

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 SPIRITUAL SPHERES.

FROM "NATURE'S DIVINE REVELATIONS,"

BY A. J. DAVIS.

Thoughts that are associated with the process of dying, and with the state of death, are to some minds dark, doubtful, cheerless, and disconsolating; while to others death seems a welcome state, productive of peace, quietness, blessing and elevation. It is in a degree terrifying to all, and to many it seems of all things the most to be dreaded and shunned. It is generally feared by the brave and the timid, the wise and the foolish, the old and the young. It is to all a fearful process, rendered much more so by the prospect of a cold and unrelenting grave! This, I perceive, is in consequence of wrongly apprehending the process of dying, and of not knowing the ineffable beauties that surround the living man when it escapes the outer form.

As soon as the human organization is perfected in its form, size, and general developments, and as soon as the period has arrived when the spirit exercises its full control over the body, the process of transformation commences. The change is imperceptible, yet it is incessant and progressive. The body is not dying for a few hours only, but for many years—during which time the faculties and powers of the inner being gradually release their proprietorship over the form, and the soul continues its aspirations towards the higher spheres.

When the form is yet a child, it manifests all the angular, eccentric, and irregular traits of character, inclinations and movements. When childhood advances to youth, the eccentricity gives way to more uniformity, and then is displayed the circular, in every possible modification of that form. When youth ascends to manhood, the perfect circular and spiral make their appearance, and are uniformly displayed in the inclinations and characteristics of that progressed stage of development. At this period the process of dying, or transformation commences. The spirit is continually developing and expanding its faculties, and putting them forth as *feelers* into the higher spheres. The tendencies of the spirit are no more descending, but ascending, and that, too, to an immensity beyond the power of language to express, or the most exalted intellect to comprehend.

And as manhood progresses to old age, the body gradually becomes incapable of performing the office required by the spirit. Hence, when people are aged, their faculties seem buried beneath the worn-out and useless materials of the body. They appear weak in intellect, imbecile, and unconsociable to all around them that is youthful, blooming, and seemingly perfected. One faculty after another withdraws from the material form, and their energy, brilliancy, and susceptibility, seem to decline. The body, finally, is almost disconnected from the spirit which gives it animation; and then the body is a dweller in the rudimental sphere, and the spirit is an inhabitant of the inner life, or the spiritual world. And when the moment of dissolution occurs, the *sensation*, or clothing medium of the body, is attracted and absorbed by the spirit, of which it then becomes the *material form*. At this instant the body manifests faint and almost imperceptible movements, as if it were grasping for the life which had fled; and these are contortions of the countenance, spasmodic contractions of the muscles, and seeming efforts of the whole frame to regain its animating soul.

Such are the visible appearances connected with the process of death. But these are deceptive: for the process occurring in the *interior* is far more beautiful than it is possible to describe. When the body contracts its muscles and apparently manifests the most agonizing and writhing efforts, it is merely an open

indication of joy unspeakable in the inner being, and of *ecstasy* unknown to all but itself. When the countenance is contorted, pain is not experienced; but such is an expression of *ineffable* delight. And when the body gives forth its last possession, a smile is impressed on the countenance, which of itself is an index of the brightness and resplendent beauty that pervade the spirit's home. In the last moments of outer life the spiritual perceptions are greatly expanded and illuminated, and the spirit is thus rendered competent to behold the immense possessions of its second habitation.

It is given me to know these truths by daily experiencing them, and having them verified in the frequent transitions that occur within my being, from the outer to the inner world, or from the lower to the higher spheres. I speak, therefore, from personal experience, which is knowledge fully confirmed by the unvarying sensations and phenomena that occur.

The butterfly escapes its gross and rudimental body, and wings its way to the sunny bower, and is sensible of its new existence. The drop of water that reposes on the earth is rendered invisible by the absorbing invitations of the sun, and ascends to associate with, and repose in, the bosom of the atmosphere. The day that is known by its warmth and illumination, dispenses its blessings to the forms of earth, and sinks into repose in the bosom of the night. Night is, then, an index of a new day, which is first cradled in the horizon, and afterward perfected in its noontide light, beauty and animation. The flower, being unfolded from the interior by virtue of its own essence and the sun, is variegated in every possible manner, and thus becomes a representative of light and beauty; but having attained its perfection, it soon begins to change its form, its color, and its beauty of external being. Its fragrance goes forth and pervades all congenial and suitable forms, and its beauty is indelibly impressed upon the memory of its beholder and admirer, when the flower itself is no more. The foliage, tinted with the breath of winter, no longer retains its outward beauty: but this is an index of new life and animation, which is perfectly exemplified in the return of foliage in the youthful season. As it is with these, so it is with the spirit. The body dies on the outer, or rather changes its mode of existence, while the spirit ascends to a higher habitation, suited to its nature and requirements. And as it is with these, so it is with me, and the transitions that I continually experience.

The transition of my being from the outer to the inner world is produced by the action of forces contained in another body, upon the similar forces contained in my own material form. The process is that of destroying the sensation of the outer, or rather of changing it to the sensation of the spirit—at which time the medium that connects my body with another is sustained by a mingling of the forces of the two bodies, while the actual sensation leaves the body and becomes the Form of my spirit. This Form, then, is the body which I possess while occupying higher positions in material existence. Inasmuch, then, as the body is thus deserted, I am enabled, by causes unrelated, to behold the possessions of the Second Sphere, and to commune with the knowledge there existing, together with that of earth. This elevation assists me to penetrate with spiritual perception the whole arcana of the various earths in the Universe.

Thus I am constantly experiencing a transition from the outer to the inner sphere of thought, existence and investigation. This change will be experienced by all, though the means by which it will be accomplished may seem in some instances painful, terrifying, and disconsolating. Death, or the transition so termed, is, however, of all things, the most to be admired, and its prospect is the first thing to be cherished and appreciated.

In these relations the inhabitants of the earth may repose confidence; and they should meanwhile strive to have all the

faculties and powers of the spirit so developed as to be able to perceive and appreciate the grandeur of that superior existence to which all must inevitably ascend.

I now behold the forms of earth and the bodies of men, including my own, in a light and with a degree of perception never before presented. I discover that I can only see the forms by judging what and where they are, by the light of the spirit: for the outer body is beyond my perception, and I only see well-constituted and living spirits. By possessing this perception, I am enabled to commune with all the possessions of this Second Sphere, and the extended fields and living habitations of this elevated existence.

