

# 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 ORIGIN OF EVIL.—A VISION.\*

BY A. J. DAVIS.

SOME weeks ago I read in one of the Boston papers an account of an aggravated and most soul-chilling murder, committed, as the paper stated, by a detested wretch, long a burthen to himself and society. I read also concerning his execution, which account was accompanied with a few remarks upon the punishment he would probably receive in the other world. The relation of this horrible occurrence weighed my spirit down. The position from which I viewed and contemplated the deed, was identical with that occupied by almost every political, legal, and clerical teacher in the land. I viewed it as to its *external* aspect, and was driven to the unreasonable conclusion that man is, in reality, a depraved creature at heart. Oh, how I trembled at this! "But no man," reasoned I, "could do such an evil to his fellow man, without being evil in the very elements of his being; and if this is an individual truth, it must be an universal one." Yes, only twenty days ago I was filled with sorrow concerning this demonstration of innate sin, of perverted and evil affection, of a voluntary love for, and doing of, evil—voluntary, because growing out of, and being allied to the Soul's Life. I prayed constantly to know the truth, and to view the occurrence, and its causes, from an interior and spiritual position. At length, one day, I felt moved to visit the village grave-yard, that I might be free from outer disturbances. I obeyed the internal impulse. I sought a retired spot, folded my head in my garments, shut myself from sense and outer impressions, and meditated on the subject of my thoughts. Instantly my understanding was opened, and the birth, and life, and character, and the various circumstances which constituted that murderer's experience, were manifested to me in their regular order of succession.

In a small, unclean, unfurnished room, in a cradle, I saw a child. It was physically deformed, especially in the cerebral region. I saw the cause of this malformation was referable to the ignorance of its parents—they had violated the laws of reproduction and utero-gestation. It was plain to be seen that this infringement and disobedience was faithfully recorded on the person of the child.

In five years more, that child manifested in its plays and conversations the angular and impulsive promptings of love unguided by wisdom, which latter it had not, because of youth and incapacity, and which its parents could not have communicated because of their ignorance from birth.

In five years more, I saw that child the companion of those of equal growth and like hereditary misdirection,—of those who were *born* foes to the interests of society,—those who were *victims* of circumstances, such as surround and influence all persons and families forming the lower strata of civilization.

In five years more, that child was a perverse and wicked youth—was the leader of card playing and gambling tricks without the city—and was the chief of mobs and riots within; was chewing tobacco, smoking cigars, drinking liquor. His parents were poor. At first they could not send him to school, at last he would not go. He stood as a representative of inferior situations and circumstances.

In five years more, I saw that youth a man in stature, but not in development of body nor elevation of mind. And in

an old dilapidated dwelling, like the Brewery in our city, containing about twenty families, I saw his wife,—for he was married.

Two years more, and I saw his child. That mother's child was left in the care of a sympathizing but no better situated neighbor, while she, worn out and emaciated, was peddling strawberries in the streets of Boston. I saw her return at night with food for herself and her little one, and money to procure bread for breakfast; but that cruel man, intoxicated husband, and misdirected father, abruptly and insultingly demanded her little saving, and appropriated it to his own use—to buy rum, whereby to drown the rising feelings of goodness and sympathy within, that his obscured and misdirected soul might not perceive the body's corruption and depravity.

In six months more I saw him when alone, weeping; but, when seen by others, he was gross, unclean, and disgusting. Feeling that others disliked and despised him, he disliked and despised himself. A whole garment was not in his possession. One by one they had been sacrificed to gratify his over-mastering desire. Indeed, he was a slave—rum was his master. A slave cannot do as he will, but only as the master prompts, and sanctions, and commands!

Three nights afterward, he was destitute of liquor, food, friendship, clothes, and money. Society had neglected its legitimate child. Nature's universal provisions were withholden, and the husband was urged to violent plans. At this moment he saw a well-dressed, and apparently wealthy gentleman, step into quite an inferior oyster house. The husband hurried on and entered it. He obtained a seat with an air of carelessness, and unobserved. The gentleman was a stranger, was inquiring the most convenient route to a village ten miles from the city. When he paid for his oysters, he unfortunately revealed a well supplied pocket book. The temptation was too powerful. The husband saw the magnitude of destitution and starvation compared with the act of assassination—compared with the former the latter seemed justice, to exercise which he at once resolved. He had heard the directions given the stranger, and without a moment's hesitation hastened on the way. After proceeding nearly half the distance, he secreted himself by the road side and awaited the traveler's approach.

"I do n't want to kill him," said the husband; "I will only stun him, and get his shiners. The world owes me a living; it do n't give it to me; I am resolved to take it. God knows this is justice. I am hungry, and must have something now or I shall die." Now I saw him weep. A sound of footsteps close by announced the traveler's approach. Out he leaped and grasped the stranger by the throat, and sternly demanded his money. The man knocked him down. This unexpected blow fired him with vengeance and determination. He instantly arose and shot the man, and stabbed him hurriedly in many places—mangled him in the most horrible manner—searched his pockets, robbed him of all he had, threw the body over the fence, and went into Boston to drown sorrow with a flood of rum, which he then could purchase.

I saw him arrested, tried, condemned, imprisoned, sneered at, and formally executed—executed as an executioner saw all this. And I can only say, beware of such judgment human, not Divine.

I continued in that illuminated condition, reflecting upon the above vision, reflecting upon its import, when my perceptions enlarged, and I saw how low his spirit.

In the first Society of the second sphere—where the inferior types of the race are taken for refinement and reformation—Indians, and weak, and idiotic, and the

\* This Vision was published originally in the "Universe," and was given in reply to a letter addressed to Mr. Davis by a believer in the doctrines of Swedenborg.

and classes of every community and nation—there, I saw that dark spirit. He was small, and weak, and ungrown; he was clothed with all possible conflicting colors, and was disagreeable to behold. As a coating upon his faint spirit was impressed, or induced, or recorded, every unfavorable influence and evil circumstance that had surrounded and actuated him from his birth to the grave. The malformation had rendered his body inadequate to a regular unfolding of his spiritual elements and attributes; and outer conditions and opposing influences prevented his finding his true position, or making a pleasant and happy journey through this rudimental sphere. The most lovely rose cannot grow, if planted in an iron vase, and breathed upon by the chilling winds of Iceland; nor can a pure spirit grow into a love of goodness and truth, if confined within the walls of an ill formed body, and breathed upon by the freezing atmosphere of uncongenial conditions and circumstances.

