

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

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

VOL. I.

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NO. 21.

The Principles of Nature.

THE QUESTION OF IMMORTALITY.

[FROM THE UNIVERCELMUM.]

ST. LOUIS, April 10th, 1848.

MR. A. J. DAVIS:—I have read your Book, and am a subscriber to the Univercelum, and am a believer in most that I have read in both, but am not as well convinced of the immortality of the Soul as I wish to be. I therefore write you, believing you a philanthropist, and that you are willing to increase light, knowledge, and truth. By the immortality of the Soul, I mean the unending duration of the intellectual powers, the faculties of thought—the mind, without ever losing its identity. For if at death such a change occurs as to render the soul totally oblivious or forgetful of the past, so that the memory of our past earthly existence shall be lost to us forever, it would be to me equivalent to annihilation. What proofs have we of a continuation of identity at death? I believe the soul or spirit does not lose its identity, but continues progressively increasing in knowledge, wisdom, and happiness. But still I am not as well convinced as I wish to be.

My object in writing you is, simply, as an inquirer after truth and light, to be convinced wherein I am wrong, and to be set right; but more especially to obtain the proofs in favor, not only of the immortality of the Soul, but of its perpetual, never-ending identity, recollections of the past, recognition of friends in the future state, &c.

I hope you will answer this letter, either directly, or cause something of yours on the above subject to appear in some future number of the Univercelum.

Yours, &c.

J. S. F.

REPLY.

NEW YORK, Sept. 15th, 1848.

ESTEEMED INQUIRER:—Your letter came while I was engaged in a very minute and elaborate anatomical, physiological, and pathological investigation with reference to a design to communicate to the world a simple and higher kind of medical information; and while absorbed in my interior researches, it is both painful and injurious to allow foreign subjects to break in upon them. This will account for, and excuse my protracted silence concerning the unspeakably important inquiries embodied in your letter.

But before laying the foundation upon which rests the individualization of the elements of the human mind, as well as all true knowledge concerning it, I feel impressed to say a few words in reference to the origin and influence of three kinds of belief therein, which are entertained by many laymen and clergymen, and by individuals in general, viz: a belief of ignorance, a belief of desire, and a belief of the understanding.

1. *A belief of ignorance* is a faith unaccompanied, and consequently unsupported, by adequate reasons. It is derived from the hereditary inclinations of the mind, or from doctrinal education imparted by the prevailing Theology or influence within the sphere of which the individual exists.

2. *A belief of desire* is an instinctive or intuitive faith in the endless perpetuation of personal existence. It arises from the central desire of the human mind, which is unconsciously considered as a living internal prophecy of its eternal destiny. This belief is grounded in no universal principles, nor has it any substantial basis upon which to rest and stand secure, except an in-

ference derived from its own aspirations, and the general tendency of all created things.

3. *A belief of the understanding* is a faith based upon absolute and unequivocal knowledge. It grows out of a complete recognition and thorough understanding of those immutable principles which flow from the bosom of the Divine Cause into the Universe, and by which every thing is governed with an unerring and unchangeable government.

The influence of the first is to generate *Scepticism*, because the believer can neither furnish himself, nor an inquirer after truth and rest, with a tangible and substantial reason, and because, too, he refers the intelligent seeker to historical accounts of supernatural phenomena and occurrences, at once startling, absurd, and incomprehensible. The influence of the second is to cause an *anxiety* in the understanding, because the believer has no ground upon which to rest his faith except internal desires, external inferences, and vague probabilities; and because when he attempts to investigate the basis of his belief (which is seldom attempted) he discovers it to be unsound, and consequently unsatisfactory—not sufficiently expansive and strong to cover the whole ground occupied by doubts and objections, and to remove all obstructions to a full confidence in the sublime truths of an immortal personality.

The influence of the third is to promote *happiness*, because the believer can give a reason for the faith and hope within him—because his understanding is convinced beyond the sphere of ignorance, and desire, and inference, and probability—and because he has a divine guaranty in the fact of individual existence; because he is himself a note drawn on the Bank of an eternal life, and signed by an Almighty Hand, payable in such installments as are measured by his entrance into, and departure from, each sphere on his voyage around eternity.

I think you will agree with me when I say that you occupy the second position with regard to a belief in a future state; for you "believe the Soul or Spirit does not lose its identity, but continues progressively increasing in knowledge, wisdom, and happiness." But like thousands of our fellow-men who strive to believe in and hope for immortality—you are not in the third position, else you could not have said, "Still I am not as well convinced as I wish to be." Now that we may obtain and secure a belief of the understanding, which alone communicates internal rest and positive encouragement in the faithful discharge of our duties on earth, I will proceed to place before you "what proofs we have of a continuation of identity at death," or to show why we are immortal.

The foundation of the whole superstructure is the absolute indestructibility of Matter, or of that Universal substance which gives us a tangible individuality, and which constitutes the outer physical organization of the Great Positive Mind. Matter is eternal, and is everywhere present. It is in all things, and is all things, and there is nothing that is not matter and substance. Upon the universality and indestructibility of matter, therefore, rests the all-glorious reality of an eternal life. But now the question spontaneously arises, how does matter constitute an individual, and how, or by what means, is that individual rendered immortal? Let us interrogate Nature. She points up to the eternal Mind, who instituted laws that manifest themselves through her unfoldings, and she bids us consider the principles of Association, Progression, and Development.

Under the powerful and constant direction of these laws, we perceive the unbroken and perpetual tendency of all forms and substances toward unity, perfection, and organization. From the Great Central Mind proceed innumerable elements and substances which form innumerable nuclei. These individually attract those elements and substances that have corresponding individ-

ual affinities; and these accumulate, and condense, and purify, and form suns, systems of suns, comets, planets and satellites. These form the central mass and fertile womb of each planet, rudimental particles ascend, and undergoing a process similar to that by which the planets were made and developed, they ultimately and develop mineral combinations.

Then again by the incessant action of body upon body, and essence upon essence, and substance upon substance, mineral compositions not only generate vivifying fluids and mediums, such as electricity, magnetism, &c., but actually and constantly lose themselves in vegetable organizations. By a similar action, and a new and higher combination of appropriate particles, the vegetable loses itself in the animal organization, and this emerges into the organization and development of Man.

