

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

"Brethren, fear not: for Error is mortal and cannot live, and Truth is immortal and cannot die."

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The Principles of Nature.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF THE UNIVERSE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,
BY W. M. FERNALD.

Nature has always been declared by Christians, to be an insufficient guide to mankind. And if by Nature be meant a mere recognition of laws, involving no God of Nature—no Central, Infinite Mind, embodied in this vast universe of substance, then is the declaration true. But if it be meant that the laws of Nature are not revelations of God, in a sense equal to the declared or written statements of any man, however inspired, then is the declaration not true. There is, however, a sense in which Nature is insufficient for us, even in respect to her laws being considered as revelations of the Deity. It is that limited sense which is usually put upon the term Nature, when it is confined merely to the visible and material. Mere outward nature is not enough; the human soul, in its most capacious states, is not enough. Unless there be a recognition of the superior world, and of the Central Mind, and of constant spiritual influences emanating thence, in vain do we resort to nature for the highest guides and satisfactions to the soul. Now, then, when it is affirmed by Christians that the ancient philosophers stumbled and fell, because they trusted only to nature, because they had no revelation from God, this is true in a certain sense, and in a certain sense it is not. So far as they trusted to Nature, they trusted in God, for the laws even of material nature are not only the laws of God, but a portion of the very outer being of God. And so far as they rightly discovered these laws, so far they were enlightened by a revelation from God; so far were they directly inspired of God. But it is not doing justice even to the heathen philosopher, to say that they "were without God in the world." For some of them had very exalted conceptions of the Creator and Governor of the Universe, while nearly all of them had, in their multiplicity of gods, that which was God, imperfectly, in spirit, power, and rule. And it is most satisfactorily shown that idolatry, originally, was not a worship of the idols themselves, but of the different gods and goddesses represented by those idols, or the different attributes and perfections which were supposed to exist in the deities who ruled over them. It is one thing to have a proper intellectual conception of God, and another to religiously recognize a Power superior to visible and material Nature, though that Power may be degraded into the Christian or the heathen conception. Now the heathen philosophers, and some of them in particular—Cicero, for instance—had very superior ideas of the existence and government of a Divinity. And for these they were indebted solely to Nature, or to the inspirations of God operating through Nature, and through the spiritual world. But the case with them was, that they did not recognize, distinctly and fully, the spiritual element. So far as they trusted to Nature, they trusted in God, and were right; and they stumbled and fell, or groped in darkness, not because Nature was insufficient, but because they were insufficient, in their undeveloped manhood, to conceive rightly of Nature, and so limited it to the outward and the visible. And yet, Socrates affirmed the presence of superior beings, and Plato trusted to a spiritual world; and the interposition and guidance of spirits was, by many of the heathen, a faith fully received, yet in a confused and imperfect form, and not suited to the highest wants of man.

Now we undertake to say that Nature interpreted aright, and not limited to the outward and material, but distinctly recogni-

zing a spiritual world and a Central, Infinite Mind, is the only revelation God can possibly make to his creatures. The Christian world has its Bible, which it thinks is the only revelation God ever made to man, and in the person of Christ, it recognizes the fullness of perfection. Nor let it ever be said that the Bible has not been a light and a salvation to an otherwise darkened world. It has been so on the principle that Newton's system of astronomy has surpassed the crude teachings of former ages, or that Gall's and Spurzheim's theory of the human mind has eclipsed the metaphysical speculations of all which preceded them. But that the Bible should be considered a fixed and ultimate guide—that, in the moral and spiritual world, any more than in the intellectual world, there should be such a thing as standing still—this is death to the soul's highest life. Those principles in the Bible which are fixed, and unalterable, and unimprovable, are those which are grounded in Nature and in the laws of the human soul. And there is much of this in the moral and devotional parts of the Old Testament, and especially in the morality and spirituality of Christ. But all true Christianity, as Butler says, is but "a republication of natural religion." There is such a thing as a Christianity of the Universe. It should be manifest at once, that no man, however inspired, can reveal any truths which form not a part of the universal connection of things; and all which professes to be a departure from this order, is stamped with the highest mark of error. The Christianity of the Church, therefore, is in derogation of the Universal Being. It lives in virtue of its high natural principles, and its hold is upon the general truth of the spiritual or supernatural element. When supernaturalism shall become highest nature to men, and the distinction shall be made between what is true and what is false in the records which claim to be the history of this element, then will Christianity pass into natural science, and be necessary to complete the philosophy of the universe. But so long as Bibles and Christs rule, not by virtue of their own excellence, but by a certain speciality which is not as one with the everlasting processes of material and spiritual Nature, so long will contractedness of mind and unworthy views of the Creator usurp the place of expansive and harmonious thought.

Many nations have had their Bibles, and they have contained much truth of a spiritual nature. The Koran of Mohammed, the Shaster of the Hindoos, the Zend Avesta of the Medes and Persians, no less than the Bible of the Jews and Christians, have each enchaind the faith of men, and have each, while accomplishing much good in sustaining the spiritual life and preserving a certain authority for highest things, at the same time contracted within unnatural limits the conceptions of the Great Eternal Cause. And it is, in fact, this speciality in Christianity, making it more than Nature, or more than that which came from God through Nature, which is beset with evils which are not duly appreciated even by those who have arisen to a higher and more natural position. Men think that by these means they quicken their conceptions of the care and government of the Almighty Father. But if they do this by concentrating a more than natural attention, foreign from all permanent and fixed law, upon this or any other world, they thereby loose in universality and harmony, infinitely more than gained in vividness and speciality, at the same time. Difficulties to the mind which tend to cloud the whole of the broadest manifestations of the Deity. For the worlds is infinite—which have proceeded from the creative power of God, and to the philosophic intelligence, be taken as a whole, and arranged in a systematic order, and asked, ha-

