

# The Spirit World.

Where Is It?      What Is It?

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A LECTURE

BY

PROF. W. F. PECK,

OF ST. LOUIS, MO.,

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I. C. I. EVANS.

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The demand for the publication of this lecture at the time of its delivery was so great that the National Spiritualists Association officials decided to have it put in type and circulated as a tract to supply the demand for scientific arguments in support of the spiritualistic hypothesis. This lecture will go far to show that our claim that spiritualism and science go hand in hand has a logical foundation.

TRUTH CANNOT CONTRADICT ITSELF.

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# THE SPIRIT WORLD.

## Where Is It? What Is It?

10 To 14 Coleridge

The third proposition in the declaration of principles adopted by the First Church of Spiritual Unity of St. Louis, of which I have the honor at present to be settled speaker and pastor, reads as follows: "The spirit world, the future home of the soul, is a real world, varying in its nature and character from the gross to the refined; from darkness to light; from states of misery and suffering to spheres of harmony and peace." This is the entire proposition, but we are to-day more particularly interested in the first part—the first declaration of that article, namely, "The spirit world, or future home of the soul, is a *real* world," as real, as tangible to the spiritual senses as earthly things and this earth world are to our physical senses.

The acceptance of the theory that man is a soul and survives the dissolution of the body necessitates the further postulate that there must be a spirit world or realm the conditions of which are fitted to the needs and adapted to the requirements of the soul, or spirit, when it has outgrown the physical body through which it manifested itself on the earth plane. That there is another world, or spiritual sphere, of course there is no room for argument among believers in immortality, but when we endeavor to define the nature, character and location of that sphere, then the difficulty begins.

It is worthy of note, that, although the belief in a future world or home of the soul has been almost universal among mankind, yet there are probably few questions upon which men have differed so widely as they have regarding the nature, character and location of that world. It must occur to the thoughtful mind that the reason for this difference lies in the lack of reliable information upon the subject. Men always differ most about those things of which they know the least, and, per contra, differ least about those things of which they know the most. The chemist, for instance, never quarrels with his brother chemist as to the amount of oxygen and hydrogen contained in water, nor as to the chemical constituents of common salt. These facts are unquestionable. There is no room for any argument; but, when man begins to speculate

upon those subjects of which he has little scientific data, then the way is opened for a vast diversity of opinion. The lack of a reliable and solid foundation upon which to predicate a future world has rendered agreement upon that question absolutely impossible, and until men have discovered a more solid foundation upon which to postulate such an existence than the mere dream of the poet and romancer we can never hope for any unity of belief upon the question.

While, as I said before, the very large majority of mankind have accepted the doctrine of a future life almost without question, yet there is a very large and respectable minority who not only entertain grave doubts upon the subject but absolute disbelief. And, it must be admitted, this minority is largely made up of the most thoughtful and intelligent of the race; to convince such people will require the presentation of the most convincing proof, the most unquestioned facts, and it is to such minds as that I want to appeal this morning while I present the question of "The Spirit World. Where is it? What is it?" it such light as I trust will, at least, appeal to their reason and judgment.

Last Sunday night, as many of you remember, I spoke from this platform upon the theory of evolution, and its bearing upon the doctrine of immortality. In that discussion I presented what I believe to be the most logical and convincing evidence in favor of a continued existence. I presented what seems to me to be the most convincing argument that, if evolution is true, if the evolutionary theory is a fact, then there must be another world, another sphere of existence, adapted to the needs and requirements of the soul when it has outgrown this physical body, and to-day I want to present what I believe to be quite as convincing an argument in favor of the existence of such a world, and its location.

I think you will all agree with me that inasmuch as the spirit of man can only adapt itself to this plane of existence by taking upon itself a physical body by and through which it is enabled to come *en rapport* with the things of earth; by and through which it is enabled to manifest its desires, its will,

its purpose, therefore it follows logically that when it has cast off this physical body through which it manifested itself on this plane, then the soul must exist in a sphere widely different from that in which the body dwelt. This, it seems to me, is the logical conclusion. The difficulty of conceiving from our present standpoint of a sphere of existence so widely different from the earth sphere has been the obstacle, and is the greatest obstacle to-day in the way of the acceptance of the doctrine of a future life, a future world, on the part of the careful thinker. And hence, the question which the doubter has ever hurled at the priest is, "If there is a spirit world, where is it located? Where is heaven? What is the location of hell?" This, I say, has been a question which the doubters have ever hurled at the priest. Before the birth of science, or while it was in its infancy this question was not regarded as a difficult one, science and theology went hand in hand. The church being supreme the priest simply fitted the facts of science to the dogmas of religion. The Bible was supposed to contain all that man needed to know upon any subject. Moses and the prophets were the only scientific authorities, and their glaring ignorance regarding the facts and phenomena of nature was still further distorted in order to make them fit the dogmas of religion.