You will doubtless perceive that man never loses his identity in subordinate forms and organizations—that he is not their slave as they are his, nor is he designed to supply them with appropriate nourishment, as they supply him; but that minerals, and vegetables, and animals, all lose their identity in man, for he is the grand concentrated production and union of them all.

Thus in the planet, in the mineral, in the vegetable, and especially in the human body, do we behold unmistakable manifestations of the laws of association, progression, and development, or of the universal and constitutional tendency of all matter toward a state of unity or individualization. This brings us to the contemplation of a conspicuous reality, viz: that every organization seems more and more complete and perfect in position, and influence, and importance than any previous one, from the mineral up to Man. All forms inferior and subordinate to Man, are but parts of him; and in order to fully comprehend why man occupies the highest position, exerts the strongest influence, and is in every way the most important, we must proceed to consider the use for which man was made.

Under this head I will place an extract from my medical work, which work I shall probably present to the world in a few months. Its teachings are not according to the decisions of popular physiologists, but I venture to believe they will be found in accordance with the revelations of Nature and Reason. When speaking concerning the brain, I say, "The brain has three uses or functions, 1. To receive the omnipresent moving essence of the Great Divine Spirit, which resides in and is extracted from all elements and substances in being, especially those which administer to the nourishment of the body, and to the gratification of its various desires and senses. 2. To concentrate, and refine, and elaborate this all-animating essence, and to dispense it to the appropriate part or parts of the dependent system, according to its (the essence's) relative degrees of refinement and progressive plains of manifestation, viz: as Motion, Life, and Sensation. 3. To give this essence its germinal and indestructible organization, and to connect it with elements and substances in the outer world, by which connection the Brain is instrumental in the movement and government of the body—and to enable the interior organization to manifest intelligence in reference to its self and external things."

It is clear, I think, that the physical organism of man is designed to elaborate, and to establish the eternal individuality of the human mind. Other organisms are less perfect, and consequently inadequate to the same end. But it may be said that many animals possess qualifications identical with, and in some instances superior to man; and that the reason is not sufficiently clear why man can give birth to an immortal spirit, and why the animal cannot. I would reply that man is the ultimate organization—that Nature is a perfect, and powerful, and stupendous Machine, constructed upon the Universal Mechanical principles of association, progression and development, by which machine the man is manufactured; and that the explanation is to be found by considering man, in the capacity of individualizing the spirit, as a machine. Animals are but parts of men; they are but portions of the human mechanism. Let us think of an illustration. Suppose you desire to construct a pin machine. In your mind the machine is first created—it stands in all its parts complete in your memory. You proceed to collect and corre-

pondingly perfect the parts with reference to the whole. You adjust the parts, the machine is developed, and its work is admirably performed. That work is to *individualize* or make the pin. Now with the same propriety it might be asked, why cannot those parts make a pin as well as the machine, which is a co-regregation of them all?

It is evident that the use of Nature is to individualize Man, that it is the use of man to individualize the Spirit. But now the question spontaneously arises, how can the spirit exist independent of the body, and how can its personality be preserved? I am taught to reply that the spirit can exist separate or independent of the body on the same ground that the body can exist separate from, or independent of, Nature. For Nature made the body, even as the body made the mind; and, be it remembered, the same unchangeable and eternal principles of creation operate uniformly every where and at all times. And I am taught that the spirit preserves its identity on the ground that every organization is absolutely different. This fact precludes the possibility of absorption, or amalgamation, or disorganization. The difference in the arrangement of inherent elements establishes the individual in this life, and through all eternity. If spirits were constituted alike they would inevitably and irresistibly gravitate to but one center, would desire to occupy but one position, and to fill but one locality. But being constitutionally dissimilar, they cannot, nor do they desire to, be absorbed by, or amalgamated with, other spirits, nor can they lose themselves, as some have been led to suppose, in the universal Spirit, or Great Positive Mind.

There are three evidences, therefore, that the Soul will preserve its identity after the change which is called death. They are these: 1. It is designed that Nature should develop the body. 2. It is designed that the Body should develop the Mind. 3. It is designed that the Mind should develop itself differently from other minds, and to live forever. These are no inferences, no conclusions based upon hypothetical reasons, but they are the universal testimonies and absolute demonstrations of creation—indeed, they are simply Nature's own instructions. You can readily, I think, believe, and comprehend why there will exist a "recollection of the past, and a recognition of friends," in the other world, by reflecting upon and understanding the ultimate connection which exists between the first and second sphere of human existence. The relation is as intimate as that between youth and maturity, love and wisdom, perception and memory. The experience, character, and progress of an individual in this life is recorded upon, and will be, to a modified extent, manifested by, that individual in the life to come. And the friend or companion who has impressed us with friendship and affection here, will be remembered hereafter.

The passage from this sphere into the next is no more a change to the individual than a journey from America to England, excepting the almost complete emancipation consequent upon the change, from rudimental misdirection and earthly imperfections.

So I am taught concerning the principles upon which rest the sublime and heavenly realities of an eternal life. And so I am taught concerning the transformation known as physical death. And I can assure you that, to the convinced and enlarged understanding, there is no death,—only the most important and delightful change in the mode of personal existence. And as we are immortal, and the memories of this life remain with us until displaced by more profitable and spiritual ones, let us at once resolve to institute and manifest henceforth a well-ordered life, and a godly conversation.

With a willingness to instruct, and to be instructed,
I remain yours, &c.,

A. J. DAVIS.

The songs of birds, and the life of man, are both brief, both soul-filled, and both as they end, leave behind whispers of Heaven.

What is the universe but a hand flung in space pointing always with extended finger unto God?

Psychological Department.

SPIRITUAL WARNINGS.

