

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

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

VOL. I.

SPRINGFIELD, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1851.

NO. 26.

The Principles of Nature.

SEPARATE EXISTENCE OF THE SOUL.

BY S. B. BRITTAN.

The subject on which I propose to write, is full of a mysterious beauty. It carries the mind into a region where the light of material existence fades away, and earthly forms decompose and become the shades which people the realms of the Invisible. Here, as it were, on the confines of two worlds, we must take our place.

"We hold a middle rank 'twixt heaven and earth,
On the last verge of mortal being stand,
Close to the realms where angels have their birth,
Just on the boundaries of the Spirit-land."

This position, man alone may occupy; for in the chain of being, he is the connecting link which unites the visible and invisible, the material and spiritual, the temporal and eternal, in one unbroken line of existence, beginning in *DART*, and ending in the unorganized elements of distant worlds.

I am conscious that no created intelligence has the power of self-comprehension; and I know how difficult it is to establish ourselves on a reliable basis, when the entire subject—comprehending its invisible laws and visible phenomena—is above and beyond the sphere of material things. Here the mind must necessarily *feel* its way in the vast immensity. Some of its steps may be uncertain—indeed they must be—but *they cannot be useless*. The discipline by which we learn to exercise any faculty, of body or mind, is made up of unsuccessful efforts; and he whose fear of a false step will not permit him to hazard an experiment, may as well conclude to crawl for ever, for it is certain he can never walk. Motion, in some form or direction, would seem to be an essential law of all existence. The world moves from center to circumference—and not one of the elements of matter or mind may resist its action. Thou, O Man, art a part of that which is around thee. How, then, shalt thou be still?

"Will the hand on Time's dial backward flee,
Or the pulse of the Universe pause for thee?
The Sun that rises, the Seas that flow,
The Thunders of Heaven, all answer, No!"

The great Heart will continue to beat evermore. The earth will not stop in its orbit, nor can mind be chained to a single point in the cycle of its destiny. **ONWARD FOR EVER!** is the sublime and emphatic annunciation which peals through all time and space, and vibrates on the chords of universal Being.

But some of us may not move to the common measure of the world, and so those who have learned and practiced *that* may not be able to beat the time. What if they are not? A fresh exercise may still be of service as a necessary stimulus to the faculties; and even an occasional jar, or discord, may not be disagreeable, if it but break the old monotony. If we are not always in the ascending scale when we move, still, motion, even at the risk of falling, is less to be dreaded than immobility. All who have made discoveries have ventured out beyond the walks of the multitude. What if these narrow limits which time, and custom, and prejudice have defined, are mistaken for the boundary lines of creation! Still, beyond these is the great **UNEXPLORED**, which infidel feet have never trodden. Let us go there, that we may stand for once on hallowed ground, where the aspiring soul dwells alone with God.

He is a happy man who can occasionally escape from the dull sphere of grosser life, and dwell, if it be but for an hour, where the discordant sounds of the Market-place and the Exchange are

not heard. It is glorious thus to exist in a sphere that is not all of earth—where the scenes are fresh from the hand of God, and the light of eternity illumines the soul. As we advance from the lowest forms of matter toward the highest manifestations of mind, existence becomes ever more beautiful and divine. We begin to discern foot-prints of the angels where the traces of men disappear.

The existence of organized beings, of a nature so refined and spiritual as to be invisible to mortals, may be inferred from an investigation of the laws of matter and mind. The tendency of matter to assume organic forms and relations, will be found to correspond to the degree of its refinement. In the mineral kingdom, all matter exists in an inorganic state. The elements require a refining process, to fit them to the superior sphere of organized existence. By virtue of the electric forces which pervade the earth and all things, a chemical action of its elements is produced, by which the more volatile parts are thrown off in impalpable gases. In this sublimated form, the particles of matter exhibit constant mobility, assuming every moment new relations to each other.

At this stage of its refinement, matter is fitted to undergo an important transition. Numerous forms appear, possessing organs adapted to specific functions of being. Plants possess a power of assimilation, by which the most offensive exhalations are absorbed, and the most deleterious substances taken up and so modified by the process, as to become the nutritive products on which animated existence is made to depend.