There are to be observed three specific degrees of form and development: the young and unmaturing; the advanced stages of these up to the mediatorial degree of manhood; and the highest of them all, which is the perfect form and most highly developed of all the spirits there existing.

I perceive that whenever an *infant* dies on any of the earths, the germ or undeveloped body of its spirit becomes deposited in this Sphere, and is fully unfolded in intellect, and highly enlightened concerning all of its own existence and prior situation. The infant that has had life and dies in infancy, is, I perceive, in this Sphere, fully developed and perfected. So it is with all un-informed spirits who escape the body on any earth: for each is here educated in the truths and beauties of the whole existence. So it is also with the intelligent and highly cultivated; for they are here more advanced, and occupy a position more elevated and refined.

Moreover, I discover three distinct *societies* or associations of men and females, each occupying a position determined by their degree of cultivation, sympathy for one another, and power of approaching each other's sphere of knowledge and attainment. And what is well to relate is, that each society is encompassed by a peculiar sphere or atmosphere, which is an exhalation from the specific quality of their interior or spiritual characters. Every spirit has a peculiar sphere of its own, and also a general one in which it can with pleasure exist. And spirits know and associate with each other according to the quality of the sphere which is exhaled from their interiors. They associate only as spheres are agreeable, and as they are capable of approaching each other with pleasure.

So it is also with mankind on earth.—They dwell in each other's society only as they can coalesce, and approach each other with pleasure. So also are existing on earth the three specific degrees of development, which are youth, manhood, and mature age. But they are in a rudimental condition, and not situated in order as they are in the Second Sphere.

I perceive that spirits approach each other according to the relative degrees of brilliancy which surrounds and encompasses their forms. Thus association is determined and made perfect by the law of congeniality and affinity, or affection. They have an affection for one another in proportion to the similarity in the degrees of love and purity to which they have attained. Thus are the three states or societies established.

In the *first* society are an immense number of infant and un-cultivated spirits, which are in various degrees of advancement and cultivation, according as such have proceeded from the earth. In the second group, or society, are those who have become highly instructed in the principles and truths of the Divine Mind. And into this society all who die on earth with minds properly unfolded, are immersed, because here they can associate agreeably. In the *third* society I discover spirits of the most enlightened character. The most of them proceed from the planets Jupiter and Saturn, and also from planets in other solar systems. This society is so highly illuminated with wisdom, that it is almost impossible for the spirits of the lower societies to approach it. If they make an effort to enter their midst, this is immediately overcome by the strong repulsion arising from the non-affinity existing between them and their respective spheres.

The atmosphere that flows from and encompasses and protects the first society, is of a mingled and rather unilluminated appearance. Its brilliancy is rather faint in comparison to that of those above it. It appears gloomy, dark, and rather uncon-

genial, because it is an emanation from uncultivated intellects. Yet there is a purity—an exceeding purity among them, viewed comparatively with that existing on earth.

The *second* society is enveloped with an atmosphere of far more congenial variations, presenting a resplendent brilliancy which indicates purity and elevation. It appears like the mingling of many colors, such as are not known on earth. And these are all so perfectly conjoined, and are blended together in such harmony, that the whole *aroma* is of itself a representation of purity and refinement. Yet it is a sphere emanating from the whole body of the society, indicating the wisdom of the spirits composing it. Their wisdom consists in a knowledge of truths and principles concerning material and rudimental things; and in them they are highly enlightened. And the inconceivable variety of colors surrounding them arises from their dissimilar stages of intellectual advancement. Yet they are all in the same plane of wisdom, and thus form one society, enveloped by this beautiful and refined atmosphere.

The *third* society is also clothed with an aerial garment, which is a perfect representation of the character and perfection of their interiors. I behold in it all colors, and a variety of reflections proceeding from the subordinate societies; and these reflections render their spiritual emanation so very beautiful that language is inadequate to describe it.

Those of the *first* society are in the plane of natural thought; that is, they are just emerging from the instructions and impressions of earth in the wisdom of the higher societies.

The *second* society is in the plane or sphere of *causes*; that is, they are just emerging from a superior knowledge of visible effects presented on earth, to a perception of the interior causes of them: and their wisdom extends to the lowest and first cause of all material things. Therefore they have a knowledge of all interior causes, essences, and their modes of external manifestation: but they are not in the possession of superior wisdom concerning the *uses* for which causes and effects were instituted.

The *third* society is in the plane of *effects*; and those composing it have a perception of all ultimate design, and of the universal adaptation of things to each other. Their minds are exceedingly luminous. With their powers of penetration, the externals of things are laid open, and they perceive only the character and quality of the interior. Their vision extends to every recess of their own habitation, and their knowledge comprehends all subordinate material existences. They have a most unlimited presentation of all created things below their elevated position; and their wisdom is light, and love, and brilliancy, and even ecstasy, to a degree that transcends description. With their unfolded spiritual powers, they behold the vast landscapes of the spirit-home, too extensive to be comprehended by men on earth, and too beautiful to be appreciated or enjoyed by them.

The third society are not only in a state of emergence from the plane of causes to that of effects, but also from their sphere to the third world of human existence.

And what is well to relate is, that notwithstanding the dissimilitude that exists between the three societies, there is a perfect unity among them, and a mutual dependence one upon another; and there is a continual aspiring affection that gyrates from the infant intellect to the high and superior wisdom of the third society. There is a unity of action, an agreeableness of situation, and a propriety of position, which causes them all to live for another, like a brotherhood.

And, moreover, it is profitable to remark that each society or group is well situated, well conditioned, and well cultivated, in reference to the specific state which each is compelled to sustain. The situations are perfect in proportion to the degree of wisdom and refinement to which each has attained. The lowest appears inferior in comparison to the higher and superior; though even the first, to man on earth, would appear to be in a high state of perfection. By the varieties of condition and development, the societies are made perfect. They are thus as one brotherhood, joined by mutual affections and actions, and perpetuated in goodness by the benign and gentle influences that proceed from the highest society to the lower ones, and from these to it again.