The fact that there is a guardian intelligence which watches over the interests of men and unfolds in dreams and impressions the events of life which are yet future, is substantiated by many occurrences which cannot be rationally explained on any other hypothesis. Numerous instances are on record in which, by some timely warning proceeding from an invisible source, individuals have been saved from impending danger, or have received information of some important circumstance, which lay beyond the ordinary perceptions of the human mind. Such occurrences have been sometimes accounted for by supposing a special interposition of divine Providence; but when it is considered that God rules the universe through the agency of general laws, and that these laws can never be reversed or suspended without affecting the whole machinery of Nature, it seems more reasonable to presume that the phenomena referred to are merely the whisperings of guardian angels, whose peculiar office it is to watch over and instruct the benighted children of earth. Many interesting instances of spiritual warnings are related by Mrs. Crowe, from which the following are extracted :

"There are numerous curious accounts extant of persons being awakened by the calling of a voice which announced some impending danger to them. Three boys are sleeping in the wing of a castle, and the eldest is awakened by what appears to him to be the voice of his father calling him by name. He rises and hastens to his parent's chamber, situated in another part of the building, where he finds his father asleep, who, on being awakened, assures him that he has not called him, and the boy returns to bed. But he is scarcely asleep, before the circumstance recurs, and he goes again to his father with the same result. A third time he falls asleep, and a third time he is aroused by the voice, too distinctly heard for him to doubt his senses; and now, alarmed at he knows not what, he rises and takes his brothers with him to his father's chamber; and while they are discussing the singularity of the circumstance, a crash is heard, and that wing of the castle in which the boys slept falls to the ground. This incident excited so much attention in Germany that it was recorded in a ballad."

"It is related by Amyraldus, that Monsieur Calignan, chancellor of Navarre, dreamed three successive times in one night, at Berne, that a voice called to him and bade him quit the place, as the plague would soon break out in that town; that in consequence, he removed his family, and the result justified his flight."

"A German physician relates that a patient of his told him, that he dreamed repeatedly, one night, that a voice bade him go to his hop-garden, as there were thieves there. He resisted the injunction some time, till at length he was told that if he delayed any longer he would lose all his produce. Thus urged, he went at last, and arrived just in time to see the thieves, loaded with sacks, making away from the opposite side of the hop-ground."

"A very singular circumstance was related to me by Mr. J—, as having occurred not long since to himself. A tonic had been prescribed to him by his physician, for some slight derangement of the system, and as there was no good chemist in the village he inhabited, he was in the habit of walking to a town about five miles off, to get the bottle filled as occasion required. One night that he had been to M—, for this purpose, and had obtained his last supply, for he was now recovered, and about to discontinue the medicine, a voice seemed to warn him that some great danger was impending, his life was in jeopardy; then he heard, but not with his outward ear, a beautiful prayer. "It was not myself that prayed," he said, "the prayer was far beyond any thing I am capable of composing—it spoke of me in the third person, always as *he*; and supplicated that for the sake of my widowed mother this calamity might be averted. My

father had been dead some months. I was sensible of all this yet I cannot say whether I was asleep or awake. When I rose in the morning, the whole was present to my mind, although I had slept soundly in the interval; I felt, however, as if there was some mitigation of the calamity, though what the danger was with which I was threatened, I had no notion. When I was dressed, I prepared to take my medicine, but on lifting the bottle, I fancied that the color was not the same as usual. I looked again, and hesitated, and finally, instead of taking two table-spoonfuls, which was my accustomed dose, I took but one. Fortunately it was that I did so; the apothecary had made a mistake; the drug was poison; I was seized with a violent vomiting, and other alarming symptoms, from which I was with difficulty recovered. Had I taken the two spoonfuls, I should, probably, not have survived to tell the tale."

"One of the most remarkable instances of warning that has come to my knowledge, is that of Mr. M—, of Kingsborough.

This gentleman being on a voyage to America, dreamed one night, that a little old man came into his cabin and said, 'Get up! Your life is in danger!' Upon which Mr. M— awoke; but considering it to be only a dream, he soon composed himself to sleep again. The dream, however, if such it were, recurred, and the old man urged him still more strongly to get up directly; but he still persuaded himself it was only a dream; and after listening a few minutes, and hearing nothing to alarm him, he turned round and addressed himself once more to sleep. But now the old man appeared again, and angrily bade him rise instantly, and take his gun and ammunition with him, for he had not a moment to lose. The injunction was now so distinct that Mr. M— felt he could no longer resist it; so he hastily dressed himself, took his gun, and ascended to the deck, where he had scarcely arrived, when the ship struck on a rock, which he and several others contrived to reach. The place, however, was uninhabited, and but for his gun, they would never have been able to provide themselves with food till a vessel arrived to their relief."

The strange occurrences related in the foregoing extracts, are recorded as authenticated facts, and it is the duty of the honest inquirer to admit, with an unbiased judgment, the inferences which may be reasonably deduced. Occurrences of this nature can scarcely be accounted for by supposing them to be merely the product of imagination, as the perfect correspondence of the result with the impression received, seems to clearly indicate the action of a higher intelligence than belongs to the mind in its earthly state. What, then, can be more rational than to presume that the Deity manifests his protecting care through the ministry of angels, and that the impressive warnings which are sometimes communicated from an unknown source, are the suggested thoughts of intelligent spirits, who watch with sleepless eyes the interests of their kindred here? Such a view of the subject it is exceedingly pleasing to contemplate, while it appears to be in accordance with the highest intuitions of the soul. R. F. A.

Singular Impression.

Dr. JOHNSON, the great moralist and lexicographer, in his life of Lord Roscommon, gives an instance of a prediction of his lordship, when a boy of ten years old, which is sufficiently singular. The lad was at Caen, in Normandy; his father was at the same time in Ireland. He was usually rather a sober lad, but one day he became very noisy and antic, playing, leaping, getting over tables, boards, &c. In the midst of this extravagant mirth, he suddenly stopped and cried out, "*My father is dead!*" A fortnight after, news arrived of his father's death. This account was confirmed by the governor of the boy, and by Lord Roscommon himself in more mature age.

Before you consent to that which is wrong—prostitute the noblest powers God has given you to base and unholy purposes, will you pause and reflect a moment upon the dignity of your own nature? You are but little lower than the angels. From your rank in the scale of being, you are allied to the whole spiritual world.

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

APOLLOS MUNN AND R. P. AMBLER, EDITORS.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., DECEMBER 28, 1850.