It will be perceived, I think, that organized bodies are not likely to be developed from the grosser elements, on account of the comparative immobility of unrefined substances—but when matter becomes volatilized, the particles which compose the mass, exhibit the phenomena of perpetually changing positions and relations. It must be sufficiently evident that, in this condition, they are far more likely to so arrange themselves as to develop the forms and functions of life, than when existing in a state of less refinement.

Numerous as are the trees and plants which clothe and adorn the earth, it is probable that the animal kingdom vastly exceeds the vegetable creation, in the number and variety of its organic forms. The increasing tendency of matter—during the process of its refinement—to become organized, is evident from the infinitude of animal existence. The more ethereal parts of all gross substances are constantly becoming instinct with life. Each fleeting moment marks the birth of innumerable millions of living creatures of whose existence and habits man could know nothing, through the medium of the unassisted sense. The microscope has opened the portals of a new world, before unseen, yet far more numerous than the world which meets the unaided vision. In the light of this discovery, we perceive that every grain of sand is a walled city, and a single drop of water encircles an empire of being!

But if matter exhibits the tendency I have supposed, we may rationally conclude that, when it is so ethereal as to be wholly intangible, it is more likely to be organized than in any of the inferior stages of its refinement. It is well known that, in its higher gradations, matter is so sublimated as to escape the observation of the senses. If we admit that, in this refined state, it may be organized, we have furnished our answer to the great question of the soul's independent existence. It is equally certain that the sphere of organic being comprehends millions of creatures, too minute to be perceived by the eye. Why may not other millions exist, invisible, not on account of their minuteness, but the *refinement* of their composition. The evidence, as it presents itself to my mind, is not less conclusive. No one would venture to dispute the existence of the infusoria. Even those who have had no opportunity for personal observation,

readily accept the testimony of others who have seen the organized millions of that invisible world. If disorganized matter may be so refined as to escape the sphere of sensuous observation, can a single reason be given for the hypothesis which denies the existence of invisible beings, possessing an organic structure of more refined elements, and adapted to sustain the relations, and perform the functions, of a more exalted and spiritual life? To think of limiting the organic law to the contracted vision of mortals, indicates less of the immortal than appropriately belongs to man. If I am not in error concerning the general law which I have presumed to graduate the organization of matter by the specific degrees of its refinement, the argument would seem to be conclusive, in proof of the existence of invisible spiritual beings.

The idea that there are spirits all around us like the sunbeams, whose influence is in the very air we breathe, may be regarded by some as a pleasant fancy, or an idle superstition. To others, and to the writer, it is the image of divine reality. Will any one reject the thought because he can not see spirit forms through the medium of physical organs? Does the existence of the angels depend on the capacity of mortals to follow them to their bright abodes? Nay; I would as soon deny the being of all living forms which inhabit the sea, because I cannot live in their element. I would rather question the existence of the far off stars, which are only seen through the telescope, or relinquish all faith in Astronomy, because I may not travel up to Orion.

With those dull eyes you may not discern the spirit forms of departed men. No; *you can not*. But is the sphere of mortal vision wide as the range of being? We can not perceive the size and form of the Sun's rays, but we can feel their genial influence, and all nature is made glad and beautiful by the light. Look for the viewless winds. Are they not invisible? Yet who is unconscious that they are above, beneath, around, and within him? "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither goeth." Thus it is with the spirit. If it is not given thee, with the soul's deep eyes, to discern the forms of spiritual life, it still remains for thee—for all who are not buried beneath a concretion of sensuality—to experience their presence and their power.

The individualization and immortality of Mind, is further indicated by the nature and magnitude of its powers. If it were only fitted to perceive material forms, and to note the simple facts and circumstances of outward life, there might be room to doubt the perpetuity of being. But mind is not thus circumscribed. It has a wider and higher sphere, to which it exhibits a direct tendency and specific adaptation. If all the elements of mind are material—in the sense in which we use the term—and its organization destructible, from what source does it derive the power to grasp the first principle of spiritual science? And who will explain to us the philosophy of that mysterious and delightful fascination, which leads the willing mind far out into an ideal world.