gences, inhabiting other worlds, and subject perhaps to the same disasters of sin and imperfection? Christians have said, in answer to this question, that this may be the only world, whose inhabitants have fallen into disobedience. But this is an assumption proposed for the escape from a difficulty, and it might as well be assumed, and even more reasonably, from what we know of the constitution and course of Nature, that sin had entered and defaced the form of every spirit who has proceeded from the hands of the Creator. Indeed, when we conceive rightly of sin, as simply a confusion of human relations, incident to unprogressed being, we may assume this for a certainty. It was the consideration of this difficulty that led the celebrated Dr. Chalmers, a theologian of gigantic powers, to meet it on its own grounds. And in the mighty sketch of thought which he has given it, and the splendor of eloquence which he has thrown around it, we see at once the advantages of simplicity which truth always has in it, and the useless cost and expenditure which error ever requires from the genius and learning of mankind. It is no more likely, even admitting the "orthodox" theory of redemption, that it should be felt at Jupiter, and the undiscovered planets and worlds of immensity, than that our systems of philosophy and jurisprudence should interest the teachers and professors of these worlds. Or if the moral grandeur of the act, as the Dr. thinks, may interest the inhabitants of the remotest parts of the universe, this affords no solution to this theological difficulty of redemption; and, as he is constrained to admit, for aught we know, an errand of mercy equally miraculous—a son of God equally out of the constitution and course of Nature, may have sped to every planet and every world in immensity. How much more rational is the conception of Butler, the author of the "Analogy," and how much more creditable to his candor and reason, to conclude, as he concludes, in a work received yet as a pillar of orthodoxy, in the whole so-styled evangelical world. He was a bishop of the Church of England; and it is with some hope for human progress that we hear him treating the matter thus. Speaking of the term "natural," of which he says, the "only distinct meaning is, stated, fixed, or settled," he says "our notion of what is natural will be enlarged, in proportion to the greater knowledge of the works of God and the dispensations of His providence. Nor is there any absurdity in supposing that there may be beings in the universe, whose capacities and knowledge, and views, may be so extensive, as that the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear natural; that is, analogous or conformable to God's dealings with other parts of His creation,—as natural as the visible, known course of things appears to us."

This passage contains more truth in principle than the whole "Analogy." But how much better would it be to say, to the capacity of every mind, that this globe of earth was once but liquid fire, and that the matter so situated contained in it qualities incomprehensible, and by communication with the Central and Infinite Mind of the universe, was fitted to produce all minerals, vegetables, and animals which have existed upon its surface; that the Divine Central Mind has thus operated through infinity of worlds, and wherever redemption is needed, it is provided on natural principles, and Christianity springs up in all parts of the universe, as the moral gravitation to hold men together, as physical gravitation attracts and holds all worlds. Nothing but this can answer Butler's announcement. The seeds of Christian truth are sown abroad in the sun and moon and stars, while yet those bodies are but nebulous matter; and by the divine law of Association, God becomes incarnated in every crystal, in every tree, in every man. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself"—"Do unto others as ye would have others do unto you"—"Overcome evil with good"—were principles contained undeveloped in the revolving earths, by connection with the Divine Center, long before the voice of man was heard, or sin had entered to disturb his spirit. And you may behold the passion and the agony, and the crucifixion, even now, in the roar of the earthquake and the commotion of storms. But such discord is only to be overcome by the progressive harmony of nature; and so of moral discord, or

sin, which is only a confusion of human relations, and the finishing and end of which is provided from all eternity in the harmonies of the Divine Mind. What a redemption! What a Christianity! More than all Christians have ever dreamt of, or all arguments have ever attempted to uphold. It is based indestructibly in the God of Nature, and rises through Nature upon all earths, and appears in the spiritual worlds, and is perfecting forever and ever. Its miracles are every where. For he who has arisen to this point of observation, sees the immediate hand of Deity in the springing grass and roaring waterfall, and feels it in the summer's breeze, as in the ascended divinity of the human soul, its supersensual power over physical nature, its communion with angels, and its resurrection to immortal life. From this point we worship, in utmost grandeur, the great All in All. Churches disappear in the presence of a Truth too large to be contained in them. Christ is no longer God or perfect man, but God becomes Infinite and perfect Christ;—more;—Infinite and Perfect Man, whose Soul is universal motion, life, sensation, and intelligence; and whose Body is the substance of all visible and invisible things.

Now then, fully considered, men do not even quicken their conceptions of the care and government of the Creator, by instituting such a speciality above law, as is claimed for Christianity. While in ignorance and contraction of thought they quicken them, but they loose thereby the sense of universality and harmony, and when they come to the true view of the laws of universal causation, nothing is so quickening and vivifying to the soul's life, as the appreciation of the Universal Presence and the Christianity of the Universe. But let us not be blinded by terms. It is the *philosophy* of the Universe, or the Deity and order of the Universe, which is the more proper expression.

Christianity is Love. And what is Love? Throughout Nature, material and spiritual analogies hold most perfect. Light answers to truth, or natural light to spiritual light; darkness to ignorance and error; heat answers to love; the sun and man are images of the Deity; the hand is a symbol of power; and all birds of the air and beasts of the field are the natural representatives of the thoughts and affections of man. But there is an analogy which is correct and beautiful, which is aptly illustrative of what we have seen fit to call the Christianity of the Universe. The law of *Gravitation*, in the material universe, is correctly representative of the law of Love in the moral universe. It is by this law that all particles of matter, and all bodies, are attracted and held together,—that the planets revolve around the sun, and all run around one another and around the Grand Central Sun of the universe, so that a perfect, united, and harmonious system is perpetuated forever and ever. In like manner, among all intelligences, it is love which is the cementing principle. Where Love is not, there is discord and every evil work. It is this principle which unites man to man, and man to God, and is the originator of all those virtues which adorn and beautify humanity. By Love the heavens are kept in order, and the bright hosts of angels receive and reciprocate the blessings and benefits of a united and harmonious association. And while, as planets and suns, they are attracted and attracting, each in their order and their due degree, so do they all circulate around the Divine Center, as the Great Spiritual Sun of the intelligent creation. Love, in short, is the *gravitation* of the moral universe.