THE MISSION OF THE REFORMER.

In every age and among every nation, there have been those, who, by virtue of superior moral and intellectual attainments, or through a sincere and ardent love for humanity, and a burning desire to secure the elevation and improvement of the race, have occupied the position of reformers. These men could clearly perceive the evils under which society suffers—could experience a lively sense of the wrongs and injustices which prevail, and, from the warmth of pure hearts, would impulsively undertake their eradication and removal. Bright and glorious have been the dreams which have dwelt in those minds thus inspired with love and truth. Gazing through the medium of their own ardent desires, they have seen stupendous revolutions follow the mighty struggle for right; they have seen the darkness of wrong, want, and sorrow disappear before the dawning light, and have rapturously beheld the scenes of brightness and glory which are unfolded to the eye of the uplifted soul. Moved by the influence of such views, these individuals have gone forth on their exalted mission, to battle with the giant evils which have oppressed society, and contribute their efforts to the elevation of their brother man.

Humanity owes much to such men as these. Almost every progressive movement of the race has depended upon their labors. Breaking the crust of conservatism, which has confined the aspirations of the mass, they have let in the gladdening light and atmosphere of liberty to the entombed world. Gaining the elevation of the Ideal, they have stood there to act as magnets on the multitude who can perceive and appreciate only the Actual. Having a perception of the living principles of truth and right, and catching the inspiring visions which fit across the bosom of the Future, they have been able to impress some of these principles and paint the gleamings of these visions on the minds and hearts of the people. In this manner they have succeeded in leading the world from that sluggish inactivity and stationary conservatism, which have resulted from an enclosure within the boundaries of creed, sect, and party.

The Reformer is, and necessarily must be, superior to his age. He must have a higher regard for justice, clearer perceptions of truth, and a more exalted aspiration for human weal, than incites the actions of the mass, else he could not be a Reformer. It is his mission, therefore, not to *force* men to the practice of duty—not to drive by the influences of fear and denunciation, nor to cramp by the imposition of useless and unnecessary restraints, but to *draw*—to *lead*—to *attract*, by the silent energies of a superior wisdom, and the moving power of an exhaustless sympathy. If his efforts are at first unappreciated—if his worth, talents, and devotion are not perceived by the groveling multitude, this is only a natural result incident to his exalted position, and he must not stoop from this to reach the prize of fame, but be content with the reflection that true greatness is not like the meteor which dazzles in its rapid flight, but like the small and gentle flame which grows brighter as it is approached, and burns with increasing luster amid the flow of time. Calmly and with unyielding firmness must he preside over the commotions of the social elements. When the people, trembling at prospective innovations, decay and despise the genius which would lift them up, his voice must lull the troubled waters to repose, and bring order from the confusion of wayward minds. In short, being superior to the age in which he lives, he is naturally invested with the authority of a *leader*—one appointed to conduct the advancing race to a glorious victory—not being clothed in the panoply of human warfare, but in the radiant garments of celestial wisdom.

Knowing, however, the strength with which old opinions become rooted in the mind, and the length of time which is required

to eradicate one error and establish one truth, the Reformer should be satisfied to perform his work in a gradual and progressive manner, not depending on those sudden revolutions which produce anarchy and confusion, but relying upon the gentle, though irresistible influence of truth and justice. The ends which have been most earnestly sought, have frequently been defeated by too sudden and precipitate movements. Storms and earthquakes may produce a mighty convulsion in the bosom of Nature, but ruin and desolation are the effects which follow in their course. It is rather the warm sunshine and the gentle rain, whose silent and impressive influences can effectually operate on the inanimate forms of matter, and bring Creation forth to its joyful resurrection. So, also, it is not the fierce mandate of oppressive Force, but the mild spiritual influences which act gradually and almost imperceptibly on the human mind, that is to change, improve, and elevate the race. The mission of the Reformer, therefore, is to *work* and *continue* to work, realizing that that which cannot be accomplished in a moment must be done gradually. He must not be disheartened because the masses do not coincide with his views—they have not yet arrived at his elevated standard of thought. He must not be troubled because the effects of his labors are not immediately apparent, for in proportion to the magnitude of the work is the time required in its accomplishment, as subterranean streams by the insensible wear of ages may remove tall mountains from their base. Let him ever remember that patient toil in the establishment of Right, will ultimately secure a result which shall be the more glorious the longer it is delayed.

The mission of the Reformer can scarcely be identified with that of other individuals. He is placed in a position where the soul is moved and the actions governed by the most pure and disinterested motives. There is for him no selfish object to be gained, like those which attract the groveling mass. His reward is not outward;—he acquires not wealth, nor honor, nor ease. His path is not one on which the sunshine may long rest;—the frowns, reproaches, and heartlessness of men cast shadows upon his soul. A spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion to humanity can alone prompt and sustain his efforts. He must feel amid the darkest clouds of persecution, the majesty and power of Truth. The inward rather than the external—the spiritual more than the material, must be made the basis of his trust. Not the glittering emblems of outward royalty constitute his inheritance, but his crown and scepter lie in the sublime virtues of the heart. The Reformer must have *faith*, exercising a deep and immovable confidence in the native supremacy of right, and the divine virtue of humanity. He must have *hope*, looking beyond the present wrongs and evils which mar the world, to that state of harmony and peace, of which the good and true have always dreamed. He must have *charity*, regarding the faults of men as the result of that imperfection which is common to all; recognizing that deathless spark of divinity which exists in every soul, and laboring with heart and hand to develop all that is good, and suppress all that seems evil, in the human character.