Man is not altogether earthly. The decay of the body is not the annihilation of being. If it were otherwise, his thoughts and desires could never reach above the earth. I hold it to be impossible for any being to occupy a sphere, to desire a life, or even to conceive of a condition, which is above the plain of its nature—or that point to which it may arrive in the subsequent unfolding of its faculties. Can the beast conceive of the relations which exist among men? Evidently not, for the obvious reason that such relations form no part of the destiny which awaits him. The highest development of which his nature is susceptible, must necessarily leave him far below the dignity of man's estate.

If what we call death has power to disorganize the soul, to destroy its elements, and swallow up the identity of being to which we so fondly cling, why should man have the least conception of an invisible world and a spiritual life? The idea itself, in its simplest form, is above all that distinguishes the sphere of mere material or animal existence. Man, of all earthly creatures, dwells in this exalted plain. With him the life that shall be—the life of which the present is but the feeble and imperfect beginning—is ever before him, and its divine realities are the eter-

nally unfolding principles of his own nature. All over the world, the idea of immortality is incorporated with the very elements of mind. Neither is it always vague or unsatisfactory. We look forward with a serene joy to the communion of mind with mind, freed from the cold restraints which belong to the present. With a clearer vision, we shall yet read the thrilling memories of the Past, where our divinest thoughts will no more be distorted by inflexible and unmeaning forms of speech, and no arbitrary custom will be left to subvert the great law of spiritual affinity, by which congenial natures meet and mingle together. The idea of such a life is to me the revelation of its existence, while the desire it awakens in the soul is the infallible prophecy of its realization.

There is not a faculty of mind that does not bear the impress of Divinity. The subtle logic of the advocate in the forum; the profound designs of the statesman; the immeasurable grasp of the philosopher; the perception of beauty, and the appreciation of music, are so many deathless testimonials that man is immortal. Even the wildest dream of an erratic fancy, is a higher evidence of the divinity of Mind—the eternity and identity of its being—than the material philosophy has ever furnished for its dark hypothesis.

With these wonderful powers—the harmony of motion, the perfection of life, the intensity of feeling, and the divinity of thought—I should as soon expect that all matter in the Universe will be annihilated, as that the light of a single human intellect will ever be quenched in the oblivion of dissolving forms. Not while these spiritual instincts remain to intimate the existence of the better life, can man be shaken in the ground of his hope. He must be deprived of that reason too, which investigates the eternal laws, as well as the fleeting forms of things, ere I can relinquish mine. You must first extinguish all those burning aspirations in which he mounts to the "highest heaven of invention," or dives like a fire spirit to the depths of material elements and spiritual forces. And then—there are chords, now swept to notes of inspiration, by invisible fingers, whose gentlest touch fills the soul with music. These must be broken, and the last spirit tone hushed in the shock of the falling temple, or I shall yet seek for the indwelling divinity, above the ruins of its earthly shrine. Till then, these powers, and this idea of another life, which every where—in all stages of civilization, and among the savage tribes—attaches itself to the soul—shall be to me the God-written revelation of my eternal life.

"I feel my immortality o'ersweep,
All pains, all groans, all griefs, all fears, and peal,
Like the eternal thunders of the deep,
Into mine ears, this truth,—THOU LIV'ST FOR EVER!"

True Course of Action.

It is evident that there must be a great change in primary education and development, which shall lead to a corresponding change in all human action and intercourse. It is only through, and in accordance with, the free exercise of the benevolent affections, that moral beings can truly and happily deal with each other. Their moral nature precludes the possibility of being favorably influenced in any other way. All arbitrary or coercive measures of every kind and degree, are immoral, and all exclusion of any from confidence and sympathy, necessarily disastrous. It is only by the generous, confiding, and magnanimous appeal of each to the generosity, confidence, and magnanimity of the other, that true harmony can be attained. Nothing short of the entire abandonment of the selfish, arbitrary, and exclusive, and the full, free, and hearty adoption of the benevolent and fraternal principle of action, can answer the purpose. Justice demands the free exercise of love, and nothing but love, from all to all. As all are by nature benevolent and generous, it is unjust for any to act otherwise than benevolently and generously to any. Perfect justice cannot be satisfied with anything short of perfect benevolence, for justice and benevolence are one. To be just to ourselves, we must be confiding and benevolent to others, whatever may be their character or conduct to us.