And now, it would be as absurd to suppose some extra sun created by miraculous power, to establish the principle of gravitation in the solar system, as to suppose any Christ created, otherwise than by natural law, to establish Christianity among men. Christianity is as old as the creation of man. Its laws are man's highest nature. But as the asteroids (or small planets) in our solar system present the appearances of an imperfectly developed substance, or of a shattered mass, by the temporary existence of inharmonious elements, so did man, before Christ, present equal evidences of an inharmonious nature. Christ is as Saturn to the planetary members. Beautiful above all his fellows, and altogether lovely, yet by law of as natural development have the principles of nature ascended and brightened in this man which, however, before existed, broad-spread throughout human-

ity. Not one of his moral precepts but may be found in the heathen philosophers, but no one ever existed before him who embodied them all in one harmonious character, and a life so beautiful and perfect. Yet there is no evidence that his character was *full and rounded*, nor need we search for any to supply any necessities of men. Christianity, like every thing else, is perfecting throughout eternity. Love must exist more refined and more universal, as the elements of human nature ascend to higher and higher perfection. And be it remembered that Christ only declared an *individual* Christianity—a state of perfection of the individual soul struggling through all the obstructions of social embarrassments—of physiological disorder, of intellectual imbecility, of poverty of means, of antagonism of human interests, and of all external and discordant circumstances. He thus declared a virtue which could not be possible, even generally, though the world should exist a million of ages; for in fact, should the present system of society continue, the inequalities and evils of life would grow worse and worse, and engulf even a respectable Christianity, more hopelessly than it now is, in universal corruption and selfishness. The correspondent to love in the physical creation—the law of gravitation, has long since passed the chaotic materials into planetary order. And so, by a progressing and omnipotent nature, must this spiritual attraction—this love, issue in a sublimer christianity than has ever been proclaimed by any man, by making the outward and the social correspond to the inward and individual, and thus perfecting and universalizing this virtue of humanity.

[TO BE CONCLUDED.]

Psychological Department.

REMARKABLE DREAMS.

The phenomena of dreaming naturally results from the continued action of the mind when the outward senses are buried in the slumber of the body. In ordinary dreams, the mind doubtless receives its action from the impulse of previous ideas, or, as this is intimately connected with the physical system, the visions which pass before it may arise from the discordant state of the brain and nerves. There are instances, however, which clearly show an independent action of the mind in the profound slumber of the senses. Either the soul in such cases has power to raise the veil and scan the realities of the future, or it is impressed with the approach of unforeseen events by the guardian angels that hover around the couch of rest. Although a belief in dreams as mediums of divine instruction is commonly regarded as a relic of superstition, yet to the philosophic understanding it will appear reasonable that these may sometimes be the reflection of spirit-thoughts; for in the depths of physical slumber, when the attractions of the outward world have no power upon the soul, the interior perceptions may be opened to receive the truths that flow from brighter spheres.

A few authenticated instances of remarkable dreams may here be introduced. The first I will notice was related to me personally, and the fulfillment came under my own observation. A gentleman in the town of D— dreamed for three successive nights that his son-in-law was buried alive in the process of excavating a well which he had commenced digging not far distant from his own residence. Deeply impressed by this dream that some fearful accident was about to occur, he warned his son to be particularly careful, and avoid, as far as possible, all danger incident to his labors. He, however, ridiculed the impressions of his father, and continued his work without fear or thought of accident. But the dream was not to be without its fulfillment. A short time afterwards as, in company with others, the son-in-law was engaged in digging, the sandy bank of the well gave symptoms of falling away. His companions immediately desisted from their labors, but he, laughing at their fears, remained at work, when suddenly a mass of earth became disengaged, falling, covered his body to the depth of many feet. Every effort was made for his extrication, but his mortal part passed forever, before he could be reached.

The following dream is related by Dr. Abercrombie, who vouches for its truth:

"Two ladies had been in attendance for several days upon their brother, who was ill, but not considered dangerous. One of the sisters had borrowed a watch of a female friend, while her own was under repair. The sisters were sleeping in a room communicating with that of their sick brother, when the elder of them awoke in a state of great agitation, and having roused the other, told her that she had had a frightful dream. 'I dreamed,' she said, 'that Mary's watch had stopped; and that when I told you the circumstance you replied, much worse than that has happened, for brother's breath has stopped also. To quiet her agitation, the younger sister immediately got up, and found the brother sleeping quietly, and the watch going correctly. The following night the very same dream was repeated, followed by similar agitation, which was again composed in the same manner—the brother being found as before, in a quiet sleep, and the watch going well. On the following morning, after the family had breakfasted, one of the sisters was sitting by her brother, while the other was writing a note in an adjoining room. When her note was ready to be sealed, she proceeded to the desk where was placed the watch alluded to, for the purpose of using the seal attached to it, when she was astonished to find it had stopped. At the same moment she heard a scream of intense distress from her sister in the other room. Their brother, who had been considered as going on favorably, had been seized with a sudden fit of suffocation, and had just then breathed his last.'

Another singular, but instructive dream is related in a letter of St. Augustine to his friend Evadius:

"I will relate to you a circumstance," he writes, "which will furnish you matter for reflection. Our brother Sennadius, well known to us as an eminent physician, and whom we especially love, who is now at Carthage, after having distinguished himself at Rome, and with whose piety and active benevolence you are well acquainted, could not, nevertheless, as he has lately narrated to us, by any means bring himself to believe in a life after death. Now God, doubtless, not willing that his soul should perish, there appeared to him, one night, in a dream, a radiant youth of noble aspect, who bade him follow him; and as Sennadius obeyed, they came to a city where, on the right side, he heard a chorus of most heavenly voices. As he desired to know whence this divine harmony proceeded, the youth told him that what he heard were the songs of the blessed; whereupon he awoke, and thought no more of his dream than people usually do. On another night, however, behold! the youth appears to him again, and asks if he knows him; and Sennadius related to him all the particulars of his former dream, which he well remembered. 'Then,' said the youth, 'was it while sleeping or waking you saw these things?' 'I was sleeping,' answered Sennadius. 'You are right,' returned the youth, 'it was in your sleep that you saw these things; and know, oh Sennadius, that what you now see is also in your sleep. But if this be so, tell me where then is your body?' 'In my bed-chamber,' answered Sennadius. 'But know you not,' continued the stranger, 'that your eyes, which form a part of your body, are closed and inactive?' 'I know it,' answered he. 'Then,' said the youth, 'with what eyes see you these things?' And Sennadius could not answer him; and as he hesitated, the youth spoke again, and explained to him the motive of his questions. 'As the eyes of your body,' said he, 'which lies now on your bed and sleeps, are inactive and useless, and yet you have eyes wherewith you see me, and these things I have shown unto you; so after death, when these fail you, you will have a vital power, and sensible faculty whereby you will live, no longer, that there is a life after death, and the excellent man, 'was I convinced, and.'"