But now, higher influences pervaded him—penetrated that superficial coating; it grew thinner and more thin; it became transparent; it dissolved and crumbled into nothing, and lo! the white robed angel was there! The germ of the spirit sparkled like the crystal in the granite rock. I saw that from the first it was pure within, though evil without; the pure soul indigenous to heaven, the outer life to the imperfections and misdirection of earth. I followed him through the first society, and, as he ascended to the second, I could not see the least vestige of that evil garment, but he was a rightly directed and comparatively perfect being of the inner life. I was overjoyed. The vision ended, and I returned to the outer world with different feelings. I would not call that evil which is good in its way and state of being. What, think you, was the legitimate impression of this vision? I will relate.

1. That there are three sources of evil. First, progenitive or hereditary misdirection; secondly, educational or sympathetic misdirection; thirdly, circumstantial or social misdirection.

2. That "the disunity prevalent in the earth is rather the result" of those conditions and circumstances which make affections evil, than "of evil affection," as Swedenborg teaches, and you believe.

3. That all things and spirits are receptacles of the grand element of the love of God, which, diffused through nature, as the soul is through the body, unfolds itself into Wisdom.

4. That man is an incarnated divinity, and therefore that he is not *intrinsically* evil himself, and cannot love any thing "*intrinsically* evil," though he may be bent or misdirected while in the twig state, and grow up crooked, and despised by sensuous observers, through this sphere of his existence or development.

5. That as God lives in all things and every where, there are no local or especial Incarnations of this essence. This is the true "ground of our grand doctrine of the Incarnation," the highest demonstrations of which are visible in the life and teachings of Christ, and in the profound revealments of Swedenborg.

6. That every human being has an important mission to fulfil, or three uses to subserve. The individual is designed to reproduce its type, to properly direct the heavenly germ in it deposited, and to live here in reference to the principles of Nature and another life.

7. That a knowledge of nature and her laws, is indispensable to a just performance of the three uses just specified, constituting man's mission; and that, to cure the evil and "disunity prevalent" in Society, we must ascertain our inner and outer relations to each other, as members of one body, and our relations to the Material and Spiritual Worlds. In this way "man's moral nature may be elevated from its sensual plane," and a "conjunction" be established between the human and divine. The teachings of all good spirits (especially the great reformers, Christ and Swedenborg), tend to the full discovery and just application of those truths which will constitute "a spiritual sphere of attraction," and which will attract and elevate the race to a closer relation among its parts, with the principles of Divine order and harmony, and the chastening influences of higher spheres.

Such, I am impressed, is the origin of evil, as manifested in the actions of the individual; and its cure can only be accomplished by removing the three causes of human misdirection.

When I examine Swedenborg's philosophical disclosures, I find nothing in them inconsistent with the above illustration of the origin of evil, but when he takes the Bible for his master, he seems to make his stupendous Science, Philosophy, and Theology of Nature and the Universe bow, submissively, to its imperative authority. Do not the receivers of Swedenborg, in like manner, take *him* for *their* master? When you say "no revelation from higher spheres can in the least degree" disturb the convictions of Swedenborgians, I fear it is rather Swedenborg and his truths, than the truths of Nature and heaven, they are determined to advocate and defend—and such seem to defend him, too, with instruments by him prepared, rather than with Reason freed from prejudice and educational inclination.

I am not defending the *Book* I gave to the world in my superior condition (let it do its work), but I am desirous of freeing the general mind of all isms, and their errors concerning the origin of Sin, the Incarnation, and the restitution of man to a state of purity and blessedness. I am not only anxious to be free from all isms, but to have a *standard*, composed only of reason and truth—based on Man, Nature, and the Universe—a basis immovable, but an edifice of truth and goodness capable of inconceivable additions,—a germ of truth, capable of endless expansion—a Master, inspiring all earths and spheres with heat and light, or Love and Wisdom, and making the weakest beings recipients and examples of his love and grace. I know I shall, like all others, progress eternally; therefore I do not promise to believe to-morrow exactly what I believe to-day, for I may know more.

The internal man rests on the foundation of *intuition*; the wise man upon *reflection*, the external man upon *perception*, and the superficial man upon *testimony*. Beware of testimony—of believing what others say, but who will ascend to higher spheres, there to learn and enjoy more of the perpetual blessings flowing from the inexhaustible depths of intuition and truth. So, kind spirit, I am taught.

### Progress of Discovery.

There are no limits to the progress of knowledge, though there are mysteries which must forever remain unknown. The circle of science is constantly widening; yet beyond that circle is the infinite, which can never be reached or comprehended. In our search after knowledge, we are ascending a ladder which rests upon the earth and extends into the illimitable heavens. In our ascent we calculate our progress from our starting point, and thus we perceive our advancement; but the infinite above us and around us seems only to extend and widen as we advance. Hence there is knowledge which is unattainable, there are ways which are unsearchable, there are laws and principles which are past finding out. The finite cannot comprehend the infinite. The intellect of man is narrowed down to the understanding of his wants, and seems to have the power of expanding itself only in proportion to the multiplication of those wants. Hence, as population increases, the laws of nature are gradually unfolded to man, to enable him to multiply his resources.

Almost every age of history is noted, either for some particular discovery in science, or for some peculiar productions of genius. During the period of the dark ages, as the middle ages are often termed, the apparently useless and unsubstantial pursuits of alchemy and scholastic philosophy were preparing the way for the wonderful discoveries of the succeeding ages that produced Kepler, Galileo, and Newton. Those faculties which existed in the intellects of these great men were developed by the exercises of the learned of the age that preceded them. Had these great discoverers never existed, their discoveries would still have been made, and probably by the generation to which they belonged. They were the representatives of the genius and learning of their generation, and they brought to light in their immortal works, those ideas which spontaneously arose in a multitude of minds that were similarly educated.