Psychological Department.

INTERIOR PERCEPTION.

The true idea of human nature and dignity will ever recognize the existence of those spiritual powers—those inherent perceptions of the soul, which enable man to look beyond the sphere of material existence to the brighter glories of the inward world. We may recognize the presence of such powers, even beneath the grossness of the physical nature, in all the manifestations of mental vision existing independently of the outward sense. The following instances, which we extract from the *Univercœlum*, may be profitably noted:

"Barrow, in his interesting book entitled 'The Bible in Spain' gives a singular instance of presentiment: the coming event casting its shadow before. A sailor, on coming on deck in the morning, informed him with deep solemnity that during the night he had been impressed that in a few hours he should meet his death, by drowning. The sailor was the most active and intelligent of the crew. No reason or ridicule could efface the impression that he had received: it seemed written upon his very soul. During the evening the wind arose and freshened to a gale. The sailor in question went aloft to take in sail. While engaged in that duty he lost his hold and footing, and fell overboard. A boat was immediately lowered, and every effort made to save him, but in vain. The narrator saw his face shining out like a thing of light, as he sank fathoms deep beneath the waves.

The case which follows was narrated to the writer by a clergyman of Ohio, distinguished for ability and truthfulness, as occurring to himself. We give his words as nearly as they recur to us.

I was engaged at that time in pursuing theological studies with the Rev. Mr. G. in a village in the vicinity of Boston. During the night I seemed to enter a place which I had never before seen. I walked up the main street, which was shaded with large trees, noticing the prominent buildings as I passed them. It seemed to be Sunday evening; the shops were closed, and all business was suspended. The street led me to a large building containing a hall. I saw horses and carriages, in great numbers, standing near. Entering the hall, I found a large audience gathered. It was a meeting for religious purposes. At last the preacher rose up, and his features impressed themselves upon me, and his very words, although he seemed an utter stranger. The vision made a deep impression upon my mind; it seemed not a dream but a reality.

On the Sunday evening ensuing I walked with a friend to attend a religious meeting in a neighboring village where I had never been. On entering the street it seemed familiar to me, and I remembered it to be the place I had seen in a vision a few days preceding. Anxious to see if my dream would correspond with the reality throughout, I pursued the path which I seemed to have taken before, till it led me to the building, which I at once recognized. Entering it, the hall was familiar, and when the preacher arose, I knew him at once. The street, building, and preacher corresponded in every particular with those impressed on my consciousness during the previous vision.

A lady in Cincinnati has the remarkable gift of presentiment in relation to events relating to occurrences that are to transpire in her own family. She seems to be impressed with the coming event about twenty-four hours previously. If a letter is to arrive, or a visiting friend, she is duly impressed with it. Although a skeptic with regard to the more recondite and abstruse facts of Psychology, her own repeated experience has convinced her that the faculty of fore-knowledge, within the limited sphere alluded to, exists in her organization. Instances of this kind are by no means uncommon. A lady residing in a neighboring city, has the same faculty, and has been known to arise at an unusual hour in the morning to prepare for the reception of friends, who arrived at the precise hour which she predicted, when no intelli-

gence of the contemplated visit had reached her through any of the ordinary channels of perception.

Mr. John O. W., the well-known reformer of Ohio, is gifted with remarkable interior perceptions. In consequence of his simple and beautiful habits of living, his higher faculties at periods become remarkably active. Some time since he met a friend from whom he had been separated for a considerable length of time. On meeting they embraced, and were deeply affected. So strongly was Mr. W. influenced, that he sank into a state of trance, in which the external form seemed entirely inanimate. His friends, by the magnetic force of sympathy and will, succeeded in re-establishing the connection between the spirit and its outward form. On regaining the use of speech, Mr. W. stated that he, while apparently unconscious, had passed into a state of great light and freedom, and seemed to hover over the outward body, which was distinctly visible to him, and lay below like an abandoned shell. Mr. W. is a man of perfect truthfulness, and this fact was of actual occurrence."