According to the science of that day—science so called—the universe was constructed in the form of a huge box (the Jewish tabernacle was constructed after the supposed pattern of the universe). The sky was solid, it was the ceiling of the earth and the floor of heaven, above it dwelt God and the angels, while men occupied this floor: hell and the devils occupied the cellar. Just beneath the surface of the earth were hell and the infernal regions.

Now we can easily understand how easy it was for mankind to arrive at this conclusion. The rumbling of the earthquakes, the pouring forth of boiling water from the hot springs, the belching forth of fire from the volcanoes were positive evidence to them that hell lay just beneath the surface of the earth, and so the location of heaven and hell was a very easy matter to them. But when astronomy was born and swept the heaven with its telescope it swept away the solid arch and yet failed to find the home of the blessed out there. When geology was born and began with pick and spade to dig into the depths of mother earth without discovering the regions of the damned, then skepticism took a new lease of life and flourished with increasing strength, and so the question recurs with even more force and persis-

tency, "Where is the spirit world? Where is heaven? Where is hell?"

It is a favorite theory, as you know, among a certain class of metaphysicians, that heaven and hell are merely conditions and not localities; that the spirit world is purely subjective and not an objective reality, and, therefore, it cannot be located—has no location. To my mind that conclusion is very unsatisfactory, for while I admit freely that, in a sense, heaven and hell are conditions, or states of consciousness of pleasure or pain, happiness or sorrow, yet, mark you, these conditions or states of consciousness must exist in space somewhere, and therefore, must have location. If the human soul is a real individualized entity then it must be an objective personality, and being an objective personality its environments, its relations must also be objective, and if they are objective then they must have locality. It is impossible to avoid the conclusion.

We often hear people say that there is no such thing as time and space in the spirit world. Now it seems to me that when a person utters that statement he or she fails to comprehend the stupendous question involved; fails to comprehend the momentousness of that statement. Let us examine that point logically. "No time nor space in the spirit world." What is time? What is space? Time is distance between events. Time of itself is nothing, but it is a measure of distance between events. What is space? Space of itself is nothing, but it is a measure of distance between objects. Now, if there are any objects in the spirit world, if there are any events taking place there, there must be both space and time. (Applause.) Get away from that logic if you can, I can't. (Applause.) If there is no time and no space in the spirit world then there is nothing, there are no events and no objects, and you can't get away from the logic to save you. Therefore, I say that the spirit world is a real world, a natural world, far more substantial than this world, that it has both time and space and also that it has location.

A little while ago I said to you that the conditions and environments of the spirit after it has left the body must be widely different from this, so the question occurs, Where can such conditions exist in this universe of ours? conditions adapted to the needs and requirements of the spirit? Some speculators have theorized that the ex-carnate spirit passes to another planet. Mars, Jupiter and Saturn have all been located as the home of the spirits, and the sun, because of its superlative brilliancy and power, has been believed by thousands of people to be the heavenly home of the ex-

carnate spirit. But science, that relentless iconoclast, has shattered that belief by showing that the sun and planets, through spectrum analysis, are composed, practically, of the same elements as the earth. And that, therefore, the same difficulties that prevent the ex-carnate spirit dwelling upon earth also exist upon those bodies, and so driven from their refuges one by one by the irresistible attacks of science, we are compelled to seek a solution of the question in accordance with the facts of nature and the science of the age.

Before I proceed to locate the world of souls as seems to me reasonable and scientific, I want to call your attention to a few very startling and suggestive facts in connection with the evolutionary process of Nature's laws as applied to the visible and natural universe (and a consideration of these facts will surprise some of us, perhaps, because they indicate that the apparently wild vagary indulged in by many religionists of the final destruction of the universe is not so wide of the truth after all).