## Psychological Department.

## THE INTERNAL VISION.

ZSCHOKKE, a well known German writer, mentions in his autobiography a remarkable power which he possessed, of reading, by an internal vision, the whole former life of persons with whom he met. In relation to this faculty, he gives the following interesting account :

"It has happened to me sometimes, on my first meeting with strangers, as I listened silently to their discourse, that their former life, with many trifling circumstances therewith connected, or frequently some particular scene in that life, has passed quite involuntarily, and as it were dream-like, yet perfectly distinct before me. During this time I usually feel so entirely absorbed in the contemplation of the stranger-life, that at last I no longer see clearly the face of the unknown wherein I undesignedly read, nor distinctly hear the voices of the speakers, which before served in some measure as a commentary to the text of their features. For a long time I held such visions as delusions of the fancy, and the more so as they showed me even the dress and motions of the actors, rooms, furniture, and other accessories.

"By way of jest, I once in a familiar circle at Kirchberg related the secret history of a seamstress who had just left the room and the house. I had never seen her before in my life; people were astonished and laughed, but were not to be persuaded that I did not previously know the relations of which I spoke, for what I had uttered was the *literal* truth; I, on my part, was no less astonished that my dream-pictures were confirmed by the reality. I became more attentive to the subject, and, when propriety admitted it, I would relate to those whose life thus passed before me, the subject of my vision, that I might thereby obtain confirmation or refutation of it. It was invariably ratified, not without consternation on their part. So often as I revealed my visionary gifts to any new person, I regularly expected to hear the answer: "It was not so." I felt a secret shudder when my auditors replied that it was true, or when their astonishment betrayed my accuracy before they spoke.

"Instead of many, I will mention one example, which pre-eminently astounded me. One fair day in the city of Waldshut, I entered an inn (the Vine) in company with two young student-foresters; we were tired with rambling through the woods. We supped with a numerous society at the *table-d'hôte*, where the guests were making very merry with the peculiarities and eccentricities of the Swiss, with Mesmer's magnetism, Lavater's physiognomy, &c. One of my companions, whose national pride was wounded by their mockery, begged me to make some reply, particularly to a handsome young man who sat opposite us, and who had allowed himself extraordinary license. This man's former life was at that moment presented to my mind. I turned to him, and asked whether he would answer me candidly if I related to him some of the most secret passages of his life, I knowing as little of him personally as he did of me? That would be going a little further, I thought, than Lavater did with his physiognomy. He promised, if I were correct in my information, to admit it frankly. I then related what my vision had shown me, and the whole company were made acquainted with the private history of the young merchant; his school years, his youthful errors, and lastly with a fault committed in reference to the strong box of his principal. I described to him the uninhabited room with whitened walls, where, to the right of a brown door, on a table, stood a black money-box, &c. A dead silence prevailed during the whole narration, which I alone occasionally interrupted by inquiring whether I spoke the truth? The startled young man confirmed every particular, and even, what I had scarcely expected, the last mentioned. Touched by his candor, I shook hands with him over the table and said no more. He asked my name, which I gave him, and we remained together talking till past midnight. He is probably still living."

## INCIDENT OF THE CHOLERA.

The following letter, addressed to a friend, contains some interesting facts, which illustrate the tendency of some forms of disease, to elevate and expand the mind. Instances of the character here related seem to show that physical indisposition, so far from having any power to deaden or destroy the faculties of the soul, is frequently instrumental in bringing them forth to a higher and more intense action.

"NEW YORK, SEPT. —, 1850.

"My Dear Friend: I returned to this city from my western tour a few weeks since. My return was much delayed in consequence of a violent attack of Cholera. I was taken the day before I arrived at St. Louis, on the steamboat; and those who saw me, said they never knew a person to recover from so violent an attack. I suffered no pain, as I had no cramps—which they told me had proved to be the worst form of cholera. I suppose I lost near thirty pounds of flesh in three hours. You would not have known me, nor would my oldest acquaintances. I was, indeed, very near the other sphere. I was almost clairvoyant. I never experienced such pleasurable sensations. My mind seemed to expand every where, and would sweep through whole systems, apparently, without effort or obstruction. Although I was sensible of every thing around me, and had a consciousness of the expanded thoughts which passed through my mind, yet I have only a slight, dreamy remembrance of them. Some points I can distinctly recollect. As I was always passionately fond of the study of Mathematics, I threw my mind upon the subject; and it seems to me now that I went through a review of the whole system, almost instantaneously. I distinctly recollect drawing one single proposition, to my mind, in mensuration of heights and distances, as it were to test my powers. The demonstration seemed not like a thing to be done; but my mind seemed to see it as a truth. I thought of you; and thought my mind must be in a state similar to the superior condition. I then tried to bring you to me, so that I could see you. My eyes were open; I saw every body and every thing around me, but I could not bring you to my mind's eye. I had a peculiar sensation; it seemed that I could feel your presence; the distance we were apart seemed to be nothing; you were at my right, a little in the rear, and Mrs. D. was a little beyond you; and I could bring you in no other position. Oh! the happiness of my condition then! My love principle was expanded into the principle of universal love. I loved every body, and every thing; and I must have operated magnetically on all who saw me;—they seemed to love me equally in return, for no person, it seemed to me, could excite the interest that every one seemed to take in me, who saw me, not only while on the boat, but also after I was on shore, up to the time I was able to travel. Whilst lying in the above condition in the boat, it seemed to me that I had the power either to live or die, at the election of my own will; and I do say to you, had it not been for my family, which I was then going after, you would never again have seen me in this sphere. I could not but be diverted at the astonishment of every one (when they thought I could not live half an hour), to see me talk and laugh, and exhibit no more signs of fear than if nothing was the matter; but the truth was, I never was so happy in my life. I sent for my family to St. Louis, found them all well, and in a week was on my way again to Cincinnati. I have been feeble till within the last few days. As business has made great demands on my time, I had no opportunity for the rest that I needed. In the last few days I have nearly recovered my usual health and strength."