The societies in the Second Sphere are very much to be admired, because of the perfect harmony which pervades them, and the perfect melody and concert of rudimental and perfected knowledge they manifest. In a corresponding manner does there exist a concert of action, a unity of feeling, and a universal love, one for another.

The inhabitants do not converse *vocally*, but immerse their thoughts into one another by radiating them upon the countenance. And I perceive that thought enters the spirit by a process of *breathing*, or rather it is introduced by influx according to the desires of those conversing. They perceive thought by and through the eyes, inasmuch as *these*, like the general countenance, are an index to the quality and workings of the interior. They seemingly *hear* each other converse; but that is owing to a previous knowledge of sound by which words are distinguished and their meaning apprehended.

They perceive things without them by their sense of *vision*; but they are conscious that it is the *reflection* which they perceive, and not the *substance*. Therefore they exercise *judgment* concerning all they perceive—not judging from sensuous observation, but from the character of the substance observed.

I also discover that spirits in this Sphere approach and associate with each other according to mutual affinity subsisting between them, even as do the inhabitants of earth; but the difference is in the *mode* of associating. Men on earth associate with one another by the guidance of their gross and rudimental senses, as these are productive of inclination and desire. Instead of this, men associate in this higher Sphere by a knowledge of each other's inherent purity, and the state of each other's affections.

Moreover, I perceive that the *former experience* of every person, both male and female, is treasured up in the memory, from which they can extract representations of that which they previously knew or experienced. Every thing appears indelibly impressed upon the memory, and is mirrored forth with a vividness in proportion to the strength of the impression. Therefore whatever thought enters the human mind on earth, becomes a resident in the memory, and is here brought forth with the appearance of newness that makes it both interesting and instructive. Those things experienced which are disagreeable to the memory, are deposited in its depths and concealed from the view of any other being, by the prevalence of those events and experiences which it pleases the mind to remember, and which the mind takes delight in contemplating. Hence it is proper for all men on earth to do and think only that which pleases them most (according to wisdom), and which they would most earnestly desire to remember; and *not* to do those things, or encourage those thoughts, which are opposed to the superior delights of the mind. If this cannot be done in the present social and mental condition of the world, then it is proper to *change* those conditions, so that even *this* great good and pleasure may be obtained.

When spirits conversing appeal to each other's memory, the memory mirrors forth a perfect representation of the thing remembered, which is perceived and understood by the conversing spirit. I behold beautiful representations in the memory of those in the higher societies. These representations are of the most exquisite character, because they proceed from the memory of highly enlightened intellects; and they are therefore delightful, inviting and instructive.

I perceive that every thing in this Sphere is created and manifested only by and through the exercise and direction of *Wisdom*. Hence the perfect order and uniformity that subsist, and the inexpressible happiness that flows as a consequence from such exquisite harmony and unity of action. Every thing is appreciated as a blessing conferred upon them by the light and life of Divine Love, and the order and form of Divine Wisdom.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Music.

There are chords in Nature which Man may reach. These vibrate with a lofty harmony at his touch, but only the span of *DERRY* can reach the octave, and waken the thunder-tones of that sublime diapason, which shakes the infinite scale of the universe.

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THE POWERS OF THE SOUL.

From the many startling and wonderful phenomena connected with the human soul, we may discover in this the presence of those latent powers, which, though they are being gradually developed, are yet imperfectly understood. Science with all its penetrating researches, has been unable to disclose the many mysteries which still linger around the nature and action of our spiritual being. Perhaps the most remarkable instances illustrating the powers of the soul, are those in which a person is able to make himself visible at a distant place, the spirit being still connected with the body. As to the peculiar manner in which this is accomplished, we can only indulge in speculation, without obtaining any positive knowledge; but it seems probable that the soul, when measurably withdrawn from the material organism and placed in rapport with another individual, may so operate upon the mind as to produce the impression referred to above. Jung Stilling, in a work on Pneumatology, relates an instance of this nature which we here introduce.

"About sixty or seventy years ago, a man of piety and integrity arrived in Germany from Philadelphia, in North America, to visit his poor old parents, and with his well-earned wealth to place them beyond the reach of care. He went out to America whilst he was still young, and had succeeded so far as to become overlooker of various mills on the Delaware river, in which situation he had honorably laid up a considerable sum. This respectable individual related to one of my friends, upon whose veracity I can depend, the following wonderful tale.

In the neighborhood of Philadelphia, not far from the mills above mentioned, there dwelt a solitary man in a lonely house. He was very benevolent, but extremely retired, and reserved, and strange things were told of him, amongst which was his being able to tell things that were unknown to any one else. Now it happened that the captain of a vessel belonging to Philadelphia was about to sail to Africa and Europe. He promised his wife that he would return again in a certain time, and also that he would write to her frequently. She waited long, but no letters arrived; the time appointed passed over, but her beloved husband did not return. She was now deeply distressed, and knew not where to look for counsel or consolation. At length a friend advised her for once to go to the pious solitary and tell him her griefs. The woman followed his advice and went to him. After she had told him all her troubles, he desired her to wait awhile there, until he returned and brought her an answer. She sat down to wait, and the man opening a door went into his closet. But the woman thinking he stayed a long time, rose up, went to a window in the door, lifted up the little curtain, and looking in, saw him lying on the couch or sofa like a corpse: she then immediately went back to her place. At length he came and told her that her husband was in London, in a coffee-house which he named, and that he would return very soon: he then told her also the reason why he had been unable to write. The woman went home pretty much at ease.

What the solitary had told her was minutely fulfilled: her husband returned, and the reason of his delay and his not writing were just the same as the man had stated. The woman was now curious to know what would be the result, if she visited the friendly solitary in company with her husband. The visit was arranged, but when the captain saw the man, he was struck with amazement; he afterward told his wife that he had seen this very man on such a day (it was the very day that the woman had been with him), in a coffee house in London; and that he had told him that his wife was much distressed about him; and that he had then stated the reason why his return was delayed, and of his not writing, and that he would shortly come back, on which he had lost sight of the man among the company."

The foregoing singular tale may be regarded by many as an absurd and fanciful superstition; but when it is considered that the world is replete with mystery, and that developments are being constantly made of which man had never dreamed before, even this should not be too hastily rejected.

R. F. A.

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

APOLLOS MUNN AND R. P. AMBLER, EDITORS.

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A FRIENDLY GREETING.