The Reformer should be regarded as an instrument in the hands of angels and of God, to impel man onward to an exalted destiny. A halo of glory surrounds his brow, though he feels but the crown of thorns. The reward of interior approbation and spiritual guidance is his, though he feeds upon the husks of poverty, or dwells amid the shadows of earthly sorrow. How ill could the world spare his labors! Deep and dense would be the darkness gathering over humanity, without the light of its guiding stars. Slow indeed would be the progress which the world would make, without the agency of some mighty and truth-loving minds to direct its course. It seems to have been an established principle in nature to meet the necessities of the race, that there should be men *born* in advance of their fellows—having souls expanded and illuminated in a superior degree, that they may act as guides and leaders of the mass. Hence in every stage of human progress, there have been representatives of a still higher stage, whose influence has been to inspire loftier feelings, awaken purer aspirations, and incite to nobler action. In the present age there are a greater number of the class here referred to than at any previous period. Their mission is be-

coming more glorious, their work more practical, and their elevating influences more apparent. Each is laboring in his appointed sphere. The philosophical reformer searches out and overthrows the erroneous principles which have been incorporated in the sciences; the moral reformer appeals to the innate sense of right and duty which forms the true bond of obligation with every individual; the theological reformer exposes the false doctrines of the Church, and gives freedom to the creed-bound soul; and the social reformer investigates the causes of the evils that afflict society, and proposes a re-combination and more harmonious arrangement of the social elements; while all these combined, labor together for the attainment of one grand end—the elevation, unity, and happiness of the race.

It is possible that, as the true coin is sometimes counterfeited, there may be false reformers in the world, whose aim is to remove the chains of humanity, that they may substitute others which are still more galling. These should be carefully distinguished from the true Reformer. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Such labor for their own glory rather than the good of man; they would lay the basis of a despotic authority, rather than alleviate the sufferings with which the world is groaning. But he who labors faithfully and truly for the welfare of mankind, will manifest the movings of a god-like spirit; he will go forth among men as a *brother*, and not as a tyrant; he will seek to do good to his race, both externally and spiritually; and while he dissipates the clouds of error, he will unfold the light of Truth; while he overthrows the temple of superstition, he will rear the shrine of Liberty; while he moves away the mouldering foundations on which the present structure of society is erected, he will labor to establish upon the ruins a building, harmonious and beautiful, which shall be hallowed by the presence of the Infinite.

R. F. A.

The Thirst for Wealth.

Oh! how terrible is it, that almost every thing in this world is made to bend to money! How this eager pursuit for wealth shrivels the soul, stultifies and darkens the intellect, and hides from our hearts the sunshine that would beam in from heaven, all-radiant and beautiful—lighting up this earthly home, now made dark and desolate by the insatiable thirst for gold! My heart aches to hear, wherever I go, the word "dollar," "*dollar*," eternally upon the lips of men who profess to be laying up "*treasures in Heaven*." As "*cut of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*," it is easy to perceive the prominent subject of their thoughts. Thus gold may be properly termed "*the god of this world*," for that is a man's god which he *thinks* about the most—*talks* of the most—*toils* for the most. Nothing is surer. Therefore is Christendom "*weighed in the balance and found wanting*."

An indulgence of the extravagant desire for wealth has filled the world with sorrow, confusion, discord, and woe. A *home* and a *competence* are not enough. Were men to limit their wants to these, there would be plenty for all, without this everlasting *struggle* to which the majority of individuals are now subjected, in order to keep up the conjunction between soul and body. But this spirit of monopoly, which *never has enough*, has planted thorns in every path of life. The excuse is, "*we must provide for our families and for our children—as it is written that he who does not this 'is worse than an infidel.'*" And thus the wealth-seekers go on, adding dollar to dollar, house to house, land to land, possession to possession, without any thought as to the bearing which such unhalloved monopoly has upon the millions of poor, homeless, houseless children, widowed mothers, and sorrowing fathers, whose lives are rendered desolate by the heartless avarice of those very aristocrats and monopolists, who waste their substance in riotous living, and then quote Scripture to defend their course. I did not intend to enlarge upon this subject, although I deem it one of great importance; for men will not listen to spiritual truth, until they *release their hold on Mammon*. You ask them to read, or subscribe for, some good work (such as the "*Messenger*,") and they will reply, "*I don't get time to read—I have my business to attend to.*" What is a

man's business—his *mission* in this life? Is it to eat, drink, sleep, toil, and die? Is it to pamper the body and starve the soul?

Somewhere in the distant future—in that "*good time coming*"—monopoly will cease, together with oppression, war, and selfish strife; and then peace and kindness, and confiding trust between man and man, will universally prevail, and "*sorrow and sighing shall flee away*." No fears of want will then exist—but all will be cared for; and instead of the unrighteous motto, "*every man for himself*," it will be, *each for all, and all for each*; and then the earth will be the blissful abode of brothers and sisters of one great family, in which peace and harmony shall forever reign.

M. A. T.

New Brighton, Pa.

Communication from a Friend.

Hartford, December, 1850.

BRETHREN:—I perceive and realize your peculiar situation. The vision and the hope of the reformer are sources of many perplexities and trials; the consciousness of the right, without the power of enforcing its appeals, wounds the sensitive mind, and too often forces it to realize a sickening sense of the injustice which ever pursues the utterance of any *new* humanitarian principle. The seeds of the human character are sown in superstition and reared in prejudice, and the present mental condition of the world is the deplorable consequence. The true philosopher takes cognizance of this fact, and is moved to pity; he feels a deep, earnest prayer crowding up for utterance which no words can express, but becomes eloquent in the endeavor to erase from the human mind the traces of error which becloud the spiritual perceptions and render them inadequate to the discovery of Truth. Between the convictions of duty and educational prejudices, lies the great battle to be fought. The latter now constituting the chief elements of the general mind, it is with difficulty they can be entirely eradicated, as the foreigner cannot escape or disguise the accent of his native tongue. Were it not for these prejudices, the mind would enjoy its native freedom, like the young bird that escapes from its mother's nest, and hears its own sweet voice echoing from a thousand hills;—it would then search out, and walk in, the true paths of investigation, and the great work of reformation would be almost instantaneously accomplished. But we must not, we *cannot* hope for a sudden change in the condition of things pertaining to the religious and social affections. Old principles are so deeply and so firmly fixed, that they seem to be a part and parcel of life, vitality, existence—shreds woven into the life-element, which cannot be entirely sundered until the spirit experiences its heavenly birth, and has its vision opened to the "*real reality*." We should remember that the man who has been long accustomed to the darkness, and the pestiferous fogs of ignorance and bigotry, must be imperceptibly influenced to receive the light, else he will become dazzled and pained by its brightness; and, in a momentary paroxysm, will curse it forever.