MAN, when civilized and illuminated by knowledge, discovers in the objects and occurrences around him, a scheme beautifully arranged for the gratification of his whole powers, animal, moral, and intellectual; he recognizes in himself the intelligent and accountable subject of an all-bountiful Creator, and in joy and gladness desires to study the Creator's works, to ascertain his laws, and to yield to them a steady and a willing obedience.

COMBE.

## THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

APOLLOS MUNN AND R. P. AMBLER, EDITORS.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., DECEMBER 7, 1850.

## MIND AND THE SENSES.

Used synonymously with spirit, the mind may be defined as the thinking, reasoning, and intelligent principle which is peculiar to man. It is the refined and individualized essence of that which already exists in material forms, and constitutes the divine image and likeness which are estampé upon our nature. The mind, which may be recognized as the presiding power of the human system, is not only the author of all the voluntary motions of the body, but also constitutes the seat or receptacle of impressions conveyed through the medium of the senses. Forms of surrounding objects are first reflected on the organ of vision, and are thence conducted to the brain, from which the mind receives their image. In the same manner the vibratory movements of the air are conveyed to the organs of hearing, their impression is made upon the brain, and thus the mind takes cognizance of sound. So it is also with the other senses. The different impressions of taste, touch, and smell, are transmitted to the perceiving spirit through their appropriate organs. Now in these cases it should be observed that the mind sustains a super-eminent position in relation to each of the organs of sense, and that the various impressions conveyed through this medium should never be identified with the repository in which they are received. It is evident that none of the senses can be exercised independently of the mind, and that the several organs which are said to produce the senses, are merely the instruments or servants of the internal being, through which it communicates with the external world. In fact, it is by the operation of the mind in analyzing and comparing the impressions it receives, that the senses are made to perform their appropriate offices, so as to impart a correct idea of the relative distance and size of objects, and enable us to distinguish different sounds and colors.

In order to understand more fully the relation which exists between the mind and senses, it is proper to inquire concerning the medium of communication by which the one is connected with the other. It is obvious that some communication is essential to establish this connection. The eye, for example, is a perfect optical contrivance adapted to receive the image of all visible objects, but, as before hinted, the eye in itself has no power to see, and hence there must exist some connecting link between this and the brain, and from that to the mind. To understand the nature of this connection, it must be observed first that the senses communicate with the brain by means of their appropriate *nerves*, termed the nerves of sensation. Thus the sense of smelling is performed through the olfactory nerves; that of seeing by the optic nerve; that of hearing by the auditory nerve; that of tasting by the lingual nerves, and that of feeling by the nerves in general, which are spread over every part of the system. Now these nerves of sensation, let it be remarked, are pervaded by a subtle, nervo-magnetic fluid, which is also diffused through the brain; and it is through the medium of this fluid with which the nerves and brain are filled, that the organs of sense communicate with the mind. Here, then, we have the principle on which all sensation is produced. Visible forms, sounds, odors, and other objects of sense, are first brought in connection with their appropriate nerves; thence, through the agency of a refined magnetism, the impressions are transmitted to the brain, from which, through the same medium, the mind is enabled to perceive their image. Such being the case, no sensation can be perceived by the mind without the presence of the magnetic fluid in the nerves. Let this be deranged, diminished, or removed, and sensation will be correspondingly affected. Thus if the eye, from long continued attention to one object, expend a portion of the fluid in the optic nerve, the sight for a time becomes dim and feeble; and if this fluid from any cause be yet farther abstracted, total blindness is the result. So also

if the nerve connecting the ear with the brain be collapsed or obstructed, so that the magnetism of the nerve cannot perform its accustomed action, deafness is immediately produced. If, still farther, the nerves which impart feeling to any limb be so affected as to obstruct the passage of the fluid by which they are naturally pervaded, numbness and insensibility in that limb will be the consequence. But however deranged and obstructed may be the medium of sensation, the mind itself is in no way affected from this cause; for while it is deprived of some of the sensual pleasures which flow from its communication with the outward world, it constantly preserves its internal action, and explores the vast fields of thought which are untold to its searching vision.

To perceive that the absence or derangement of any of the senses do not essentially disturb the operations of the mind, it is sufficient to observe the fact that this very effect is produced by a concentrated mental action, which action is continued even when sensation is completely absorbed in the great thought of the soul. This principle is exemplified in the faculty of abstraction, or revery, found in some individuals. The mind in being exercised extremely on one subject, calls the brain into such intense action as to absorb the circulating fluid of the nerves, and hence, the medium of communication being disordered, no impression is received through the senses. A person in this condition may be surrounded by the most attractive objects, yet he will see but vacancy; he may be audibly addressed, yet he will hear no sound; he may be touched, but he will feel nothing;—yet in this temporary absence of sensation, thought is still at work—mind is still in action—the soul sleeps not. This power of abstraction in some individuals may be carried to a surprising extent. A celebrated mathematician is said to have been sometimes so absorbed in his calculations as to pass several days and nights without food; and it is related that the Italian poet, *Marini*, became so intensely engaged in revising one of his poems, that he placed his leg on the fire, where it remained for some time without his being aware of the fact. From this we can easily imagine how it is that certain martyrs and fanatics have been able to submit with impunity, and even pleasure, to the severest tortures. The mind, in such cases, wrought up to a kind of ecstasy, attracts the fluid which forms the medium of sensation to the brain, and thus by partially destroying the communication between this and other parts of the body, renders the whole system so insensible to pain that the most terrible inflictions can be endured with perfect composure.

There is no reason to suppose that the mind ever loses its identity or its power of action, even in the deepest slumber of the body, when the avenues of sense are wholly closed. As the outward consciousness becomes lost, an inward consciousness is opened; and hence on awakening from a deep sleep, the dim remembrance of some faded vision will pass before us, though we have no distinct recollection of a dream. Besides, it has been satisfactorily demonstrated, that in that condition known as the magnetic sleep—a condition in which every outward sense is closed and utter unconsciousness pervades the physical system, the mind can think and reason independently of the organs it is accustomed to employ as instruments, and can even obtain conceptions and arrive at results which it could not have reached in its ordinary state. Even in the normal condition of the body, the mind exercises a supreme authority. We must trust, though we cannot see. We must believe, though the senses often deceive us. Soaring beyond that which is material, reason enters the wide world of thought, and gathers truths, all beautiful and divine, which the senses never could discover. Hence when we would search for principles which lie beyond the mere facts of the outward life, we instinctively withdraw from the things of earth, and endeavor to shut out the sounds and objects which appeal to the senses, that the powers of the internal being may have a freer and more perfect exercise. Thus the cloudy veil of the material is gradually lifted from the soul; the pure light of Truth and Reason flows into its depths, and its perceptions expand and reach forth to those sublime realities, which dwell in the inner sanctuary of Nature.