After many days of physical prostration and distress, occasioned by obstinate pulmonary difficulties, which seriously threatened to dissolve the intimate relationship between my spirit and its frail, enfeebled casket, I am gradually regaining strength, and trust I shall soon be able to commune weekly with the readers of the Messenger. The symptoms of my disease have been of the most aggravated and alarming character, and to the minds of nearly all surrounding friends, they pointed unmistakably to a speedy dissolution; and here I feel impressed to say, that had I been left during my recent illness to the kindest ministrations of earthly wisdom *alone*, it is more than probable that I should have been, ere this, a resident of a brighter sphere. It required something deeper than the skill of physicians to reach my disease, arrest its progress, and thus enable my spirit to retain its hold upon the flesh. The wisdom of the spiritual sphere, which is the ultimate of this, could, and did accomplish that which earthly wisdom had attempted in vain. It happened that one of the young ladies of the Fox family was spending a few days at our house, when my disease was evidently approaching an important crisis, and through her, the spirit of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN spelled out, by the Alphabet, the following message to my family—"Have courage! I have examined his case analytically. He will be helped. His mission in the body is not yet ended—he has duties to perform, and he shall be assisted by spirits."

The next morning, after carefully describing the nature and proximate causes of my difficulties, pointing out very clearly the condition of my lungs, the particular spot whence the hemorrhage proceeded, and the parts diseased, he proceeded to give directions, which, if followed, he said would prolong my stay in the body, and give me strength and comparative freedom from pain. These directions, which indicate consummate science, are, according to my highest intuitions, exactly adapted to the end sought to be attained. The first effect was manifested in a speedy change in the diagnosis of the disease; and from the day I first commenced following the prescription of my spiritual physician, I have been slowly but surely improving in health.

Having said thus much concerning the particulars of my own case, which may not be wholly uninteresting to the reader, I shall doubtless be excused for the expression of a few thoughts on the harmonizing and tranquilizing influence of disease. It has been made clearly manifest by the results of my own experience, that disease operates as a refining and harmonizing process upon the mind, by which it prepares the spirit for the brighter scenes of the more refined sphere which constitutes its eternal home. When the body, racked and enfeebled by pain, lies helpless and almost lifeless upon the couch, the spirit, subdued and purified by the ordeal, gradually relaxes its hold upon the interests and pleasures of the world, gently breathes forth forgiveness of faults and love to all, and then, catching the heavenly influence which flows from congenial spirits who have passed "the dark valley," it becomes ready to enter, with angelic purity, that celestial gate—that "TRIUMPHAL ARCH" which opens to the enraptured vision, the "many mansions" prepared by the impartial Father of all spirits, as the eternal and happy abode of His children. Such is the natural effect of disease. It calms the restless and stormy bosom—teaches man his own weakness and dependence—expands his fraternal love, and draws him magnetically toward his God. How delightful the fact! The worst evils which the errors of society have fostered among themselves, including in the dark category, poverty, starvation, disease, pain, and death, are all made subservient to the refinement of the spirit, the expansion of its powers, and the ultimate enlargement of its happiness! These beautiful truths, so strikingly illustra-

tive of the ineffable wisdom and affectionate providence of God, should not be presented to us in vain. They should serve to chasten and purify the heart, and prepare us for still further discoveries of the infinite goodness of the Creator.

It is true that Infinite Wisdom has provided an ultimate redemption for all our follies—all our faults—so far as the great principles of immortality and happiness are concerned—that is, it has provided that all who leave this sphere of existence, shall be at once surrounded by higher and holier influences, which shall draw the soul upward with magnetic power in the direction of its Author.

The pursuit of sensual and selfish objects, and the frequent violations of the laws of nature, while in the corporeal body, will indeed tend to dwarf the powers of the spirit, prevent its growth in knowledge, and thus diminish, to a certain degree, its faculty of receiving and appreciating the higher joys of the future state. While it is rendered certain that every spirit will receive all the happiness it is capable of appreciating, after it becomes a dweller in the inner temple, free from the flesh, it is also clear that spirits differ widely in their respective degrees of expansion and capacity. The experience of almost every thinking individual, teaches that the spirit may be cultivated as a flower from the garden of immortality. If our leading object in life is the acquisition of wealth, all other interests are made subservient, and we succeed. We become skilled in speculation, and, as if possessing the magical power given by one of the fabled gods to Midas, we convert all we touch into gold. But in thus cultivating the money-getting faculty, we are neglecting the higher qualities of the spirit, which are perhaps suffered to slumber in forgetfulness, until sickness reminds us that it is "appointed unto man once to die." Then, the thought occurs to us, as our minds wander away to the future, that our brightest faculties here, our exquisite skill in money-getting, will all be useless hereafter. Gold and silver are too material to form the currency of the spirit-world; and all its residents are supplied with every good and perfect gift, without money or price, from the free treasury of Heaven.

I intended this article, dear reader, as a friendly greeting, and not as a labored essay. You will excuse its rambling style, and permit me to remark in closing, that it is a matter of the highest consequence to each and all of us, that we refine and expand our minds by the study of nature, her laws, and her harmony; by cultivating love and unity among our brothers; and above all, by exhibiting in our lives that purity, peacefulness, love, and practical holiness, which will secure a heaven within ourselves, and which will whisper gently in our hearts, the pleasing hope that the world may be even *better* for our having lived in it.

A. M.

The Old Error and the New Truth.

The old Error dies, and is entombed beneath the shrine where it was worshiped; while the great TRUTH struggles into organic life, and is immortal in all visible forms. It is the light of the new discovery in Science; it is embodied in those works of Art which constitute the deathless memorials of Genius; it clothes itself with the fiery vapor exhaled from metallic lungs, and thunders along its iron track, breaking the sepulchral slumbers of eastern nations, and scaring the eaglets from the rocky cliffs of the distant west. All over the civilized world the great thought circulates through iron nerves; it is spoken by invisible electric tongues, and vibrates on every smitten fibre of a million hearts.

If the old Error was feeble and hopeless in its death, the new Truth is mighty in its birth, and immortal in its aspirations. The shadows of the ancient Night vanish like the ghosts of departed hours, and the hosts of Ignorance are paralyzed at its approach; the things that remain become the auxiliaries of its progress, and the newly-discovered motors are chained to its triumphal car. Truth claims the supremacy by a right divine. Even the Lightning on his cloudy path is made subservient, and becomes the terrible war-house on which immortal Thought—in a march sublime—rides to a bloodless victory.