This generation must pass away, and with it must pass also the dogmas, creeds, church-formulas and ceremonies, which have come down to us as faithful representatives of the "*olden time*," and which have been consecrated and sanctioned as the best product of their age in the absence of nobler conceptions. The aspirations of individual minds unfolded by the new Philosophy, are but the tear-drops which the eye of a dying generation sheds upon the world to wash away its stains! We must not, then, relax our efforts; we must be earnest, faithful, and compassionate, knowing that for every good and true action, there is somewhere a corresponding reward.

Brethren, fear not: you have many incentives to action; you have many friends whose sympathies cannot permit you to suffer, and you have a Philosophy that *can wreathe the bleeding heart with smiles*.

Your paper must not stop, nor must the friends expect too much from you—that you alone can do all. We must all work, with warm, earnest hearts, feeling that we have *something to do worth laboring for*; and I would suggest to the members of dif-

ferent societies about the country, to co-operate in procuring subscribers,—even to take two or three copies themselves, and send the extra numbers to their friends;—in that way much good can be accomplished with little exertion. A vehicle of pure thought is the greatest expression of power with which the world is acquainted. It is an essential auxiliary in the reformation of the present, and must be sustained.

But words, what are they? They may create a momentary pleasure in a despairing heart, but for the real cravings of the human soul they are of very little account, without a corresponding action.

The Harmonial Association of this city will endeavor, from time to time, to make some more tangible demonstration of their sympathy, and I hope others will do likewise.

Fraternally yours,

G. T. W.

Letter of Mr. Davis to the Hartford Times.

MR. EDITOR:—Considerable misunderstanding (detrimental to the cause of truth) has arisen in this city and community, in consequence of a few unqualified remarks which were elicited from me by the Rev. C. C. Burr, at the close of his highly interesting lecture on what he termed "Thusology." I did not qualify my remarks that evening; because, under the impression that Mr. Burr would deliver at least another lecture, I did not think it proper to allude to a different and superior class of mental and spiritual phenomena, which Thusological science (as defined by the lecturer) does not embrace or explain. Yet I am constrained to acknowledge that (though exceedingly material and superficial) this new named science evidently furnishes an explanation of many facts and experiences, which are closely allied to a certain class of dreams, arising from physical disturbance, and to ordinary mental hallucination.

On entering American Hall, I was accosted by Mr. Burr (the lecturer's brother), who said he had been informed by many individuals in this city, that his lecture would be in direct opposition to me; that I was perfectly persuaded of the truth of all "rappings" as being spiritual communications; and that I probably would take an affirmative position with regard to their verity, and attempt their demonstration. I assured him that my mind was open and free—was seeking to hear and know more upon the subject; and had not investigated the whole field occupied by it sufficiently to pronounce an intelligent judgment upon its merits or demerits. My knowledge of spiritual communication (through sounds), is very limited; and I accordingly said to Mr. Burr (what I in substance repeated at the close of his lecture) that I had visited Hartford for the purpose of investigating the "sounds" and manifestations as presented in Mr. Gordon's case, and had not discovered in those sounds any thing which I could not refer to human or electrical agency. From this the impression has gone abroad that "I do not believe" in spirit rappings. This impression is erroneous. In many instances I have heard and seen things (in the presence of Mr. Gordon and others), which no human power could accomplish; and I have, in a manner peculiar to myself, examined the *modus operandi* of spiritual agencies in the production of sounds; and have discovered *how* visible and material substances can be, to a certain extent, influenced and moved by spirits and invisible instrumentalities.

I have not, however, made these very wonderful and exciting phenomena a subject of such deep and consecutive investigation as their apparent connection with the developments of Spiritual Philosophy would seem to demand from me. I have thus far left the subject, as it were, to stand or fall upon its own intrinsic merits or demerits; and have not desired to disturb any person's convictions with regard to it; but I have desired to behold a more reasonable, dispassionate and impartial investigation of all the facts unfolded by this new manifestation of spiritual truth. I have no doubt that these phenomena are being constantly developed in many portions of the United States (and even this beautiful Hartford is not without a blessing in this respect). But the question is not—"how do these new things harmonize with our educational prejudices and personal desires?" but, "ARE THEY

TRUE?" So far as my experience goes, I can affirm a great deal of very beautiful truth in the "rappings;" but how much, or what proportion of it, emanates from the spiritual world, and how to discriminate between the pure and the spurious, is an important discovery which I hope soon to be enabled to make and lay before the public mind.

Fraternally thine,

A. J. DAVIS.

Hartford, Dec. 17th, 1850.

Importance of Example.

It is a manifest and observable truth that we are all, to a greater or less extent, creatures of imitation. The character and direction which the actions take, depend much on the influence of example. Not only the peculiar cast of the individual life, but also the habits, customs, and usages of society are regulated on this principle. He, therefore, who has been able to present a living example to the world—who has created in his own life a divine standard of virtue which will move the aspirations of men, has founded a claim for greatness which is stronger than that of sage or hero. It has been a great deficiency with those who have gained the honors of the world, that they have failed to exemplify in their lives the sublime principles of truth and virtue. Thus there have been those who have astonished the world by their deeds of valor—who have been seated on lofty thrones of power, and have gained mighty victories on the battle-plain; but while we delight to peruse their history and contemplate their achievements, we may find in their career no standard of moral excellence—no example which may be given for the world to imitate. So there have been those who were famed for their wisdom—men who could explore the profound mysteries of Nature—who could scan the hidden secrets of the heart, and frame wise precepts for the regulation of human conduct, and these have passed away, leaving a name, it is true, on the records of genius, but furnishing no example to be followed—no life to be lived. The far-famed Alexander conquered the world, and was called great, but we are not authorized to follow in his blood-stained footsteps; David is said to be a man after God's own heart, yet we are never exhorted to follow his example; Solomon is claimed to be the wisest of all ages, yet he has given us no moral pattern which we may safely copy. Thus have the most renowned of earth been wanting in one of the essential elements of true greatness, which is the practical exemplification of pure and truthful principles. Long have we listened to the lifeless precepts of morality;—it is now time that we should be moved by some living example. Let him, therefore, who would truly benefit the world—who would quicken the pulses in the great heart of humanity, aid in erecting an exalted standard of virtue for the race to reach. So shall he impress his footsteps on the path of time, to be a guide for succeeding generations.