These reflections serve to show that the mind is not the result of sensation in the system, and that while it employs the senses



to obtain a knowledge of external things, it can exist and act without their aid. Thus we derive a pleasing and steadfast hope, that when the organs of sense shall have performed their last service—when the haze of death shall have dimmed the eye, and the ear can no more listen to the sweet voices of earth, the deathless spirit, freed from its earthly prison-house, will soar to a higher sphere, and drink in the joys of an unending life. R. P. A.

### LETTER FROM PORTSMOUTH, N. H.

DEAR BROTHERN:—Although I am a stranger to you personally, yet I am not a stranger to the good cause in which you are engaged; for, having had the privilege of perusing a number of copies of your valuable paper, and knowing that the stand you have taken in advocating the nearness of the spiritual world to the natural, and not only the possibility, but the *certainty* of a communication between them, will of course bring upon you the scoffs of the self-styled wise, the skeptic, and religious bigot, and all who assume to reign over the consciences of men, I, as an individual, deeply sympathize with you, and would help to strengthen your hands by any means in my power. I know the selfishness of man causes him to err often when he thinks himself honest; and it is because many think that their Gods will be stolen, and their craft endangered, that they thus cry out as they do in some of the public prints. Be assured that it requires no prophet, nor son of a prophet, to surely predict that this opening of a new dispensation by spiritual communication between the two spheres of existence, is destined in the order of nature to sweep the earth of skepticism and all false and discordant theology; and that it will bring man to understand the laws of his being, and his destiny, teaching him to live as a social being, and to realize the importance of loving his neighbor as himself. Oh, that all who think they possess in the highest degree the knowledge and wisdom of the world, and hold the keys of the same, would for once become as children, and calmly investigate the subject, to see if there is not a philosophical reason showing that these things must be so!

As regards myself I would only say, that from a child I have ever experienced a delight in searching into the mysteries and laws of nature—the truths embraced in geology, chemistry, &c.—tracing the connection between the mineral and vegetable, the vegetable and animal worlds; and having been more or less engaged, for ten years past, in investigating the subject of human magnetism, in curing disease, producing trance, &c., I must say that all nature and revelation had taught me the existence and nearness of the spiritual world—the numerous and well authenticated cases of spiritual consciousness in catalepsy and temporary death by drowning adding to the list of evidence; but yet I had no correct idea of the *mode* of spiritual existence—could not conceive how a spirit could preserve its own *identity* without retaining its *form*, nor how there could be a form without *substance* to compose that form. I had not yet comprehended the fact that there are forms and organizations of matter which are so purified, and of such high order as to be beyond the reach of material eyes. Well, having read "Nature's Divine Revelations," and a volume of the "Great Harmonia," the key was turned which enabled me to look into the interior or spiritual world; and it now appears no more mysterious to me that there should be actual intercourse between us and pure spirits, and that tangible evidence of their presence should be received, than that we can converse with our fellow-man from one city to another by the telegraphic wire. Moreover, I have now been, for nearly two years, advocating (in my daily conversation) these views, and the certainty of spiritual communications. I have fearlessly opened my mind to all classes, as I have had opportunity;—to the M. D.s and D. S.s, as well as the humble mechanic; and I have never yet met with one philosophical or even scriptural evidence of the falsity of these things. Again, during that time I have taken notice of classes that most oppose this new philosophy, and I find that it is not the ingenious mechanic or artisan, who studies nature's laws and symmetry; it is not the practical physician, who makes it his daily study to understand the organization of body and mind; nor the honest, open-hearted farmer, who looks up through nature, and adores na-

ture's God, and respects the liberty of conscience; but it is, first, a class of persons whose whole inquiry seems to be, how shall I enjoy myself, what shall I eat and drink, and how shall I make money?—secondly, a class who assume to be public leaders (very wise in their own conceit), who mean to prevent the public from knowing more than themselves; and the third class are religious bigots, who are honestly afraid that these things will do away with the Bible, and who firmly believe that all the light the world is ever to enjoy, is derived from that book by "men of God," whose business it is to sermonize and theorize, and keep mankind in perfect ignorance of the spirit-world, while they hold up the fear of death as the king of terrors, and make a scape-goat of that venerable personage, the Devil, for their own iniquity, by teaching that he is the prime cause of all the evil that exists. This class cries out, "Delusion of the Devil," "Come to deceive," &c. All other arguments are resolved into this:—"I don't believe it," "it is not what we have been taught." Such persons are more to be pitied than envied; they dare not allow the mind to receive any evidence of any thing that is not contained in their theological creed, lest they incur the vengeance of God, and lose their souls; but the people of their charge are fast leaving them in the rear, and they will soon wake up to their shame.

I was visited not long since by an eminent clergyman, who has traveled extensively in the western states, and whom I deem to be as open-hearted as the very best; and while in conversation, I handed him the "Spirit Messenger," No. 6, pointing to the communication at Bridgeport, where it was directed to "tell brother Ambler to preach the gospel," and asked him what he thought of the gospel there described. He seemed to read carefully, and then replied, "I don't think much of it." I asked, why not? "Because," said he, "I don't think these spirits are to be depended upon;—they contradict each other, and are mischievous." But, I asked, is the fact established that there is an open communication between the spheres?—between those who are now living in the body and those that live in the spirit-world? "O yes," he replied; "I have no doubt of there being communications between the living and those that have departed; there is too much evidence to dispute the fact,—yet I think they are not to be depended on, especially when they come in opposition to the Bible." Well, you must judge for yourself, I replied; but if the fact is established that we can converse with our friends who have passed the vale of death, and have become acquainted with the realities of the spirit-world, and especially with those in whose truthfulness and virtue we had full confidence while in the body,—if we cannot believe them, whom shall we believe? Is not the evidence of living spirits better than creeds in manuscripts of doubtful origin?

