example, and purity you would be a great deal the better for following

to-day. "In my father's house are many mansions." In the spiritual world are men of all grades. What are the many mansion for? Why simply and solely to meet the requirements of the divers individuals that are continually coming into the spirit world. "Were it not so I would have told you." Man passes into the spirit world a conscious being, retains his entire individuality; and supposing that all were to be jumbled together in a mass with those of different opinions, there could be no happiness, there could be no progression, because the laws of spiritual affinity and attraction are opposed to such a thing. To be jumbled together in this fashion would be spiritual death itself. You will enter that condition you are spiritually fitted to enjoy. Any other condition would be hell to you, but being in a condition you are fitted to enjoy would be the highest heaven you are capable of appreciating. What would be the use of placing you in a place you are not capable of enjoying, or a place you did not understand?

And now we come to deal with the son we have already spoken of, with all his crimes upon his head. Are there no mitigating circumstances? Is there nothing that can be taken into consideration to alleviate this load of guilt? Are all our friends such stocks and stones, such hard hearted and cruel beings, that they would see a fellow creature in the mire, in sin and damnation, without experiencing some sort of grief, some sort of hope, that the creature might be spared such a doom. If any of our friends can feel thus, if they can let a fellow creature sink without sorrow and regret, we are almost inclined to disown their humanity and cast them from us! We, however, feel that there are some who would say "Oh, let us labour that we may help this poor degraded soul; let us assist him to escape condemnation." If man were simply and solely a natural structure, or in other words, capable of totally degrading himself, the matter would be very different, but you as believing in the existence of the soul, must of course come to the conclusion that the soul has to manifest through a body, and you must take into consideration further the effect that body will exercise upon the actions of that soul. Is there no such thing as deflection of purpose and desire? Is there no such thing as a defective bodily organisation? If not, why then, of course there could be no individual degradation; but if there are such things, then they must be taken into consideration with everyone's sinfulness, inasmuch as they will exercise an influence on all your actions. We give this suggestion to our friends, and should any be possessed of inefficient bodies, diverting the expression of their soul, this must assuredly be taken into consideration, for what would be the good of punishing a man for a thing he could not help. He did not make his body, and if it be inefficient and tends towards the degradation of the individual, if any portion of his guilt is to be removed, we must deduct that which he could not help. Still even then there

would be a percentage of his crimes left—crimes that he persisted in committing and put forth all his energies to accomplish. What of them? He shall never escape the consequences of these crimes until the uttermost farthing of the account has been rendered. Not one jot or tittle shall pass away until ample restitution has been effected. No happiness till then. Nothing but sorrow and remorse—all the keen and bitter feelings owing to the consciousness of a life mis-spent—the feeling that the soul is naked—that it is out of the paths of love—and the bitter humiliation that it has transgressed its being, and thus condemned itself to darkness. No escape. Always there until the full account has been paid—until in humility and truth it kneels before its Father God, and asks to be forgiven; and then, when retribution has been effected to the full—when by good deeds and noble works the dark sorrow of the soul has been obliterated—there comes a light in that soul, calling forth all its attributes, and step by step, and by slow degrees, darkness is changed into light. In thus dealing with sinful humanity, God vindicates his goodness and his love. Everyone must bear the consequence of his own crimes, and experience the full perfection of their punishment. Can we discover a more just way of dealing with humanity? Can we discover a better mode of punishing those who did wrong while they had it in their power to do right. From this there is no escape, for you cannot run away from yourselves. You must suffer for the life you have so badly used—feel a deep shame and humiliation that you are not fitted for the higher states—not fitted for the mansions of the blessed. But then on the other hand, those whose lives have been spent in purity and truthfulness, whose every effort was put forward for the advancement of their fellow men, they will reap a glorious compensation in the world to come. Happiness in proportion to the good they have done! Such will be their reward. Such, and no more, is theirs. Indeed the all governing laws are, retribution for evil doers; compensation for those who have lived and laboured for good, compensation and retribution working as divine and eternal laws.

Thus you will see that Spiritualism repudiates the theological heaven and hell. It points out a heaven and hell which answers more effectively to the needs of humanity than ever the theological heaven and hell can do. This may not be a consoling thought to the minds of many. Still we can only say that every individual soul in the spiritual world occupies that position which it is fitted for, or rather that which, by its works, it is entitled to hold—receiving precisely that amount of happiness it is worthy of receiving, and exactly that amount of sorrow which its past life has merited. No more; no less; for the eternal justice of God is full and exact. Punishing in proportion; rewarding in proportion; exacting the requirements of the case that has to be adjusted. Here we see the justice of God vindicating itself most marvellously, and when you take into consideration the adjustment of the spiritual world in

this respect—the different societies and classes—the gradual elevation and caring for all—you can see something more than impartial justice, you can see the eternal and everlasting love of God ; for in the spiritual world the same laws hold good as here. All souls are going forward towards the light, ever upwards and onwards to truth, all are travelling onwards, nearer to our Father God. The further they go, the nearer they seem to reach that mighty and mysterious source, the more deeply mysterious does it become. Ever onwards and upwards to God though never reaching him. Always going on with eternity before us, ages and ages of eternity yet to be unfolded, and when these are past, there are ages and ages of eternity still yet to come. On and on, for ever progressing ! Ever aspiring towards beauty and truth—to heaven if you will. Onwards, and upwards to heaven, where men live united in spirit and purpose, banding themselves together that they may know more of heaven, and the true relationship they bear to their author. Ever onwards ; ever becoming grander and nobler as the ages roll by.

“Heaven and hell, viewed in their relation to modern Spiritualism ” are then, as facts, inseparable from man’s progress. And, in conclusion, we must urge this statement that they are in no way connected with the heaven and hell of theology. It is not a matter of belief in any special creed or religion ; for it may be that those who utterly repudiate all creeds and dogmas of any and every kind, find themselves in a heavenly condition hereafter, for the simple reason that they have taken to their hearts the practical lesson of all religion ; and if you do not know what that lesson is we will quote the words of him who lived 1800 years ago. “By these things shall all men know that you are my disciples, inasmuch as you have loved one another, as I have loved you ; go also love ye one another.” If the world only took that lesson to itself, and reared it within its heart of hearts, loving all men, the world would thereby be transformed into a paradise indeed, and you would have no need for any “anity” for the truth, the life and way would be with you always. There would be no rejoicing in any belief, no rejoicing in any creed or dogma. Bear in mind then, that by living a true and honest life, endeavouring to work out truth, justice, and love, in your daily life you shall receive compensation for so doing, and that compensation shall be that when you enter the spiritual world you will find yourselves in a happy condition, in the highways of progress, borne on by the tides of eternity to everlasting wisdom and truth, and there amid the far off hosts who have gone before, in the midst of the wise and the true, learn of the mysteries of God. By good deeds man worships God ; by living a noble life he merits a heaven and escapes a hell.

THE END.