As by such facts as mere fancies, coinciding, but to the reasoning mind they convey a principle which should be believed as they do the superior and heavenly possibility of communing with an immortal spirit.

E. F. A.

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

APULLOS MUNN AND R. P. AMBLER, EDITORS.

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EXISTENCE OF THE SPIRIT IN A HIGHER SPHERE.

Whatever may be the grounds on which the reality of the spirit's future existence is predicated, it is observable that the longings of the human heart reach forth towards a higher life. Man feels within him the thirst for a continual and endless being. His desires and aspirations soar beyond the darkness of the sepulchre. The conviction steals upon him that something of man lives more than the material frame, and while he looks upon the ruin and desolation of death, and gazes with sadness on the falling leaf and the fading flower of humanity, a hope radiant with immortality springs up in his bosom, which penetrates the dark veil of the future, and reveals a life all beautiful and glorious beyond. From the earliest ages of the world this desire and hope have lingered in the human breast. The traditional accounts received from the nations of antiquity, distinctly unfold the idea of a future existence. Though the evidence of such an existence, as presented to the mind in its undeveloped state, may have been shadowy and imperfect, yet the instinctive and spontaneous *desire*, which seems to form an essential element of the soul, was made clearly manifest. All grades and classes of mankind have experienced the same inward prompting. The poor Indian looks up from the bright streams and shady forest to a glorious spirit-land; the philosopher launches out on the waves of death, trusting to be wafted to an immortal shore; and the christian with ardent hopes aspires to become the denizen of a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God. Now these desires and aspirations which flow so naturally from the human bosom, serve to shadow forth a bright and substantial *reality*. They unfold a higher state which man from his very nature is fitted to enjoy, and form the earnest of a destiny which will be ultimately attained, by the progressive unfolding of the internal essence.

The existence of man, as considered with reference to its whole extent, is two-fold in its nature. There are two modes or states of being through which he is made to pass; the life that now is, which is the life of the body, and the life that is to come, which is the life of the soul—the one material and earthly in its nature, the other spiritual and divine. The first of these states of being was designed to be momentary and transient. "All flesh is as grass," and life may be compared to the vapor which appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. The bodily frame was not designed to endure forever—the earthly tabernacle was formed but to be dissolved, and hence, in respect to his temporal life, man walks on earth as the pilgrim of a day—a transient guest that early to his home retires. This earthly life, however, is but the morning of human existence. It is the vestibule of the great temple in which man must worship, and hence, in succession to this first and lowest state of being, is unfolded, on the dissolution of the body, an endless expanse of spiritual life in which the freed soul can roam forever.

But I am aware that I am now speaking of a truth which is not as yet sensibly unfolded. We are now only in the first stage of our existence, and hence cannot clearly discern, or have a just appreciation of, that which is to come. Allow me, then, to adduce some evidences which may establish the *reality* of the existence of the spirit in a higher sphere. This point may be established in the first place, by a reference to truths naturally developed from philosophical investigations. Spirit, then, being a substance, must necessarily partake of the nature of matter. According to an established principle of philosophy, matter is indestructible. No particle of any substance which has ever existed, can by any possibility be struck out of existence. Different substances, by the action of certain laws, may be changed in their form and nature, but not the least particle of matter in the whole universe can ever be destroyed. As a proper infer-

ence, therefore, from these premises, I conclude that spirit must exist forever. Again, in obedience to a law which governs all finite substances, the spirit assumes a definite form, and this form, by an inherent tendency of the particles of which it is composed, becomes organically constructed, so as to constitute an internal man. Hence the spirit has a perfect and distinct individuality, and is able, under all conceivable circumstances, to preserve its *identity*. Still again;—the spirit, as indicated by the different manifestations of clairvoyance, prevision, &c., is endowed with an independent action. In other words, when from any natural or artificial cause, the tie which binds the soul to its frame is measurably dissolved, the spirit has an existence so far separate from the body, that it acts independent of its organs, and exercises a vision of its own which has no connection with the material senses. From this fact it is perfectly fair to infer that were this process carried still farther—were the tie connecting the spiritual and material entirely dissolved, and the spirit rendered fully clairvoyant by the process of death, it would then have no further need of the physical organism, but would enter immediately upon a new and higher sphere of existence. We see, then, that the spirit, from its nature, is indestructible—from its form must preserve an identity, and from its inherent powers of action, must live as a distinct and independent being when the body is dissolved.

Secondly, the reality of the spirit's future existence may be sustained on the ground of its *limitless expansion*. The human spirit, though it becomes individualized in man, is never here fully unfolded. There is no stationary point which can form a limit to its advancement. It has powers which have an innate tendency to constant progress—faculties which are capable of almost infinite expansion—which enable it to approach the glory of the Infinite Mind, and worship in the boundless temple of truth. Deeper and deeper it drinks at the well of knowledge, and yet its thirst is never satiated—farther and farther it advances into the fields of truth, and still it finds no limit to its view,—higher and higher it rises in its aspirations to God, and yet the full measure of love and purity is not seen. Let us now inquire,

"Why should such duties cease—such powers decay?
Are they not worthy of a deathless state—
A boundless scope—a high, uplifted life?"

Is it possible that these powers, so limitless and divine, shall pass away with human strength? Is it possible that that celestial flame which God has lighted from his own spirit shall be blown out by the breath of the destroyer? Nay; we can only deem that the spirit passing the ordeal of death enters into a higher sphere, else is there no scope for its expansive faculties, and hence no wisdom or design in its creation. Were the powers of our spiritual nature bounded by the limits of time and sense, and could they reach their full development in the brief period of this earthly life, it might seem more rational to suppose that the spirit dies with its falling temple. But while these powers extend entirely beyond the limits of this lower world—while they ascend upward to higher spheres, and reach forward into the realms of infinity, it is the conclusion of reason that the soul, when freed from the material body, lives on in a brighter world, adapted to its exalted and godlike nature. The poet truly declares,

"This life, this world is not enough for us;
They are nothing to the measure of our mind—
For place, we must have space; for time, we must have
Eternity; and for a spirit, godhood."