\* \* \* \* \*

What, I ask, could lessen the sorrows of life more than to have our own guardian spirits,—a father, a mother, a companion, a brother, sister, or child—voluntarily manifest themselves in our family circle, answer our questions, and give pleasing intelligence from the spirit-world, and useful advice, with every token of their continued love?

Yours fraternally,

RICHARD WALKER.

### The Mob Spirit of Sectarianism.

The foul blood-spirit which has so often lighted the faggot and once controlled the movements of the Inquisition, is still abroad, and ready to punish "heretics" by armed mobs, or such other available means, as, in the minds of sectarians, may best promote the interests of the church. When Mr. HENRY C. GORDON, the young man through whom spiritual manifestations are made, was spending a few days at Norwalk, Conn., a short time since, the house where he visited was surrounded by a mob in the night, who demanded that he should leave at once, or submit to personal violence. He firmly refused to remain and take the consequences. After making much noise, the mob dispersed, without doing any harm. Directly after, the two newspapers, representing the town, published exaggerated accounts of the outrage, and OPENLY SANCTIONED THE OUTRAGE. Since this occurrence, we have heard

quite its equal in bitterness and wrong. While Miss Fox was visiting the family of a friend—one of the most respectable citizens in West Troy, N. Y.—the house was surrounded by the emissaries of sectarianism, who amused themselves, and illustrated their ideas of freedom and right, by throwing stones through the windows, and threatening to demolish the house! It is rumored that some of the most "respectable" Christians in the town were engaged in this pious crusade. We trust their names will be given to the public, in order that they may receive the full measure of notoriety they have so richly earned.

A. M.

### Messages from the Spirits.

Through the several mediums for spiritual communication which are now established in many places, beautiful and consoling messages are being constantly received from the dwellers of the celestial spheres. These messages, being addressed particularly to private circles, are usually of greater interest to individuals or families than to the public. Some, however, of a more general character, are occasionally given, which it is well to present to the world. The following was received in manuscript by H. R. COOLEY, of Springfield, Mass., through the medium of Mr. GORDON, with whom the former is at present associated.

"Give those in darkness light. Continue to progress. Love God's works. Increase unity among men. Fear not in doing good. Keep before the world the immortality of the soul. We live in the spheres;—you are dwellers in the flesh. You shall be happy when God is ready to call you to dwell with us. Will you avoid all unpleasant words that tend to arouse the base passion of anger? Strive to live cheerful and happy. The world will be prepared to receive these communications soon. These are heavenly mandates from the angels. Believe in their creed—to love all good; all that is lovely.

In true happiness and unchanging love, your beloved sister,  
EMELINE COOLEY."

In addition to the above, which it will be seen, breathes the spirit of celestial purity, we will here introduce a brief communication received by a gentleman of Troy, N. Y., from his father in the spirit-world.

"You are never alone. Your perseverance has gained for you an immortal crown. The spirits of the blest are watching over you. Man hath little to fear from the persecutions of the unbelieving. The times are fast changing;—the light is breaking upon the whole world. Your opposers will soon turn to the subject you have so long labored to convince them of, and hang their heads in shame."

In view of such pleasing and hopeful communications from the spirit-home, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable, feeling that the darkness which has so long overshadowed humanity is rapidly passing away, and that the day-spring of immortal Truth is already dawning upon the race.

R. P. A.

### Boston Harmonial Association.

DEAR FRIENDS:—I learn by several articles in your paper lately, of the existence and formation of different "Harmonial Associations," in various parts of our country. I wish now to inform you of the existence of one in this city. We have engaged the Washingtonian Hall, in Bromfield Street, where we have services every Sunday afternoon, conducted by our talented friend and brother, WOODBURY M. FERNALD. They were begun and continued through last winter and spring, but discontinued at the commencement of very warm weather, and were resumed again early this fall. Our meetings are always large and interesting, and a growing interest is constantly being awakened. We have not yet secured to ourselves a name by which to identify our society, but it is proposed to give it that of the "Boston Harmonial Association." I write you this to inform you of the efforts that are being put forth here for the furtherance of our movement, and that any of our friends from a

distance, stopping in the city over Sunday, may know where our meetings are held.

S. H. L.

P. S. Any of our friends in the towns adjacent, who would like to hear some lectures from Mr. FERNALD, on the general subjects of Psychology, would do well to engage him. His address is, Cambridge, Mass.

### Interesting Incident.

During my visit at Rochester, in the month of October last, Mrs. Fish related to me the particulars of a very interesting incident that occurred while I was in the city, in connection with the spiritual rappings. The facts were written down at the time, and the public may depend upon their strict reliability and verity. A stranger called at the house of the Fox family, for the purpose of investigating the phenomena, and received excellent communications from the spirits of his mother, brother, and other relatives in the second sphere. He had conversed with five different spirits, and was about closing his visit and withdrawing from the table, when the signal for the Alphabet was made, and his mother spelled out this sentence—"My dear son, there is one spirit you have neglected to speak to." The stranger, manifesting for the first time much excitement, inquired, "Who?" The spirit answered, "Your wife. She loves and watches over you always." Here Mrs. Fish, whose sympathies became strongly excited, and who desired to relieve the intense excitement of the stranger, kindly inquired, "Does the spirit love her husband as well now as she did when in the body?" The answer, "More," was at once given. The stranger instantly asked—"Did she love me at all when in the body?" Very faint affirmative raps were given in reply, which were interpreted as meaning "very little." The following conversation was then had between the stranger and the spirit.

Stranger. "Was it your treatment that caused me to do as I did."

Spirit. "I regret my conduct towards you when living in the body."

Stranger. "Was I irresponsible for my act?"

Spirit. "Yes. I forgive you. I am happy now. All is well."

Stranger. "God knows I did not know what I was about."