The consensus of opinion among astronomers of to-day is that the trend of past and present points to the final extinguishment and death of the visible universe; the elimination of all force, all power and all life from the visible universe.

Trace the progress of the universe from chaos up to man; from the primal fire mist to the solidified worlds, and one fact becomes apparent, viz: the original heat of the worlds and suns is fast being eliminated and along with the heat, the power, the force and energy which held them in their respective orbits, that, in fact, *the visible universe is running down*. All the indications are—and I think there is no astronomer on earth who denies it—that the planets which revolve around our sun are gradually but slowly contracting their orbits with each annual revolution, and that they are destined eventually to fall into and be incorporated with the sun. Long before that shall take place, however, every planet will have yielded up all its heat, all its life, and no living thing will exist upon it. It will roam through space, a barren desert waste, a spectral form, a ghost of the skies, a dead world, a burnt-out cinder, what our moon is to-day.

As I said, this seems to be the evident and necessary conclusion. The sun in itself is gradually cooling off, but its fires will be renewed temporarily as each planet plunges into its bosom, and for a time it will burn with all its former splendor, but at length, at a period so far distant that figures utterly

fail to express the lapse of time, the last planet will be absorbed, the last bit of fuel exhausted and the sun, too, will be cold, barren, dead, and will probably be absorbed by some still greater orb, until at length, at a period so vast that no imagination can conceive the figures, the entire visible universe will cease to live.

That is the conclusion which all physicists admit. There is no avoiding it. All the indications point that way.

I am not going to argue the question as to whether this conclusion is correct or not. I am going to accept the statement as a fact that this physical universe of ours is actually running down, like a clock that has been wound up and is ticking away its stored energy.

Admitting all that, can any intelligent, reasoning being believe that this is to be the end of conscious existence? Can anyone believe for a moment that, after having wrought through millions of millions of ages in order to produce the wonderful and stupendous results we find about us to-day, Nature is going to end her majestic work by such an abortion as that? To my mind such a conclusion is utterly irrational, utterly opposed to the doctrine or theory of evolution, and I will tell you why.

The doctrine of the conservation and correlation of forces has gotten beyond the theoretic stage, and it is admitted to be a fact. As matter is indestructible and cannot be annihilated, so force, energy, which is its inherent quality, is also indestructible. Matter may change into various forms, visible and invisible, so force may change its nature, its character and mode of motion, light, heat, electricity, and perhaps thousands of other modes of motion, but not the most minute particle of energy can be destroyed. It continues to exist in some one or more of its many modes of motion. That being accepted, and you will admit that there is not a scientist on earth to-day that denies it, then the question occurs, What is to become of these mighty forces that are manifested in the material universe, at the death of these worlds and suns? That stupendous force which manifests itself in the light and heat of the sun, which hurled these ponderous globes through space, which manifests itself in the growth of the vegetable and animal, in the thousands of methods and chemical action? Is it to be destroyed? If the doctrine of the conservation of energy is a fact it must exist somewhere—but where?

Now, I am going to offer what some of you may think is a rather novel theory. But first, let me say, there is no such thing in

the universe as empty space. Matter in some form fills all space. There was a time when it was supposed that outside of the atmosphere of the earth and the other planets there existed an absolute vacuum. Now it is conceded by all scientists that a very attenuated and sublimated form of matter or substance fills all space between the heavenly bodies. For want of a more specific term it has been designated as "ether". I have not time, if it were necessary, to give you the evidences and reasons why scientists have arrived at this conclusion. I can only say that they have reached that conclusion because they cannot avoid it; because there is no other way to explain many of the phenomena such as the transmission of light, heat, electricity and that wonderful and marvelous force called "Gravity."

The existence of this hypothetical ether of space is as thoroughly accepted and believed in by scientists as is the existence of this earth on which we dwell. Finer than any known form of matter on the earth, more sublimated than any gas of which we have any knowledge; what its constituents are they cannot tell. But I am going to venture even at the risk of illustrating that old saying that "fools walk in where angels fear to tread." I am going to tell you that it is *spirit substance*. (Applause.) That is what it is. Finer than any known matter on the earth; apparently defying the ordinary laws of gravity and the laws that govern ordinary matter. It is found through all space, not only through space between planets, but through every particle of matter that exists on this old earth of ours. The earth moves on through the ether and the ether through the earth. Everywhere, all space, all interstices, are filled with this spiritual matter, this spiritual substance.