Another evidence of the future existence of the spirit, may be found in the *analogy of nature*. Curious and beautiful processes are constantly going on in creation around us, which are perfectly analogous to the changes by which the spirit becomes freed from the body, and attains an independent existence. Thus the little seed of a grain or a plant is placed in the earth, and while the outward body with which it is clothed moulders and decays, the internal germ or essence contained within it still lives, and is developed in another and higher form. So the little bud which we observe on the plant, gradually throws off the body in which it is encased, and disclosing its petals to the cheering light, soon unfolds itself into the full-blown flower. In this way

all nature is made to rise from its wintry sleep—throw off the old dead bodies which have been withered by the chilling frost, and unfold the internal soul in new forms made glorious with life and beauty. From the principle here manifested, we may see how it is that the human spirit, when the tie of life has been severed, rises from the ashes of its earthly frame and inhabits a higher sphere. The same analogy may be observed still farther in the transformation of animals, numerous instances of which are presented in natural history. Thus birds and insects commence their existence in narrow, temporary coverings, which constitute their rudimental sphere. Here they live and derive nourishment until they attain to a certain degree of perfection, when they burst their shell, and are introduced into a new world—a world entirely different from that in which they had before existed, and which calls for the exercise of new and higher powers. A forcible example of this transformation is presented in the *caterpillar*. It remains for a time in this incipient stage, casting of its skin at intervals in advancing to a more developed state. It is then changed into a *chrysalis*, an intermediate state, in which it lies for a season in an apparently inanimate condition—then, after a certain period, it breaks away from its old body and commences a new mode of existence, in the form of a beautiful *butterfly*. In view of these processes which are going on in the physical world, it will be seen that the transformation of man from the material to the spiritual body, and his introduction into a higher sphere of existence, are but in accordance with the analogy of nature; and I may venture to affirm that this change, had we the same opportunity to become accustomed to it, would appear no more wonderful than a thousand similar changes which are constantly taking place in creation around us.

In the next place, the reality of the spirit's existence in the future, may be deduced from the apparent *design of human existence*. That design, as appears from the inward tendencies of our nature, and from all the requirements of the divine Being, is that we should advance, to the full extent of our capacities, towards the glory of our spiritual Creator. He reigns on high as the Spiritual Magnet of the universe, and sends forth his attractive, irresistible influence to all souls. On Him we are all dependent, and around Him we all revolve as planets round their central sun, and towards Him we are impelled to advance, drawing ever nearer, never near his throne, as the great work for which man was created. Now this work, in the present sphere, seems to be but *commenced*. Our advancement here is necessarily obstructed by our very condition and the circumstances by which we are surrounded. The flesh lusts against the spirit; earthly influences circumscribe its powers, and the allurements of time and sense ever tend to draw it down to low and unworthy objects. It is necessary, therefore, in order to complete the design of human existence, that the beginning of our progression in the physical, should afterwards be continued in the spiritual sphere, where, freed from fleshly lusts and the enticements of earth, and having laid aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, we can advance upward in our destined course through heavenly regions, and, filled with the purity of the divine Spirit, approach nearer and nearer the foot of that throne where angels bow, and seraphs chant their praise.

Lastly, I remark that the existence of the spirit in a higher sphere may be shown from the *office of death*. Death has been usually regarded as the greatest evil which befalls our race; and when considered only with reference to its outward and visible effects, it appears indeed as an appalling monster. With power triumphant it has swayed the world, and by its dread touch has carried millions to its shadowy land. It comes with fearful might to dash the proud monarch from his throne of power, and to darken the hut of poverty with lonely sorrow. It comes to seal the lips of the wise, and to still the pulses of the mighty; and, as a blighting tempest, it falls upon the young and beautiful of earth, and carries them away in the early freshness of existence. Thus

"The lover, and the soldier, and the bard,
The brightness, and the beauty, and the pride,
Have vanished, and the graves great heart is still."

But there is another and more truthful aspect in which we are to view the ministrations of death; and in the performance of

its appropriate office, we shall see that it is one of man's best and truest blessings. What though it may hush the beatings of the heart and still the throbbing pulse—what though it may prey upon the outward body and turn it again to the dust from which it sprang. There is a spiritual form within which its blighting power can never reach; and while it loosens the silver cord and breaks the brittle thread of life, it gives freedom to the living soul, opens the doors of its earthly prison-house, and leaves it to soar upward in its heavenward course towards the infinite Fountain of light and love. Thus the very ministration which man has so much feared, constitutes the means by which the spirit is transferred to a higher sphere. Death forms the medium through which we are to enter upon a new life—it is the gateway through which we are to pass from the physical to the spiritual. When called to gaze on the clay-cold form that is wrapt in its last slumber, we should not deem that the being once manifested there is dead, but rather that by the office of death it has been released from its trammels, and transferred to a more genial clime.

So the proofs of our immortality flow in upon us on every hand. There is a language in all nature which is constantly proclaiming the cheering truth, and there is

"A voice within us speaks that startling word,
'Man, thou shalt never die!' Celestial voices
Hymn it unto our souls: according harps,
By angel fingers touched, when the mild stars
Of morning sang together, send forth still
The song of our great immortality!
Thick clustering orbs and this our fair domain,
The tall, dark mountains, and the deep-toned seas,
Join in this solemn, universal song."

R. P. A.

The Work of Reform.

History truthfully relates to us the uncompromising and earthly machinations resorted to by bigots, in former ages, to put down any uprising of illuminated minds. Dark and fearful as the pathway of science has ever been, Reformers, though forced to wade through rivulets of blood, or suffer the horrid tortures of the rack and stake, still cowered not, and this nineteenth century has opened to the gaze of millions an age of revelation and progress, cheering to the aspiring soul of man. The world seems begirt with an electric chain, the links of which are formed of fraternal spirits, drawing gradually all minds within the sphere of eternal Truth. This work of reform springs from that indomitable spirit which actuated the souls of those who have long since become dwellers in the spirit-land, and in my view, it is not too much to believe that they are still among the great moving agents, actuating reformers to the bold and daring innovations of the present age.