S. B. B.



THE MINISTRY OF FEAR.

Among the numerous influences which have tended to the observance of religious forms and practices, we shall find none more prominent than a selfish anxiety and apprehension of mind. Men have been impelled by fear, rather than love — have been forced, rather than drawn, to seek the altars of religion. In the early stages of human progress, fear became naturally one of the chief elements of devotional feeling, and this has since been carefully fostered by theological teachers, who have conceived this to be the most effectual means of inducing obedience to their authority. The influence of this principle has thus extensively prevailed among nearly all classes of individuals. The savage, in the wildness of his forest-home, looks around him on the tokens of infinite power; he hears the voice of the rolling thunder, and feels the blast of the rushing winds; and, as he thus views the commotions of nature, he thinks that the Great Spirit is angry — that the dreadful fire of his wrath is kindled, and that, to conciliate his favor and secure safety from his vengeance, he must engage in the rites of worship and devotion. So the Pagan, in his benighted state, is seemingly threatened with the anger of his gods; and as the horrors of their consuming wrath rise before him, and the fearful judgments of offended Deity are made present to his fancy, a selfish anxiety steals upon his mind, and under this influence he bows before the ponderous car, and casts his child beneath the rolling tide. But it is not only in the lands of heathen darkness that we may see the manifestations of this spirit; — we may find it even in the more enlightened abode of gospel principles. Behold, the Christian looks upon his God as a being of dark and malignant passion; he sees in imagination his flaming wrath bursting from the heavens on a guilty world; he sees the fires of the eternal pit rolling and heaving over ruined souls, and in his selfish anxiety to escape the direful judgments of Heaven, he engages in the services of worship, makes a solemn profession of faith, and puts on the outward semblance of piety and holiness.

But it will be proper to consider here the peculiar nature of the influence which this fearful spirit is calculated to exert. It has been supposed by many, that when the mind of an individual is so far affected by the dark visions of the future as to be moved by a sense of internal anxiety, he has evidence of a rapid advancement in his spiritual course, and is already near unto the gate of heaven. This opinion, however, so far as it regards any moral improvement in the individual, is in our view entirely incorrect. It will appear evident to the unbiased mind, that a selfish fear of being overwhelmed by divine wrath — a fear that relates only to personal interests and has no reference to the interests of humanity, must of necessity tend to cramp and narrow the sympathies of the heart, suppress the aspirations of benevolence, and check the warm flowings of love. We may go even farther than this, and affirm that this constant apprehension in regard to safety from a mere outward evil, tends to destroy the basis of all true virtue, and close up the fountains of spiritual life in the soul. He who labors under the influence of this spirit, naturally loses his regard for the interior principle, is moved by no interest in his own moral improvement, and seeks only to secure the enjoyments of outward ease. Take an illustration of this idea. An individual, having committed a flagrant crime, is exposed to the severe retributions of justice; and as the dreary gloom of the dungeon or the ghastly horrors of the scaffold rise before him, he is actuated by the impulse of a selfish fear, and seeks to avoid the penalty of the law. Now it is obvious that this individual feels none of the promptings of virtue, and experiences no true repentance in his heart, but is moved alone by a desire for mere outward safety, and is ready to adopt any course of action by which this may be secured. Thus it is, we fear, with the religionist. Repairing to the sanctuary, he has heard portrayed the terrors of eternal wrath — has seen in imagination the sword of omnipotent vengeance suspended above his head, and, in view of the terrors of divine judgment, he feels an anxiety to escape from the impending danger, and tremblingly inquires, "What must I do to be

saved?" But let us look within that man. Behold, the light of inward purity has gone out, and the well-springs of spiritual life are closed; the whole soul is bound up in the idea of escape from an outward evil, and the individual engages in external acts of piety, virtue, and religion, as a *scapegoat* to gain the joys of heaven. This, then, is the legitimate influence of the slavish fear, inspired by a false theology. It has a tendency to corrupt the purity of the soul, to destroy the elements of virtue, and substitute the outward act and the lifeless form for the indwelling spirit. Whether this fact will assist us in accounting for the corruption which has been spread abroad in the bosom of the Church, for the secret sins and iniquities which have prevailed, for the spiritual wickedness of priests who have ministered at the altars of religion, and the hypocrisy of "saints" who have stolen

"the livery of the court of heaven,
To serve the devil in,"

is a question which may be left to the judgment of the reader.

To minds accustomed to the contemplation of this subject, it is plain that the ministry of fear has been productive of little substantial benefit; that while it may have cut off some of the outer branches from the tree of vice, it has never penetrated to the roots; that while it may have stayed for a time the mighty stream of corruption, it has never purified the spring from which it flows. The world evidently needs an influence which is more powerful than that which can operate only on the grosser elements of the mind. It needs a light which shall reach down through the dark mists of vice to the heart of humanity; it needs a voice which shall stir the deep fountains of feeling, and call forth an appropriate and corresponding action; in short, it needs the *ministry of love* — the breathings of that divine principle which poured light and life over the bosom of chaos. This principle is the essential element of all progress; it seeks for an indwelling purity in the heart, and its tendency is to elevate and improve humanity. Like an invisible presence lingering over the pathway of man, it will guide his steps in the promotion of truth and virtue, banishing the dark forms of evil and corruption, and bringing to his soul the sweet harmonies of heaven.

R. P. A.

The Destiny of Man.

Man, as viewed in his present condition, seems hastening on to a bright and glorious destiny. Through the principle of progress implanted in his nature, he is rapidly advancing towards the exalted ends of his being. His course, though sometimes perverted by the influence of outward circumstances, is ever progressively onward, and no earthly obstacles can permanently change its direction. The winding stream that flows from the mountain top, may pass through varied scenes of light and shade, yet amid all its changes it is ever drawn onward to the mighty ocean. So with the course of man. We may trace it amid the changing scenes of earth; we may follow it on among the devious windings of sin and guilt; but amid all its turnings and changes, it is ever brought nearer to the boundless ocean of purity and love. Thus in the plan of divine government, man is destined to attain to the most exalted state. As the flower unfolds its petals to the light, the soul is to expand and grow beneath the beamings of divine love, until it blooms in celestial beauty. Attracted by the influence that flows from the Supreme Magnet, humanity has entered on the course of eternal progress; and the light which even now begins to gleam on the ascending pathway, forms the harbinger of its destiny.