Now can anybody believe for a moment that that matter, filling all space with its sublimated essence, is lifeless? that it is unoccupied? that it is a mere barren waste unoccupied by intelligence? unoccupied by living, intelligent beings? Why, it would be folly to so conclude.

And that brings me back to the question I asked a while ago, what has become of those mighty forces that manifested themselves in these old worlds? Have they been destroyed? No, not for one instant, for these forces cannot be annihilated. Back into that fathomless space from whence they came. Back to the source from whence they were derived; out into that mighty expanse, permeating the atoms afloat in space, developing and revealing a universe so immense in extent, so wondrous in beauty

and grandeur, that in comparison all that which has gone before is as nothing.

Now, so far as we can observe, all life and activity are confined to a limited portion of the universe, the visible world and sun occupy the merest space, leaving all the vast domain outside useless, lifeless, inert, if we are to believe the materialistic theory; but who has a right to determine that all life is confined to a comparatively insignificant portion of the universe? On the contrary with that mighty expanse of space filled with spirit matter and with the active forces of light, heat and electricity permeating it through and through, what wonderful scenes may be revealed to the eye that is sufficiently developed to perceive them?

Andrew Jackson Davis, the grandest seer of the nineteenth century, and many other clairvoyants, have seen and described to us the wonderful scenes over there. Mountains, valleys, rivers, lakes, forests and plains, as real and as tangible to the spirit senses as earthly things are to the mortal senses. Is there any good reason why that should not be true? Shall we doubt that the active forces operating upon that abundant refined matter may develop scenes of beauty far eclipsing anything known on earth? Cascades and fountains, whose silvery spray would dim the brightest diamond; forests and plains, trees and shrubs, fruits and flowers, fairer even than the poet's dream. Indeed a veritable fairy-land which by virtue of its greater diversity is so much grander, lovelier and more enjoyable than this. I know there are some who will sneer at this. I know there are those who will say: "Moonshine"! "Moonshine"! That is so vague. That is so mystical. That is unscientific. That is impossible." But I tell you, my friends, it behooves us to be very cautious how we pronounce upon the possible and impossible in the realm of physics.

A great scientist has said that he would not venture to pronounce anything impossible outside of the domain of mathematics. Twice two will always equal four, it could not equal five, but outside of the domain of mathematics he would not pronounce anything impossible, and it behooves us to be cautious how we pronounce anything possible or impossible.

We should remember that all conditions are relative, comparative, that although the ether of space seems too attenuated to permit of the results we have mentioned, it is because we judge from our own standpoint, our own conditions. Water is a very treacherous element upon which to set one's foot, yet the fish navigates the water with ease

and comfort. Take that fish out of the water and require it to float in the air and it will fall to the earth at once, and yet a bird will float in the air with the same ease and comfort as a fish floats in the water. If you had never seen a fish swim in the water or a fowl flying in the air you would declare either to be impossible.

You probably remember the story of the traveler who visited one of the savage monarchs in the interior of Africa and told him of the marvels of the world. The savage was very much interested in the story that the traveler told him about the things at home, and the traveler told him some pretty big stories, but he believed them all, until at length he told the king that at a certain season of the year in his country the water became so hard people could walk on it. That was enough for that savage. He could believe everything else the traveler told him but he could not conceive how water could become solid enough to walk upon.

Now, a drop of water is a very small thing to us, but it may contain a world of life all unknown until the microscope reveals it. What myriads of forms of life are all about us to-day which the most powerful glass cannot discover? And so with this celestial ether, the realms of space. Our dim vision cannot discover life there, it cannot be cognized by our physical senses, yet our failure to do so does not prove that it does not exist there. And right here science, materialistic science, comes in to support our assertions. Comes right in here to support our statements by declaring that this ether of space which seems to us so attenuated is really more solid and substantial than any known form of matter on this earth.