The interesting scene here closed, and the stranger retired, after first leaving his name with the family. His name is in our possession. It is well known in New York, where he is very respectably connected, but we suppress it here from a regard to his feelings, which we would not unnecessarily wound. Some six years ago, he shot his wife, in a fit of jealousy. She died instantly. He was tried in the state of New Jersey, where the offense was committed, and acquitted of the charge on the ground of insanity. Thus it will be seen that "truth is sometimes stranger than fiction." This little incident beautifully illustrates not only the fact of spiritual communications, but of the progress of the spirit in goodness and happiness hereafter.

A. M.

The substantial expression of interest from "T. S. S." of Randolph, N. Y., has been gratefully received. Our friend is one of those consistent believers in the truths of Nature, who is not only willing to have the light shine, but is also ready to furnish the "material" by which it may be more generally diffused. Here, certainly, is an example worthy of all imitation. It is well to exercise perfect confidence in the triumph of Truth, but it is also well to provide the means by which this may be attained.—Eds.

In noticing the formation of Harmonial Societies, in different places, we have hitherto neglected to mention that the Circle in this place, which has held meetings for about one year, still exists, and has recently assumed a more definite organization; having for its objects the promotion of harmony, the investigation of the principles of Nature, and the reception of that interior light which flows from every recess of the great temple of Creation.

R. P. A.

## Poetry.

## THE SPIRIT'S YEARNINGS.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,  
BY R. P. AMBLER.

Dim are the scenes of earthly bliss,  
The world grows cold, and dark and drear ;  
A fairer, brighter sphere than this,  
Dawns on my longing vision here.

Ties of selfish love are breaking,—  
My spirit wanders far away,  
While soft and holy tones are waking  
Its yearnings for a brighter day.

Welcome, thou Spirit of the tomb !  
Sweet are the slumbers thou dost bring,  
For thou shalt bear me to my home,  
Where songs of triumph angels sing.

Wilt go with me, my spirit-bride,  
To gaze upon the heavenly land ?  
Wilt thou, forever by my side,  
Mingle with the seraph band ?

We'll roam throughout celestial bowers,  
Or rest beneath the shady grove ;  
We'll cull the fair, unfading flowers,  
As emblems of our deathless love.

We'll wander by the crystal streams,  
Or bathe in fountains pure and clear ;  
We'll woo us sweeter, brighter dreams  
Than ever blessed our spirits here.

Then come, when life's brief hour is o'er,—  
'Mid scenes of earth no longer sigh ;  
Upward with angel-wings we'll soar  
To the bright world of harmony.

## GENTLE WORDS.

BY C. D. STUART.

A young rose in the summer time,  
Is beautiful to me—  
And glorious the many stars  
That glimmer on the sea ;  
But gentle words and loving hearts,  
And hands to clasp my own,  
Are better than the brightest flowers,  
Or stars that ever shone !

The sun may warm the grass to life,  
The dew the drooping flower,  
And eyes grow bright that watch the light  
Of Autumn's opening hour—  
But words that breathe of tenderness,  
And smiles we know are true,  
Are warmer than the summer time,  
And brighter than the dew.

It is not much the world can give,  
With all its subtle art,  
And gold and gems are not the things  
To satisfy the heart.  
But oh ! if those who cluster round  
The altar and the hearth,  
Have gentle words and loving smiles,  
How beautiful is earth !

## Miscellaneous Department.

## LUNA'S CONFESSION.

BY LIZZIE.

The evening was calm and serenely bright. No clouds, save one dimmed the glory and beauty of the heavens,—that one dark cloud hung lowering over the fair scene, as if frowning on the beauty it could not overshadow. Our favorite orb, Luna, wore a calm, but as we thought, sad smile, and as we looked anxiously for indications of an unusual sorrow, we were sure a tear-drop glistened mournfully in her sweet thoughtful eye. Just then, and while we were wondering at this new phase in our beloved Luna, she stretched forth her hand and drew that ominous looking cloud over her face as if to screen herself from the gaze of idle curiosity.

We could keep silence no longer, but addressed her with, "What great sorrow, O Luna, causeth thee to robe thyself in that dark veil? Hast thou a faithless lover, a harsh and cruel father, or weepst thou in thy compassion over the sorrows of some poor mortal?" Slowly she removed the veil from her pale, sweet face, and low and sad were the tones in which she replied,

"I have been grieved, oh mortal, at the waywardness and fickle purposes of man. Years since," she continued, "as I in my passage noted objects on your earth, I marked with pleasure a rosy, smiling boy, whose heart seemed bursting with warm and generous impulses, and whose future promised to teem with all things pure and beautiful. With ever increasing delight I watched the growth of the boy Hermann, and fondly believed my dream of manly perfection, truth and nobility, was to be realized. And for a long time the youth did deport him well. He was guided by the precepts of his father, and paid good heed to the counsels of his mother. Not purer than his heart were the flowers he tended, and the thoughts to which he gave utterance were sweet and innocent as the breath of morning. Love mingled with the dreams of the youth, and my hopes grew brighter still ; for the maiden whose heart he had won was pure and beautiful as the lily of the valley. But alas ! Ambition came, and her perverse whisperings led the heart of the youth astray. She pointed to the gentle Ella, his destined bride, and asked if she was not worthy of other than a cottage home ; and when he lent a willing ear to her teachings, bade him seek the crowded city, and win *gold* and *fame* for a bridal offering. The youth, forgetting that the priceless jewel, *affection*, would be a far more acceptable gift, obeyed her promptings. With this unholy passion kindled in his heart, and away from the gentle influences of his pure home, he entered eagerly into the inglorious struggle for Wealth, and neither was Fame forgotten. Both were won through the same channel. He held the ready pen of a genius, and its sparkling productions won him golden opinions. Bright gems of thought and feeling sparkled amid drossy emanations, showing that occasionally sordid motives were forgotten, and his former self gained the ascendancy ; but alas ! that these were so often o'ershadowed with the rank growth of foul weeds that sprung up so plentifully around them ! With increasing wealth came leisure, and then followed gayety and dissipation, and finally youth, beauty, and innocence were trampled on and destroyed. The warm affections of pure young hearts were won, worn a while, and then cast aside as utterly worthless. And this night, while he, than whom the meanest wretch in yon crowded city is not more debased, is courted and flattered by the fashionable and the gay, one of his frail victims,—because, forsooth, of the virtuous indignation of this same class,—makes a death-pillow of the cold, cold earth. Alas ! for the consistency of human society.