R. P. A.

At the suggestion of some of our patrons, we commence this week the publication of extracts from "Nature's Divine Revelations," relating to the Spiritual Spheres. This subject, both from its nature and the attractive manner in which it is treated, is calculated to excite the deepest interest; and it is presumed that while many who have not previously seen the proposed extracts will be pleased and instructed, those more fortunate will not regret to see them presented in this form.

Individual Responsibility.

As all bodies are made up of parts, so humanity is composed of individuals; and as the weight or power of any body will depend on the nature of its constituent elements, so the movements of the race, as a whole, will depend on the action and influence of its different members. While, therefore, the great work of the world is apparently carried on through the agency of association and the operation of masses, it is well to remember that there is in all this a necessity for individual action, which should be deeply and universally felt. In contemplating the reformatory movements which have blessed the race, we are inclined to overrate the strength of sects and parties, and appreciate too little the unseen efforts of the individual. It is true that the ultimate result presented to our view may have been seemingly attained by a combined power; but the *means*, without which the result could not have been produced, were furnished by individual labor. Hence, in forming plans for the spiritual renovation of society, we should not forget that a responsibility rests on each separate person to act and labor. The work that is to be accomplished by an associate body, must be performed through the agency of its several members. To illustrate this idea, suppose that a large monument is to be erected by the combined labor of a certain number of men. It is evident that if each person should rely on the strength of the whole, without using his own exertions, the work would remain unfinished. The end to be accomplished, though it may require the labor of a large multitude, manifestly depends on the efforts of each separate individual. The same principle will apply also to the work of moral and spiritual reform. If we desire to promote the principles of truth, and would establish the kingdom of heaven on earth, it must be done through the medium of individual exertion. Let us not throw off the responsibility of personal effort on any associated mass, but remember that it is through our own power and energies that the work is to be accomplished. We are to build up and extend the cause of truth by the efforts which are made, and the influence exerted, in our own single capacities;—perchance by a word that is fitly spoken—by an action that proclaims the purity of the heart—by a life that exemplifies the divine principles we entertain. Let no person imagine that he alone can exert no influence on society. The moon, though far removed from earth, and pursuing its course in eternal silence, is yet enabled to cause the ebb and flow of mighty waters. Here is represented the power of even one individual, who may shed upon the world the light of a holy life.

R. P. A.

Power of Conscience.

The human being has been so constituted by the Creator, that every departure from the path of rectitude is followed by a sure and speedy retribution. Every violation of natural law—every act tending to disturb the equilibrium of the system, or destroy the harmony of the inward being, must be attended by the inevitable results of such violation. The punishment of sin is not, therefore, placed afar off in the uncertain future, but the day of judgment is always near at hand. There is a monitor established *within*, whose tones are more terrible than the scathing fire or the dungeon's gloom. It is *conscience* speaking in the soul. With a continuous and unceasing voice it whispers to the sinful. In the dawn of morning, the glare of noonday, or the silence of the midnight hour, it speaks in its fearful tones, giving no rest to the wearied soul.

Let us behold one who suffers beneath the power of this faithful monitor. The dim-burning lamps and the night-watchers of the sky give light to his deeds of sin, but lo! there is darkness in his heart. Woe, in its deepest gloom, has settled down upon him. His eye has become dim, but not with age; his locks are whitened in the spring of manhood; his brow is furrowed with consuming care, and his steps falter with the heavy burden of guilt. To him the walks of life are as a gloomy waste. Trembling and guilty he flees when no man pursues; viewless fiends with torturing malice attend his steps; each trembling leaf assumes the stern form of justice, and each sighing breeze

whispers the sentence of condemnation. Earth has no refuge where he may escape from the stings of misery. He may resort to the wildest scenes of nature; he may go where the mighty ocean lifts on high its briny waters, or where the boisterous tempests rage in their fearful power, but there is still a voice which speaks from the depths within, in the crushing, thunder-tone of woe.

Who will say, then, that conscience is not a living punishment for sin—that it is not indeed a dark judgment on the guilty! With this we need no fabled hell, no endless fires, or undying worm; for while sweet joys spring up like flowers in the pathway of the virtuous, the bitter sense of desolation and misery dwells in the very soul of the wicked.

R. P. A.

New Publication.

We have recently received a new work, entitled "Philosophy of Modern Miracles; or the relations of spiritual causes to physical effects; with especial reference to the mysterious developments at Bridgeport and elsewhere. By 'a Dweller in the Temple.'" The above is a pamphlet of forty-six pages, neatly printed, and written in the pleasing and graceful style of one whose intellectual and scientific attainments render him fully qualified for the task which is here accomplished. From a somewhat cursory examination, the work appears to be well adapted to throw light on a matter which has been hitherto involved in inscrutable mystery. Publications previously issued on the subject of spiritual manifestations, have aimed rather to present a statement of *facts*, than to unfold any *philosophy* which may serve to elucidate the phenomena. The people now seem to require a higher embodiment of thought, which shall appeal rather to the reason than to the senses, and serve to enlighten more than to confound. This want, the work before us appears to be well calculated to supply, unfolding as it does a world of ideas, whose beauty must naturally attract the inquiring mind. The whole matter of the work, which seems to have been elaborated in the realms of Reason and adorned with the richest gems of Thought, is methodically arranged, presenting a systematic course of instruction on the subject of which it treats. Next to the introduction, the author gives an analysis of several theories relating to the "rappings;" an explanation is then offered of the principles involved in these developments, after which follows an answer to the several popular objections against the theory presented; the whole concluding with an interesting account of conferences with the spirits, having reference to the nature and mode of spiritual manifestations. The following extract from the introductory Address, will doubtless meet with a response in the mind of the reader:

"A stupid assent to the prevailing modes of thought, and a blind attachment to established systems, may save a vast amount of labor, while it clearly involves the danger of yielding to ERROR the homage that is only due to the TRUTH. Some men estimate the importance of an idea as others value their wine—*by its age*. The creations of To-day—forms of beauty, instinct with life, and sense, and thought—forms quickened with vital fire—in which TRUTH is a divine incarnation—awaken no emotion but fear; while for the old ERROR—cold, passionless, and pulseless in its eternal death—they manifest an unwavering and an unreasoning devotion. But ERROR is not to be venerated for the number of its years; nor is TRUTH less worthy of respect and love, because the passing hour marks the beginning of its revealed existence."