Prof. J. Stanley Jevons, probably the greatest authority to-day on physics, tells us that this ether of space "is infinitely more solid and elastic than steel." Think of that! Who can comprehend it? Sir John Herschell, I think it was, calculated that this invisible substance exerts a pressure upon the earth of seventeen billions of tons per square inch, "and yet," says Prof. Jevons, "we live and move without appreciable resistance through this medium infinitely harder and more elastic than adamant." Talk about the big stories the spiritualists tell, there is nothing a spiritualist ever told regarding his experience that is so difficult to comprehend and realize as this frank and outspoken statement of this physical scientist. (Applause.) Nothing that ever occurred in a spiritual seance was so difficult to accept and comprehend as this. Why is it? How is it that it can be so solid and yet you cannot realize

it? You can't feel it simply because of its *infinite elasticity*.

You know that spiritualists have been teaching ever since Spiritualism began that spirit is the real substance and that these visible, material things are only shadows of that substance. That is what we have been teaching right along, and here comes the scientist now to back us up. Let me tell you right here, that it is in the facts and discoveries of science that the doctrines and teachings of Spiritualism are based. (Applause.) Every new discovery in scientific research is an added support to what our mediums and teachers have been giving us through the decades of the past. So, I repeat, here we have science coming in to support the statement that spirit is the real substance, and what we call matter, visible matter, is only the shadow of that substance, by saying that this invisible, intangible substance, the ether, is infinitely more solid than the most solid matter of which we have any knowledge on this earth. Can anybody accept that and then deny our proposition that all space is full of life and filled with intelligent beings? Why, to deny one and accept the other is simply to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

Doctor Young, the discoverer of the undulatory theory of light, has fairly committed himself to the belief that there are spheres inhabited by intelligent beings all around us in the invisible realms of space. Let us remember this, friends, that the difference between perception and non-perception is only a difference of a few vibrations. An owl or a cat will see very clearly when to a man all is darkness. A dog will smell odors that make no impression whatever upon man's olfactory nerves, and so the fact that we are unable to see those things and realize them is no evidence that they do not exist. It simply proves that we have not reached that higher plane of vibration, and when the medium clairvoyantly sees these things, as hundreds and thousands do, it means that they have gotten up to the spiritual plane of vibration, and are seeing, spiritually, the real things as they exist. Mankind, for ages, has cherished a faith in a life apart from this, in a world separate from this world in which we live. Dreams, visions, strange messages, have come in various ways from that realm; there are many who claim to have seen it, to have seen its inhabitants, and to have recognized in them the faces of those they had consigned to the grave. The testimony of the people of all ages points to a life separate from this; points to beings unclothed with visible forms. The stories of a land of fairies blossoming in per-

petual beauty, haloed by constant rainbows, inhabited by beings of wondrous loveliness, have come down to us through the ages and have been implicitly believed in by millions of people. Are we to conclude that all these stories were simply vagaries of the imagination? That they had no basis or foundation in fact? He who would unqualifiedly say yes is a bigot. Your true scientists will not say so, but they will say, "I don't know," and plod on in search of facts. There is not a scientist on the face of the earth to-day who will say the conditions I have described are impossible. Not one. If, then, these mystic stories, these half-waking dreams, these visions more or less distinct have had a foundation in fact—a fact, by the way, which has been demonstrated to millions of people through the phenomena of Spiritualism (applause); if there is, I repeat, another world, another sphere of existence, where is it located if not in the boundless realm of space? I tell you no narrow and contracted "City of Gold" can begin to contain all the emancipated souls of men and women. (Applause.) The heaven, the future world of Christianity, was imagined before science had demonstrated that

this little earth on which we dwell is only a speck of dust, instead of being the center of the universe, and is only one of myriads of worlds floating in the ocean of infinity. Heaven will have to be immensely enlarged to meet the requirements of science (Applause.) Nothing less than the whole expanse of space will answer. (Continued applause.) And that is where it is. Out in that mighty expanse; that wondrous realm stretching from star to star and sun to sun; that mighty expanse into which the escaping forces of the material worlds have gone, developing and revealing scenes of beauty far eclipsing even a poet's dream. Indeed a veritable fairyland which, as I said before, by virtue of its vast differentiation, is so much grander and more beautiful than this. A land of perpetual sunshine, a land where the emancipated spirit will wander with its chosen companions, reveling in joys of which we have not the remotest conception in this life; soaring out into the infinite, through an eternity of time, where beauty and harmony will continue to increase; where joy and pleasures will multiply as the ages roll on like the waves in the ocean of eternity. (Great applause.)



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