R. P. A.

Spirit Messages.

Some time since, while engaged with the Fox family in introducing the subject of the "mysterious sounds" to the attention of the public, the writer enjoyed many favorable opportunities for receiving and listening to, communications from departed friends. On one occasion, as a member of our company, being in a desponding mood, and disposed to censure the spirits, remarked that "the farmer who had sown the seed a number of times in vain, would become discouraged and not try again," a spirit purporting to be Lorenzo Dow, immediately replied: "He would—if he was a man of stability—he would sow the seed again. He would try until all hope was gone. He would not, for a few dollars, give up all and say, 'Well, God has not dealt kindly with me—this world has frowned upon me—I have been led astray by a few flattering words.' But not so. As I have told you before, the way may look dark and dreary, yet a little beyond the dark cloud hangs a cloud of brightness." This, with other messages equally consoling, cheered the hearts of all, and made the burden of the world's frowns seem light.

R. P. A.

☞ The illness of Mr. Munn, which for several days past has been quite severe, has prevented him from contributing to the present number. We trust he will be better soon.

Poetry.

THE DAWNING OF THE LIGHT.

BY M. H. COBB.

From a long night of dreamless sleep,

A world is waking now ;

The scales are dropping from their eyes,

The shackles fall, they run, they leap,

Proud in their new-born strength to rise,

No more in shame to bow !

As they were gathered in the time

That tried the souls of men,

Let us, their children, gather now,

While yet we glory in our prime,

And bind us with this solemn vow :

" We will not sleep again ! "

We will not sleep ! The murky cloud

That wrapt our minds in night,

Is rolled away : the damning stain

Of bigotry is gone : the shroud,

Which god-like Reason wrapt, in twain

Is cleft ! Behold the light !

We will not sleep ! Behold, the chain

Is riven from our hands ;

The cadence of that syren song,

Which soothed and wrapt us, gives us pain ;

The God that won our homage long,

In hateful contrast stands.

Who shall set earthly bounds to Thought,

When Reason guides the mind ?

Its lofty purpose who control ?

Since He who mind and matter wrought,

Hath fixed in living words the goal,

This end for each ordained :

" Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ! "

Their garner is the grave,

The costly tomb, the gilded urn !

But that which knows not blight nor rust,

The Mind, the Spirit, shall return

Unto the hand that gave.

From this comes Reason's word and law :

" The mind shall not be chained ; "

But it may leave the clay and mount

Up to its Origin, and draw

From thence, from that eternal fount,

Some good for us ordained.

We stand with beating hearts upon

The threshold of a day,

When Mind shall converse with its Sire !

Lo, we can see its morning sun ;

The gloomy clouds of Doubt retire,

And swiftly melt away.

This is the victory of Truth,

O'er Error's bigot sway ;

Her strength is gathered from the blow,

And Mind, strong in her second youth,

Shall wield the scepter here below,

And man her law obey.

N. Y. Tribune.

Miscellaneous Department.

TEACHINGS OF NATURE.

Constituted as we all naturally are, there exist, bound up within the secrecies of the bosom, certain emotions and sentiments, designed by our Creator to leap forth in joyousness in view of the magnificence of his works ; certain springs of exquisite delicacy deep hidden in the chambers of the breast, but which, touched or breathed upon never so lightly, strike the keys of feeling and fill the heart with harmony. And I envy not the feelings of that man who, amid all " the glories of this visible world," can stand a passionless beholder ; who feels not his pulses thrill with quickened vibration, and his heart to heave in fuller gush as he views the beneficence of his Maker in the magnificence of his works ; who from all can turn calmly away, and in the chill, withering accents of Atheism, pronounce it the offspring of blind fatality, the resultant of meaningless chance !

When we look abroad upon the panorama of creation, so palpable is the impress of an omnipotent hand, and so deeply upon all its features is planted the demonstration of design, that it would almost seem, in the absence of reason and revelation, we need but contemplate the scenery of nature to be satisfied of the existence of an all-wise, and all-powerful Being, whose workmanship it is. The firmament, with its marshalled and glittering hosts ; the earth, spread out in boundlessness at our feet, now draped in the verdant freshness of spring-time, anon in the magnificent glories of summer sultriness, again teeming with the mellow beauty of autumnal harvesting, and then slumbering in the chill, cheerless desolation of winter, all proclaim a Deity eternal in existence, boundless in might. The mountain that rears its bald forehead to the clouds, the booming cataract ; the unfathomed, mysterious sounding ocean ; the magnificent sweep of the Western prairie ; the eternal flow of the Western river, proclaim, in tones extensive as the universe—tones not to be misunderstood, that their CREATOR lives.

It is a circumstance in the character of the human mind, which not the most careless or casual observer of its operations can fail to have remarked, that the contemplation of all grand and immeasurable objects has a tendency to enlarge and elevate the understanding, lend a loftier tone to the feelings, and, agreeable to the moral constitution of man, carry up his thoughts and his emotions directly to their Author, " from Nature up to Nature's God." The savage son of the wilderness, as he roams through his grand and gloomy forests which for centuries have veiled the soil at their base from the sunlight, perceives a solemn awe stealing over him as he listens to the surges of the winds rolling among the heavy branches ; and in Nature's simplicity, untaught but by her untutored promptings, he believes that the " Great Spirit is whispering in the tree-tops." He stands by the side of Niagara. With subdued emotions he gazes upon the majestic world of floods as they hurry on. They reach the barrier ! they leap its precipice ! they are lost in thunder and in foam ! And, as the raging waters disappear in the black abyss ; as the bow of the covenant, " like hope upon a death-bed," flings its irised arch in horrible beauty athwart the hell of elements, the bewildered child of nature feels his soul swell within his bosom ; the thought rises solemnly upon him, " the Great Spirit is here ; " and with timid solicitude he peers through the forest shades around him for some palpable demonstration of His presence. And such is the effect of all the grand scenes of nature upon the mind of the savage : they lead it up to the " Great Spirit." Upon this principle is the fact alone to be accounted for, that no race of beings has yet been discovered destitute of all idea of a Supreme Intelligence, to whom is due homage and obedience. It is *His* voice they hear in the deep hour of midnight, when the red lightning quivers along the bosom of the cloud, and the thunder peal rattles through the firmament. It is *He* they recognize in the bright orb of day, as he blazes from the eastern horizon ; or, " like a monarch on a funeral pile," sinks to his rest. *He* is beheld in the pale queen of night, as in silvery radiance she walks the firmament, and in the