The above work is for sale at this office. Orders are solicited from our friends generally, who may be interested in the subject of which it treats.

R. P. A.

LIFE is like a portentous cloud—fraught with thunder, storm, and rain—but religion, like the streaming rays of sunshine, will clothe it with light as with a garment, and fringe its shadowy skirts with gold.

The beauties of Nature, to the spiritual view, do not fade with her leaves, nor wither with her flowers.

Poetry.

MY SPIRIT BRIDE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,

BY E. H. LLOYD.

How sweet to feel around our forms
 Love's pure white folded arms,
 To listen to her soothing voice
 And feel her inward charms ;—
 She fills the heart with gentleness,
 She makes our step more free,
 She makes the heart as musical
 As spring-birds on the tree.

The earth grows brighter 'neath her feet,
 And blooms where'er she goes,
 Where once the barren desert was
 Now smiles the garden rose.
 My angel-one, I see her now,
 She e'er attends my soul,
 Though stars in beauty shine o'er me,
 Or waves around me roll.

I often in my pensive moods
 Sit musing of my Love,
 While twilight weaves her misty robes
 And stars look down above ;—
 I often think her loving form
 And angel soul I see,
 While fancy builds a rainbow-bridge
 That bears her feet to me.

I see her in my waking hours,—
 In all the paths I've pressed,
 And often feel her loving head
 Reclining on my breast ;—
 Her eyes are beaming on me now
 So beautiful and bright,
 Like dewy stars that sweetly glow
 And cheer the sky at night.

I know she lives and waits for me,
 And folds me to her heart,—
 That naught the spirit here unites
 The world can ever part.
 Perhaps she dwells 'mong angel groups,
 E'en then I'd not repine,
 On golden wings the hours speed by
 That bear my soul to mine.