Strange Act of Somnambulism.

A most singular instance of somnambulism is that of a deceased Hampshire baronet. This gentleman was nearly driven to distraction, by the fact that every night he went to bed in a shirt, and every morning awoke naked, without the smallest trace of the missing garment being discovered. Hundreds of shirts disappeared in this manner; and as there was no fire in his room, it was impossible to account for the mystery. The servant believed their master to be mad; and even he began to fancy himself to be bewitched. In this conjuncture he implored an intimate friend to sleep in the same room with him, and ascertain by what manner of midnight visitant his garment was so strangely removed. The friend accordingly took his station in the haunted chamber; and lo! as the clock struck one, the unfortunate baronet, who had previously given audible intimation of being fast asleep, rose from his bed, rekindled with a match the candle that had been extinguished, then deliberately opened the door and quitted the room. His astonished friend followed; saw him open, in succession, a variety of doors, and pass along several passages, traverse an open court, and eventually reached the stable yard, where he divested himself of his shirt, and disposed of it in an old dung heap, into which he thrust it by means of a pitchfork. Having finished this extraordinary operation, without taking the smallest heed of his friend, who stood looking on, and plainly saw that he was walking in his sleep, he returned to the house, carefully reclosed the doors, re-extinguished the light, and returned to bed, when the following morning he awoke as usual, stripped of his shirt. The astonished eye-witness of this extraordinary scene, instead of apprising the sleep-walker of what had occurred, insisted that a companion should sit up with him, choosing to have additional testimony to the truth of the statement he was about to make; and the same singular events were renewed, without the slightest change or deviation. The two witnesses accordingly divulged all they had seen to the baronet; who, though at first incredulous, became of course convinced, when on proceeding to the stable yard, several dozens of shirts were discovered; though it was surmised that as many more had been previously removed by one of the helpers, who probably looked upon the hoard as stolen goods concealed by some thief.

Singular Presentiment.

The *Baltimore Argus* says that Mrs. Dorethea Foos, who died at her residence in Ensor street, near Madison, on Saturday evening, at the advanced age of ninety-nine years, dreamed some nine years since that she would die on the 5th of April, 1845, and her acquaintances have often heard her state her presentiment. About two years ago she accidentally fell out of bed and broke her hip, and otherwise injured herself, so that all hopes of her recovery were given up; but she steadily insisted that she would get about again, and not die until the 5th of April 1845, and singular though it may be, yet such is the fact, she did live until Saturday, the 5th of April, and died on that day.

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

R. P. AMBLER, EDITOR.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., FEBRUARY 1, 1851.

SOURCES OF INSPIRATION.

The idea of divine inspiration, being originally conceived in the infancy of the race, has been intermingled with the numerous errors and superstitions which then prevailed, and has come down to us in a perverted form, which has little resemblance to the beautiful reality from which it sprang. In contemplating phenomena of a mysterious and wonderful nature, the human mind has ever been prone to refer them to a miraculous or supernatural agency, rather than investigate the established causes by which they are naturally and inevitably produced. On this principle the manifestations of any superior faculty of mind, or the fervent aspirations of a loving and trusting soul, have been attributed by many to a direct and personal intercourse with God. It is well known that individuals have existed in different ages, who, by some peculiar endowment of the mental constitution, have manifested a remarkable power of prophetic vision, and an ability to discover facts and principles which lay beyond the comprehension of ordinary minds. Such persons have been supposed to hold immediate communion with the Supreme Being, and to receive the influx of divine truth which flows spontaneously from the Eternal Mind. Thus Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Christ, are denominated *inspired* men, and their impressions recorded in the Primitive History, have been revered as the infallible teachings of unerring Wisdom. Moreover, it has been imagined that this gift of inspiration, imparted to a few individuals at certain periods, is now no longer bestowed on man, and that the transcript of impressions primitively received, constitutes the only reliable oracle of divine truth, which has been, or ever will be, presented to the world.