What then if the bigoted world around us is ready to raise the cry of "infidelity" against every new development? Shall it deter us from winning truth to our inner council chambers? Shall the curling lip of the frowning and superstitious dogmatist turn us away from the "magnet" of the age in which we live? Shades of "Mythology," away! Too long hast thou entwined thy spider-like meshes around the souls of men! Thy gossamer threads shall soon cease to ensnare the world, and the primeval ignorance which gave thee birth shall soon recall thee to its own bosom. Why should man longer fear to restore to its legitimate birthright his faculty of reason? While the veil of traditional errors blinds him to the teachings of truth—while the tinsel and fascinating trappings of superstition—while the idolized gold-clasped Bible, holding forth the promises of an hereditary priesthood, still enchains a portion of humanity, the heaven-born spirit within—while the developments of the age, and the growing light of truth, are some-thing of a new opening new glorious life forward. But growing

throughout the world. With what celestial joy the soul drinks in the cheering communications from the spirit-world! Spirits still linked with our spirits sustain the wasting temple of the body with words of comfort and consolation that are not of earth, and whisper to us of joys that the world knows not of. Guardian spirit of my midnight slumbers and daylight wanderings! let me henceforth come under thy heavenly ministrations and guidance! Thou hast called me from the darkness of earth-born creeds to bask in the sunshine of "Nature's Revelations." Thou hast warmed and strengthened me by thy gentle influences; and, with thy constant help, through ceaseless ages my soul shall rise to Harmony, Love, and Wisdom. T. S. S.

Randolph, N. Y., Oct. 2, 1850.

Intellectual Progress.

Messrs. Editors:—In a recent number of the "Spirit Messenger," I noticed a communication on the "Progressive Light of the Present," over the initials of a gentleman who possesses a just perception of things, and who sees

"Books in running streams,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing."

These lucid and truthful remarks have induced me to pen the following lines, which are at your disposal.

That progression is a prominent law of nature, no reasoning person can deny. The geologist discovers this truth engraven in vivid characters, in the forms of animals and vegetables that once breathed the air of life, and now leave their impressions on the enduring rock. In the snail-like progress of the human intellect, and the advancement of scientific knowledge, we find convincing evidence of the same fact. Thread by thread, like the gossamer web of the spider, has science attained its present development.

Mind, thanks to its All-Wise Creator, is immortal, and knowledge is eternally progressive. The sheep that pasture on our mountain slopes, are, in respect to knowledge, the same as those that nipped the herbage on the plains of Shinar. But who will not perceive the difference between the *mind* of the bewildered shepherd who then viewed the brilliant orbs above him as the rulers of his destiny, and that of the modern philosopher, who looks to them as mighty worlds, and traces their paths through the vast expanse of space.

Placed at the summit of progressive formations, man stands on the apex of the stupendous pyramid of nature, as lord of all around him—the only being through the whole range of creation endowed with a power of contemplating and appreciating the magnificent scenery of the universe and its Almighty Architect. Man may well exult in his elevated position, but let him rejoice with modesty, for in his highest exaltation it is probable that he forms but one of the lower links in the everlasting chain of intelligence. The idea that perfection can be immediately attained is a dream of error, a phantasy of the mind, which must be removed at the very threshold of our investigations. Progress indicates insufficiency to be supplied, and error to be eradicated. Struggling, and approximation to higher truths, should be the prominent characteristics of our being, in contradistinction to the sluggish indolence of mind, which is spiritual death. To those who are satisfied with the traditions of by-gone days, and would limit the onward progress of the human mind, we would offer the saying of an ancient author: "If the Deity held in his right hand all truth, and in his left only the ever-active impulses, the fond desire and longing after truth, coupled with the condition of constantly erring, and should offer me the choice, I should humbly turn to the left, and say, 'Father, give me this, for truth is fit for thee alone.'"

Long and seemingly doubtful has been the strife between truth and error. "Glimmering slowly succeeded to glimmering; light struggling with suffocating darkness, not for weeks, months, or years, but for ages before the day-spring became manifest." But a new era has dawned; the dark clouds of ignorance, superstition, and error, are rapidly rolling away, and a thousand glorious events welcome the mighty birth of truth. With a firm and elastic step, this beautiful form is treading the produc-

tive paths of reason and nature, and throwing off in its rapid march the sepulchral garb and the habiliments of superstition by which it has been shrouded for ages. This change is truly glorious. Piety, truth, and virtue have been long cast into darkness, and vice, superstition, and tradition have taken possession of their palaces, and breathed mildew and pestilence over the earth. But thanks to an all-wise Providence, the present age is pregnant with great events; and the hated truth that has so long and vainly struggled, now meets with genial influences, and will guide man to a haven of happiness. In the words of another, "The mighty and mysterious truth is published by a voice from Heaven; it is engraven on pages of adamant. It tells us in words that cannot lie, that the soul is immortal from birth; that the strong and inextinguishable desire we feel of future being, is the true and natural impulse of a high-born and inextinguishable principle; and that the blow that prostrates the body and imprisons it in the grave, gives pinions to the soaring spirit, and crowns it with freedom and triumph."

To render truth triumphant, time and patience will be required, and it is the duty of every enlightened mind to contribute its mite to the accomplishment of the desired end. Man has not been placed here to live at his ease and gratify his passions, "while the world's work lays unfinished around him." In our indolence and indifference, when we would so often lie down to slumber and dream, and let the busy world move on without us; and when worn and weary, we would fain turn aside from the turmoil and strife, and rest in some shady nook, whose coolness might give us a foretaste of the everlasting repose for which we sometimes sigh, it would be well for us to recollect the stern reply of the fiery Arnaud to his peaceful friend, when he longed for a deeper rest than the Port Royal could give—"Will you not have all eternity to rest in?" V.

Randolph, N. Y., Oct. 3, 1850.

Seek and ye Shall Find.