beautiful star of evening as it sinks behind his native hills. In the soft breathing of the "summer wind," and in the terrible sublimity of the autumn tempest; in the gentle dew of heaven and the summer torrent; in the sparkling rivulet and the wide, wild river; in the delicate prairie-flower and the gnarled monarch of the hills; in the glittering minnow and the massive narwhal; in the fairy humbird and the sweeping eagle; in each and in all of the creations of universal nature, the mind of the savage sees, feels, *realizes* the presence of a Deity.

Angel of Dreams.

Night had drawn her sable curtain, and the inhabitants of a world were wrapped in slumber. An angel was seen winging his flight from heaven. He was the *angel of dreams*, and as he neared the earth, he murmured in silvery tones, "Sweet shall your visions be this night, ye sleeping multitude."

And first he hied him to the poet's pillow, and bending o'er him, he filled his ear with harmonious breathings and wrapped his soul in sweet melodies. And on these he stamped the seal of *memory*, that, on the morrow, the poet might embody his night dreams, and the reality become more bright and beautiful, like the vision.

Then, he entered the painter's chamber, and he caused delicate flowers, beautiful landscapes, and heaven-like scenes to pass before him, but on them he set no seal of memory—it was not needed, for the artist was a *day dreamer*; his home was among the clouds, and the dream angel was his constant companion.

Next, he stood by the widow's couch. Her brow was ruffled, and the sad expression of her features showed that sorrow had pressed heavily upon her. But the angel waved his bright wing, and immediately the troubled look vanished, and the face became calm as a child's. Her heart was with the loved ones of the household hearth, her spirit was wandering 'mid the scenes of youthful days. The vine-wreathed porch, the grassy lawn, the shading tree, all were there. And upon these the seal was not set, for the angel knew that the contrast of sleeping bliss with waking misery would cause sorrow, and his gift was happiness.

A cradled infant was next the object of his care, and as he leaned over it, a sweet smile told that the "angel's whisper" was heard. And there he left the seal, and in its playful hours, that same smile oft-times lit its features, and it would clap its little hands in very excess of joy, as the same low voice of music seemed to breathe in its ear.

And last, towards the morning dawn, he stood by the bedside of a dying christian. Fond friends were around him, and, gazing upon them, he felt as if he could pray to live for their sakes. But the angel placed before him a picture of heavenly glory, and instantly all earthly longings vanished; the bitterness of death was passed, and calmly he yielded his spirit to the angel, who, bearing it to heaven, laid it before the Lord of angels, and the "King of kings."

Fading Flowers.

To the reflecting mind there is a gloom not unmixed with pleasure, in contemplating the fading flowers. It is melancholy to witness their silver leaves fall. But who would stay the rolling year, and dwell amid the beauties of perpetual spring? Who would see the face of nature blushing in perennial bloom? It is well that the flower is ordained to fall and give place to the ripened fruit. Eternal spring would yield but a meagre harvest to the husbandman. Fadeless flowers would compensate but poorly for the fine rich fruit. Murmur not, then, though their glories depart. Let the year roll on, the flowers fade and fall, and though the change cause sadness, still rejoice in the prospect of an exuberant harvest.

How like a "flower that comes forth and is cut down," is the brief period of human life! Beautiful emblem of our earthly existence! We come into this world, our faculties expand like the swelling bud, they burst into loveliness like the opening flower, and for a while all is life and beauty. But the flower is not perpetual; it blooms but to die. With all our majestic pow-

ers, and all the glory of our nature, how soon we decay and fall. Like the lovely flower we pass away. And this change is also necessary for the fruit to mature; that mortality may be swallowed up of life. Like as the crimson strawberry, or the velvet nectarine, succeeds the falling flower, so also shall it be with us. The glories of humanity will depart, the flower will fade and fall, but this change is the preliminary of a golden harvest. And it is well that God has thus ordained. Better that our earthly existence cease—that the flower should decay, than that *heaven*, the ripened fruit, should never be obtained. Murmur not, then, at the loss of friends. The fruit is more desirable than the flower—heaven than earth. Mourn their loss, this is right, but not as those who mourn without hope. And feeling that we too must close our eyes upon the bright scenes of earth, let us be resigned to all the allotments of providence. While the flower is fading, let us rejoice in prospect of an exuberant harvest, a blessed immortality, a re-union with those we love, of a "family in heaven."—*Ladies' Repository*.

Time.

I saw a temple reared by the hands of man standing with its high pinnacle in the distant plain. The streams beat upon it; the God of nature hurled his thunderbolts amidst it, and yet it stood firm as adamant. Revelry was in its halls, the gay, the happy and the young were there. * * *

I returned, and lo! the temple was no more! Its high walls lay in scattered ruins; moss and wild grass grew rankly there, and at the midnight hour the owl's cry added to the deep solitude. The young and gay who had revelled there had passed away.

I saw a child rejoicing in his youth, the idol of his mother, and the pride of his father. * * *

I returned, and that child had become old. Trembling with the weight of years, he stood the last of his generation, a stranger amidst the desolation around him.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED.—A sophist wishing to puzzle Thales, proposed to him the following questions which were answered without hesitation:

What is the oldest of things? God—because he always existed.

What is the most beautiful?

The world—because it is the work of God.

What is the greatest of all things?

Space—because it contains all that is created.

What is the quickest of all things?

Thought—because in a moment it can fly to the end of the universe.

What is the strongest?

Necessity—because it makes men face all dangers of life.

What is the most difficult? To know thyself.

What is the most constant of all things? Hope—because it still remains in man after he has lost every thing else.

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