Thus saying, Luna wiped another glistening tear-drop from her eye. "But what of Ella, dear Luna ; surely she disappointed not thy fair hopes ?"

A smile radiant as that which lights the face of creation when first she greets the morning sun, brightened her countenance as

she replied, "In her, indeed, I found a fountain of truth and purity which swept away much of the bitterness of my sorrow. For a time she was pale and sad, and mourned much the absence of Hermann; but at length news of his impure habits reached her ear, and then she roused herself, and struggled heroically in the fearful combat between Love and Duty. It was a fearful trial, and long did her woman's heart rebel: but its purity conquered at last, and when her once idolized lover sought her side, and would fain have transplanted her to his gorgeous home, she spurned from her the unfeeling libertine who had wantonly trampled beneath his feet hearts once pure and joyous as her own."

We mused long and somewhat sadly on Luna's mournful tale, and regretted that the truthfulness of the picture forced us to acknowledge the justice of her reflections on the inconsistency of human society. We would that our own sex, at least, might look after their acts, and not remain open to her future animadversions. Strange that hearts formed for love and gentleness should treat with stern cruelty the unfortunate victim of perfidy, and smile on him who wrought the ruin. There is no sight so melancholy as that of the deceived and broken-hearted victim of man's infidelity. No being is so utterly bereft of sympathy and kindly treatment as she of the crushed heart and tearful eye, who dares not raise her head in the presence of her sister mortals, through fear of forbidding frowns, and harsh, rebuking words. God help her, and speedily remove the necessity for the anxious question, "How long shall these things be?—*Selected.*"

### THE SONG-BIRD'S TEACHINGS.

The early spring-time had come; the balmy south wind breathed over the land, awakening all nature from her long and death-like slumber to life and beauty. Every breeze was laden with the fragrance of the flowers, and melodious with the music that ascended from ten thousand voices. The rivulet bursting its sparkling, but icy fetters, leaped as with joy down the mountain side, and every grove was vocal with the music of the many warblers that joyously hailed the ushering in of the morn of the new creation. But not alone in the silent grove, and far away in the dense, dark forest, did they come to dwell, and pour out their soul-gushing melody—but amid the busy haunts of man they come, like sweet messengers from the spirit-land, to cheer his heart with their songs of love.

Among the feathered songsters, a solitary bird came and built its nest within the garden-bowers. It was a tiny thing; but there was heavenly music in its strain. Every morning through the long, glad summer time, when the first pale rays broke in the east and the sunbeams tinged the hill-tops with golden light, the little warbler was up with the early dawn, happy, loving, and free, to pour forth its heart-cheering song. And when every whisper that nature breathes was hushed in the deep, calm, noontide silence, and when arose from the city the incessant din of active life, still it ever sang on, uttering its sweetest lay. And as I listened, the discord gradually grew fainter and fainter—all nature seemed attuned to harmony, and one unbroken melody ascended even to the heavens.

Sweet Messenger? We ever welcomed thy coming, and listened with delight to thy song. It was not alone because thy sweet tones charmed the ear; but they spoke a language that penetrated into the depths of the soul. How instructive is Nature if we will but listen to her teachings! We may learn a beautiful and salutary lesson from the hum of the tiny insect whose existence is to bask but for a day in the sunlight.

Mortal! wouldst thou restore a world from darkness and chaos to peace and harmony? Listen, then, to that musical voice, and learn the lesson which it teaches. With gentle words and fervent love, breathe forth humbly the inspirations that God has implanted in thy soul! It may be a "still, small voice;" but amid the din and discord it shall be heard, and many a voice catching the strain shall waft it along, ascending higher and still higher.

S. E. S.

### Simplicity.

Simplicity is the invariable characteristic of truth. Error loves to hide her deformity in cumbrous shapes and complicated envelopments, to bury her sophistries in mazy labyrinths of subtlety, and disguise her purposes in oracular ambiguities. But truth is open as the day; her aspect is radiant with candor; her language direct and plain; her precepts admirable in beauty, irresistible in force. The grand elementary principles of whatever is most valuable to man are distinguished by simplicity. If we follow nature to her hiding places, and wring from her the secret by which she conducts her stupendous operations, we shall find that a few simple truths constitute the foundation of all her vast designs. If we roam abroad into the fields of science, the same discovery will reward our investigations. Behold, for example, on what a few self-evident axioms is reared that sublime and irrefragable system of mathematical reasoning, by means of which man proportions the grandest forms of art, directs his course through the pathless wastes of ocean, or ascending into the boundless fields of space, tracks the comet in its fiery path, and "unwinds the eternal dances of the sky." EDWIN FOREST.

### Experiment.

To some men, the very name of experiment is a sound of horror. It is a spell which conjures up gorgons, hydras, and chimeras dire. They seem not to know that all that is valuable in life—that the acquisitions of learning, and discoveries of science,—are the result of experiment. It was experiment that bestowed on Cadmus those keys of knowledge with which we unlock the treasure-houses of immortal mind. It was experiment that taught Bacon the futility of the Grecian philosophy, and led him to that heaven-scaling method of investigation and analysis, on which science has safely climbed to the proud eminence where she now sits, dispensing her blessings on mankind. It was experiment that lifted Newton above the clouds and darkness of this visible diurnal sphere, enabling him to explore the sublime mechanism of the stars, and weigh the planets in their eternal rounds. It was experiment that nerved the hand of Franklin to snatch the thunder from the armory of heaven. It was experiment that gave this hemisphere to the world. It was EXPERIMENT that gave this continent FREEDOM.

Humbled in the dust, lost in the darkness and the void of that which passes, souls now aspire to the light, to the immutable and infinite good; they thirst after God. So soon as they shall have again found the right way, they will rush toward Him with an impetuosity like that with which travelers in the burning desert hasten toward the long desired fountain that is to slake their thirst with its limpid waters.

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