One of the chief and prominent duties of man is to *seek*. He is not permitted to remain in a passive and inactive state, but is required to make exertion to secure the exalted ends of his being, and search for that which is wanting to the perfection of his nature. Though placed in a state of intellectual gloom, he is required to seek the light; though reduced to a condition of mental poverty, he is called to obtain the riches of the soul. Man should never remain satisfied with the measure of truth he has already obtained. Shall he be content with one feeble ray, when he may live beneath the all-glorious brightness of heaven? Shall he be content with one simple pearl, when the bed of priceless treasures is within his reach? Shall he passively rest with but a limited portion of truth, while the great mass still stretches out before him in advance? The true wisdom of man is to seek—to seek continually the unfoldings of intellectual light. He must search the pure teachings of Nature where the voice of the Infinite whispers to the soul; he must study the laws and purposes of the divine Spirit that breathes around us, where the lessons of instruction come fresh from the oracles of heaven.

But we are not required to seek in vain. The thirstings of the soul receive their appropriate gratification; the true wants of our nature are abundantly supplied, and the earnest labor of the mind is followed by a rich reward. Let us seek, and along our path shall spring up the objects of our desire;—with each advancing step shall new beauties rise, and the rewards of our search be richly found. Let the philosopher seek, and lo! the teachings of wisdom shall steal upon his soul; he shall read the mystery of the distant stars, and find in all the objects of earth the treasures of unmeasured knowledge. Let the skeptic seek, and he shall see the presence of the Deity in all his works—shall feel the breathings of his spirit in the moving winds, and behold in all the expanded universe the tokens of his creating power. Thus in the constant bestowment of the reward, we find a continual encouragement to seek; ever attaining a higher wisdom, a nobler virtue, and a more spotless purity—finding treasures no time nor change may dim, which decay not with the

fading riches of the world, and which shall shed on the freed spirit a divine lustre and a celestial joy.

B. F. A.

As intimated in a previous number, a member of the "Fox Family" is spending a short time with the families of the editors. In the presence of this medium, several interesting manifestations have been made, and we are permitted to anticipate that communications will soon be given to be published in the Messenger. Happy indeed should we be that we are blessed with the presence and can listen to the heavenly teachings of angelic spirits, that linger around our earthly path-way.

B. F. A.

Our readers must again excuse the absence of the well-known initials, "A. M." The health of Mr. Munn, though slowly improving, does not yet admit of the mental effort required in the preparation of articles for the press.

B. F. A.

Poetry.

SONG OF THE CHALDEAN SAGE.

FROM "TIME AND THE AGES." *

BY FANNY GREEN.

Stars of midnight, do ye see
Through this human mystery?
Have ye seen, and will ye show,
Whence we come, and where we go?

Can the work of Death be wrought
On the free and living Thought,
That from sensual bondage springs,
Soaring as on eagle wings?

Is there any power to bind
Fetters on the chainless Mind?
Is the spirit only breath?
Can ye tell us *what is death*?

Year by year, and day by day,
Generations pass away;
Were they only made to be
Tortured by their mystery?

Better far to float and sing
On a bird, or insect wing,
Than to live, and feel, and think,
Then—to voiceless nothing sink!

Have your rays e'er passed the screen
That enveileth the unseen?
Tell us—tell us! if ye know,
Whence we come, and where we go!

*An unpublished Poem, from which we shall be permitted to make frequent extracts.

THE RESOLVE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,

BY J. S. FRELIGH.

Resolv'd henceforth a war to wage against the "sons of strife,"
The moral evils that oppose the happiness of life;
Like bandits they beset my path, and with malignant power,
They watch to rob me of my peace each dark, unguarded hour.
The passions urge me various ways, by many arts and
The appetites to win, employ all sweet, seductive
And when at some weak point or hour, a victory
They send remorse to taunt me with my weaker
Come, every Virtue, to my aid—obey my spirit
And guard the empire of my mind,—it shall not

St. Louis, Sept. 8, 1850.

Miscellaneous Department.

MEMNON, OR HUMAN WISDOM.

In ancient times, Memnon conceived the project of being perfectly wise. There are few men into whose brains this madness has not occasionally entered. Memnon thought to himself, that "to be perfectly wise, and consequently happy, we have only to refrain from yielding to the passions; and certainly nothing is easier. In the first place, I must never fall in love with a woman; for, on beholding a beauty, I shall say to myself, 'those cheeks will one day be wrinkled, those bright eyes will grow dim, and that beautiful hair will be gone.' I have only, therefore, to look on her now with the same eyes that I shall then behold her, and there is no fear that her head will ever turn mine. Secondly, I shall always keep sober; vain will be the temptations of delicious wines. I shall present to myself the consequences of excess—sickness and remorse. I shall eat merely to satisfy the demands of hunger. My health will always be good and my ideas clear. All this is so easy, that in fact there is no merit in accomplishing it. Then," said Memnon, "I must think a little about my worldly goods. My desires are moderate. My property is safely lodged in the hands of the receiver-general of the finances of Nineveh. I have enough for independence. I shall never be under the cruel necessity of paying court to any man. I shall envy no one, and shall not be conspicuous enough to excite the jealousy of others. I have friends, and shall keep them; for they will have no subject of dispute with me. I shall never be out of humor with them, nor they with me."

Having thus arranged his little plans, Memnon looked out of the window. He observed two females walking under the plantain trees near his house. One of them was old, and the other young and pretty, though seemingly plunged in grief. She wept, and her deep grief made her doubly interesting. Our sage was moved, not by the beauty of the woman—for he had too much confidence in his new resolutions to indulge in such a weakness—but by her deep affliction. He descended, and accosted the young Ninevite, intending to console her with his wisdom. The beautiful girl related to him, in the most simple and artless manner, the wrongs she had suffered at the hands of an old uncle. She recounted the arts he had practised to obtain possession of her property; and she explained, without reserve, all her apprehensions from his tyranny. "You appear," said she, "to be a man of such excellent judgment, that if you will have the kindness to come to my house and examine my affairs, I feel sure that you will be able to extricate me from the cruel and embarrassing dilemma in which I have been placed."

Memnon did not hesitate to follow her, as he felt anxious to enter into a particular examination of her situation, and to give her his best and wisest counsel.

The lady conducted him to her house, led him into a perfumed chamber, handed him to a sofa, and seated herself opposite to him. In speaking to him, her downcast eyes were suffused with tears; and if she happened to raise them, they were sure to encounter Memnon's. Her language was marked by a softness, which increased as their mutual glances met. Memnon took a great interest in her affairs, and he began to feel the most lively desire to confer a kindness on one so fascinating and so unhappy.