I do not feel alone on earth,
 For I can love her now,
 And gently fold her to my breast
 And press her dewy brow ;—
 And in my darksome hours she's near,
 Is very near, I know,
 And scatters blessings on my soul,
 Like rose-buds on the snow.

~~~~~  
 Beauty can never die ! The tinted cheek  
 May lose its delicate color, and the brow  
 Reveal the furrows of unsparring time—  
 The eye forget its luster, and the voice  
 Gush forth no more in music ;—age may bow  
 The now unequalled form, and chain the step ;  
 Woe, Want, Disease, and Death, each in his turn,  
 May wreak his vengeance on the suffering clay—  
 Yet not one ray of that eternal fire  
 Which is the *life* of beauty, and its *all*,  
 Shall e'er be quenched or dimmed ! It liveth on—  
 The gift of God—eternal as himself !

## Miscellaneous Department.

## THE THREE SWANS.

A GERMAN TRADITION.

Nigh to Wimpfen, a town situated upon the Neckar, there is a lofty mountain, on the top of which appears one of those small but unfathomable lakes, which are so frequently to be met with in such situations in Germany. Popular superstition has connected the following tradition with the lake of Wimpfen.

A beautiful boy was once seated upon the shores of the lake, wreathing a coronal for himself out of the lovely flowers which grew on its banks. He was quite alone, and ever and anon he raised his blue eyes and gazed, with childish longing, across the glittering waters for a little boat, in which he might row himself about over the tranquil expanse ; but the boy beheld nothing like a boat, save a single plank of wood, which moved to and fro on the tiny waves as they rippled towards the shore, and which, though it might have afforded a slight support in swimming, could not carry him to the other side of the lake.

The boy raised his longing looks once more, and was astonished to perceive three snow-white swans, sailing proudly in the middle of the lake. At last the stately birds approached where the boy lay, who, delighted with his new companions, drew some crumbs of bread from his pocket and fed them : they seemed so tame, they looked so gentle and friendly, and came so very near to the shore, that the delighted boy thought to catch one of them ; but when he stooped down with this design, they moved gently away, and ever kept beyond his reach.

Then the boy ran towards the plank which floated on the edge of the lake, and drew it out, and then launched it again, venturing himself upon it, and pushing off with a shout of delight from the shore, when he found it supported his weight. The beautiful birds kept sailing on before him, while he rode fearlessly after them, using his hands for oars, till he reached the middle of the lake, and for the first time felt alarm on finding himself alone, and with so small support, in the middle of the waters. But the three swans kept sailing around him in gradually contracting circles, as if they wished to calm his fears ; and the gallant boy, when he beheld them so near to him, forgot his danger, and hastily stretched out his hand to grasp the nearest of the three, when, alas ! his unsteady raft yielded to the impulse, and down he sank into the deep blue waters.

When the boy recovered from a long trance, he found himself lying upon a couch in a magnificent castle, and before him stood three maidens of marvellous beauty.

"How came you hither ?" inquired one of them, taking him by the hand, with a sweet smile.

"I know not what has happened to me," replied the beautiful boy. "I only remember that I once wished to catch three lovely swans which were sailing upon the lake, and that I sank in the deep—deep waters."

The three maidens ask the boy if he is willing to reside with them in this enchanted region ; but let him know that he cannot breathe the air of the world above, if he consents to become a denizen of the fairy land beneath the waters. The boy, transported with the loveliness and kindness of the fairy sisters, freely consents to remain ; and for a while leads a happy life in this lower world, where there are palaces of surpassing grandeur, and gardens, whose fruits and flowers far exceed any thing he had ever seen or heard of before—where sweet birds fill the air with their many warblings, and the little streams murmur music as they meander through the emerald meads, and the zephyrs which play amid the hyacinthine locks, are more odorous than those of Arabia or the spicy islands of the east. At last, before twelve months have elapsed, the *maladie du pays* seizes the young villager, and he pines away in secret longings to re-visit his father's hut, and once more hear his mother's well-known voice. One day, when his father's hut, with its broad over-sheltering oak, had suddenly risen in lively colors before his fancy, and he saw his beloved mother weeping bitterly for her absent son, and all his long-forgotten companions, with their familiar faces,

standing around her, and calling his name aloud, as if partaking of her grief, he hears a clear voice singing in the distance, and on listening attentively, recognizes the following words, sung apparently by different voices :

## FIRST VOICE.

The home of my childhood, how brightly it shines  
'Mid the dreary, darkling past!  
There the sunlight of memory never declines,  
Still green is its valley—still green are its vines!  
What charms hath memory cast  
Around thy father's cot!

## SECOND VOICE.

Oh, the home of my childhood was wild and rude,  
In the depth of an Alpine solitude;  
But dearer to me, and fairer far  
Its rocks, and dells, and streamlets are,  
Than the thousand vales of the noble Rhine!  
Hast thou so dear a home?

## THIRD VOICE.

Far, far away, in the twilight gray,  
My spirit loves to roam,  
To one sweet spot, oh! never forgot!  
My childhood's home.

## FOURTH VOICE.

The eagle lent me his wing of pride,  
And away with him I flew,  
O'er many a land and ocean wide,  
To a vale my childhood knew.

When the fourth voice had died softly away in the distance, the boy, whose heart now heaves till it is like to burst with wild and uncontrollable longings to return to his father's home, hears the rush of heavy wings passing near him, and on looking up, beholds a large eagle, with a golden crown and a collar of rubies, alight near to him. At the same time he hears another voice singing, faintly and afar off, these words :

The eagle is a bird of truth  
And his wing is swift and strong.

Moved by a strong and momentary impulse, he springs to his feet and runs towards the noble bird, in the hope that it will bear him away to his own village in the world above; but perceiving that the eagle's fierce talons are fixed in a swan which lies beneath him, and which he recognizes as one of those which he had seen swimming on the lake near Wimpfen, he seizes a branch of a tree, and with it drives away the cruel eagle, and thus annihilates his own hopes of escape. No sooner has he performed this grateful action, than the three sisters appear to him, and after commending his fidelity to them, inform him that to-morrow he will behold his father and mother, and all his old companions. Accordingly, when he awakes the following morning, he finds himself lying on the shores of the well-known lake.

All was pleasure and astonishment when the long-lost boy again presented himself in his native village. His friends and companions assembled around him, and heard his wonderful story, but none believed it.

But after the first greetings were over, and the first transports of joy had subsided, the boy was seized with a secret longing to return to the unknown land; and the desire grew more vehement every day. He would now wander about the shores of the lake from sunrise till the stars appeared in the nightly heavens; but the three swans never returned, and the poor boy wept and sighed in vain for those Elysian fields, in which it had once been permitted him to wander. His cheeks now grew pale as the withered rose; his eyes became dim and languid; his bounding limbs grew more feeble every day; and all joy forsook his bosom. One evening he had dragged himself, with much difficulty, to the shore of the lake; the evening sun threw its last radiance on the waters, and he heard a sweet, silver-like voice, which seemed to rise from the blue depth beneath him, singing these verses :

Thou who hast roamed through  
The bright world below,  
What joy can thy bosom  
On earth ever know?  
Dost thou dread the blue wave?  
Thou hast tried it before:  
One plunge in its bosom,—  
Thy sorrows are o'er.

The voice had died away in the distance, but the boy now stood close on the margin of the lake, gazing intently upon it, as if his eye sought to measure its profound depth. He turned round and cast one look upon his father's cot, and he thought that he heard his mother's voice calling him through the still evening; but again the soft, silver-like voice rose up from the bosom of the placid waters, and he knew it to be the voice of one of the three fairy sisters. "Adieu, adieu, dear mother!" he cried, and with a shout of mingled joy and fear, flung himself headlong into the fathomless waters, which instantly closed around him forever.

### The Grass and the Flower.

A lovely flower stood blooming on a bush alone. It was the admiration of all, but most of itself. It unveiled its painted leaves in the sun; it glittered with the dew of morning, and breathed pleasant fragrance upon the air. Throned amid fresh green leaves, which sheltered as well as ornamented it, nothing could be more charming and graceful. Every passer-by said, "Look! what a beautiful flower!"

Beneath this pretty and delicate creation of Providence, there spread a green meadow, here swelling into gentle undulations, and here sloping till it fringed the bank of a running stream. The flower looked down on the lowly grass, and with a sneering air, and in a haughty tone, gave utterance to her thoughts :

"Behold this insolent grass, what does it so close to me? How mean! how homely! how different in appearance and destiny from me! Never does it hear the admiring murmurs which I excite. No rainbow hues streak its plain surface. It emits no fragrant odor—but remains to be trodden under foot by all who list, unvalued and unnoticed. I should like to know for what it was created."

"Ignorant and conceited flower," replied the grass, "that question might be better asked of thyself; for thou art as useless, idle, and fleeting as thou art pretty. True, the scent which rises from thy silken leaves is grateful, but where will it be to-morrow? The gleaming of thy soft colors, too, amid the verdant leaves, is agreeable; but how soon will they fade neglected on the ground! Evanescent child of vanity! I have witnessed the brief existence and death of a thousand such as thou, living unvalued, and perishing unmourning; and dost thou sneer at me because my stem is not so slender and brittle, my blades so fair as thine? Know that the wise regard me, even for my beauty, more than they do thee. I spread over the bosom of the earth a carpet of velvet. I clothe the uplifted hills in mantles of verdure. I furnish food to hundreds of animals, who derive from me the power to gratify man with the most delicious luxuries. The wind blows over me and hurts me not. The sunshine falls on me and I am yet unwithered. The snows of winter cover me, and I ready to beautify the earliest spring. Even the steps of the many who tread upon me, do not prevent my growing ever bright and cheerful; and heaven has blessed me with a color of all others the most grateful to human eyes."

The saucy flower was about to reply, when a passer-by plucked it, admired its pretty hues, and threw it away.

☞ The Books and CHART of Mr. Davis, comprising all the works on the HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY that have been published, can be had at our office, and forwarded by express or otherwise, to any part of the Union. PRICE—REVELATIONS \$2; GREAT HARMONIA, Vol. 1, \$1.25; CHART, exhibiting an outline of the Progressive History and approaching destiny of the Race, \$1.50 PHILOSOPHY OF SPECIAL PROVIDENCES, \$0.15.

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