While they were in this situation, the uncle came in. He was armed from head to foot, and he commenced his conversation by threatening Memnon and his niece on the spot. After a short time he calmed down and promised to forgive them, if they would pay him a large sum of money. Memnon gave him what he asked, and he felt happy enough in getting out of the situation.

When he returned to his house in shame and despair. He told his most intimate friends, inviting him to sit at home, considered he, "my mind is now at home," with my sad adventure; I had repast with my friends. I shall forget the follies of the morn-

He went to the appointed place. His friends observed his dejection, and at their request he drank a little wine to dissipate his grief. A little wine, taken moderately, is a balm both for mind and body. Thus Memnon satisfied his conscience, and he continued sipping until the liquor overpowered his reason. After the meal, play was proposed. He joined in the amusement, and lost all the money he had about him, and four times as much more, for which he gave his word of honor. A dispute arose, the parties became warm, and one of Memnon's companions threw a glass at his head, and put out one of his eyes. The sage was in this state carried home.

When his senses were restored, he sent his servant to the officer before mentioned, who had his estate, for funds. He was told that the functionary had become a poor man, ruining thereby a hundred families. Memnon proceeded, in a rage, to the court, with a plaster over his eye, to demand justice of the king. He kissed the ground three times, and told his story. His gracious majesty received it very favorably, and ordering him to relate it to one of his satraps, took no further notice of him.

The satrap said to him haughtily, and with a bitter smile, "You are indeed an insolent fellow, to address the king instead of me; and it is really a pretty piece of business, to demand justice against an honest man, whom I honor with my confidence, and who is the nephew of the chambermaid of my mistress. Abandon this matter, my friend, if you wish to preserve your remaining eye."

Thus Memnon, having in the morning made a vow against love, the seductions of the table, gambling, quarrels, and, above all, the courting the great, had, before night, been deceived and robbed by a beautiful woman, had been inebriated, lost his money at play, had been engaged in a quarrel, deprived of an eye, and was a baffled suitor to power.

On returning home, he found the officers of justice stripping it of its furniture, for the benefit of his creditors. He laid down under a plantain tree, and the first object he beheld was his beautiful female friend, walking with her dear uncle. They looked upon Memnon, and burst into a loud laugh. Night came. Memnon lay upon some straw in front of his former residence. A fever seized him, and in a delirium, he imagined a celestial appeared to him.

"Who art thou?" said Memnon.

"The good genius of thy family," he answered.

"Then give me back my health, my wealth, my wisdom." And then he told him how in one day he had lost them all.

"These are adventures which never occur in the world which we inhabit," replied the spirit.

"And what world do you inhabit?" inquired the afflicted man.

"Have you no female sharpers who deceive a poor man, no very particular friends who win his money, no satraps who mock while they refuse justice?"

"No," said the guardian angel, "nothing of all that. We are never deceived by women, because we have none. We never suffer repletion from meat or wine, because we never eat. We have no treasurers, because we have neither gold nor silver; and satraps never do us injustice, because we are all equal."

Memnon then said to him, "How do you pass your time?"

"In watching," was the answer, "over the other globes that are entrusted to us, and I have now come to console you."

"Alas!" ejaculated the unhappy man, "why did you not come last night, to prevent me from committing so many foolish acts?"

"Because, added the immortal visitant, "I was near your brother, who is more to be pited than you. The king of the Indies has deprived him of both his eyes, for a small indiscretion, and he is now in a dungeon and in irons."

"It is really a fine matter," continued Memnon, "to have a supernatural power protecting one's family, and of two brothers in it, one is notwithstanding deprived of an eye, and the other of both—one sleeps on straw, and the other in prison."

"Your lot will change, replied the other. "It is true, you will always be a one-eyed man, but you will be happy enough,

provided you never entertain the foolish project of being perfectly wise."

"Is it then a thing impossible to be attained?" sighed Memnon.

"As impossible," replied the instructor of immortals, "as to be perfectly skilful, strong, powerful, or happy."

The sick man then experienced a return of sense, and resolved, if he should be restored to health, to do the best he could in all things, and, by a rational vigilance over his inclinations to folly, aim at a gradual improvement in all his habits and propensities.

Genius and Taste.

Genius receives assistance from all the intellectual powers, but it is, however, to be carefully distinguished from them. We often meet with works of real genius, abounding with errors; the defect then is not in genius, but in the assisting powers. Taste has been called *passive genius*. It is necessary to direct the wild sallies of imagination, and to regulate the course of the inventive mind. Taste is more generally bestowed on mankind than genius, and is dependent on cultivation and rules. Genius, though always incorrect without study and investigation, still overcomes every difficulty, and penetrates through the thickest and most hidden recesses. It stoops not to the smaller niceties of taste, but, heedless of them, pours along its irresistible course. An excellent taste may exist with little invention; but invention is the distinguishing mark of genius. Taste is improved by the comparison of the different grades of sublimity and beauty. Genius, disdaining any invitation, strikes out a path for itself wild and hazardous, where foot has never trodden. The greatest incorrectness is frequently connected with genius; numerous errors spring up in the most fruitful mind. The rich soil which gave birth to the oak, who waves his head in the tempest, also produces weeds and sickly flowers. The slightest impulse is a times sufficient to rouse the full strength of genius; a spark communicated excites the most terrible explosion. The greatest river proceeds from the smallest fountain, and rolls his billows with the voice of the ocean.

ANAXAGORAS, the Clazomenian philosopher and preceptor of Socrates, being asked for what purpose he conceived he had come into the world, answered, "To see sun, moon, and stars!" The same philosopher, being utterly negligent regarding the politics of his town of Clazomene, was twitted for his indifference on that subject by some one of his more zealous fellow-citizens, who asked him whether he entertained no concern for his native country? "For my country," replied the sage, "I have always a great concern; my native city"—pointing to the heavens—"is perpetually the subject of my thoughts!"

CHILLO, the sage of Sparta, inquired of Æsop what was Jupiter's employment—what was his regular daily business in the skies? "To humble those that are elevated, and elevate those that are humble!" said the fabulist.

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