In opposition to these views of inspiration, the truth-seeking mind will naturally aspire to more consistent and expanded conceptions. It will appear on reflection to be entirely incompatible with the principles of the divine economy, that the Supreme Being, whose essence pervades the boundless Universe, should personally reveal his will and purpose to a few selected individuals on the earth, and that all the truth which He ever designed to communicate to man, should be imparted at particular periods embraced in the long night of heathen ignorance. It must be considered that the provisions of divine goodness are not special, but general; that the revelations of divine truth do not proceed from any direct interposition of Providence, but are made to flow from natural and appropriate sources; that in the whisperings of holy thought that come to the soul, God descends not to man, but man is lifted up towards Him, so that he communes with the interior reality, and drinks from streams that issue far away from the eternal throne. In the light of such reflections, it will be seen that the gift of inspiration does not consist in any special act of Deity with reference to his creatures, but depends rather on the peculiar relation which they sustain to the innumerable fountains of truth that surround us in the expanded Universe.

It is freely admitted, that, as God is the supreme source of existence and the embodiment of all perfection, inspiration must proceed *primarily* from the breathings of his Spirit. Whatever truth is now existing in the world—whatever interior light has irradiated the darkened earth—whatever revelations of divine wisdom have blessed the human mind, have flowed, through intermediate channels, from the Infinite Fountain. Yet it must be also admitted that the divine Being does not communicate with man *individually*, or without the presence of an intervening medium. The ascending series of gradations which form so many connecting links between us and God, would render such a mode of communication unnatural, and therefore impossible. An expanse of being reaches far around, and ascends high above us—an impassable gulf separating the finite from the Infinite,

which effectually forbids an intercourse with Deity in the manner in which one individual converses with another. While, then, the Divine Mind may be regarded as the original and primary source of all inspiration, it is evident that the only way in which this inspiration can be derived, is to seek the subordinate and intermediate sources from which divine truth is caused to flow. These sources are open alike to every seeking and aspiring mind, and the gift of inspiration may be enjoyed by all who earnestly invoke its presence.

We may observe that there is a source of inspiration in the visible Universe. It is possible for man to enjoy communion with God through the medium of his created works. While the divine glory is concealed beneath the veil of materiality, its reflection may be seen in the beautiful and wondrous forms around us; and the deep utterances of the presiding Power, though lost to the inattentive ear, may be heard in all the silent and mysterious workings of Nature. In the broad expanse of material existence, God has presented us with a volume which is teeming with immortal truth;—a volume which needs not to be translated or transcribed—which is not subject to the errors and imperfections of human works, but which glows with the beauty of divine wisdom, and teaches the lesson of infinite love—whose every line is traced by an almighty hand, and whose every thought comes fresh from the pervading Spirit. Those who have been accustomed to seek for inspiration only within the lids of an ancient book, are here furnished with a volume which bears the impress of a nobler origin, and contains truths of a diviner nature. Lessons of purity and goodness are imparted from each visible form, and a divine emanation, stealing from the hidden depths of Creation, sinks into the recesses of the heart with a silent, but impressive power. In the blooming flowers and the sparkling streams, in the glowing sun and the glittering stars, the voice of God is whispering to the soul;—whispering of truth that is more beautiful than light, and of love exhaustless as the unfathomed deep. Hence he who comes into communion with nature—he, I mean, who not only gazes on its beauties, but reads its inward soul, is truly and divinely inspired;—he breathes in the divine afflatus which is ever flowing from the Supreme Mind, and drinks from the streams of ineffable joy that spring up in the expanded soul. In the beauty, order and harmony of all things, he communes with God; and as he listens to the still, small voice, echoing in every part of the universal Temple, his mind is impressed with thoughts divine, and his lips are moved with the gushing of mighty truths, which rise in the ecstatic strains of poetic fancy, or burst forth in the flood of burning eloquence. It is well to observe that Jesus and the Apostles derived much of their inspiration from Nature; that the simple and beautiful lessons which came so eloquently from their lips, were but the transcript of that unwritten revelation which has been estampé on the volume of Creation.

Again, we may find another source of inspiration in the world above—in the concourse of angelic beings who dwell in mansions not made with hands. Lying between us and the boundless vortex of the Divine Mind are the celestial spheres, and lingering around the shadowy paths of earth, are the spirits of the departed, who form an intermediate link in the chain of being which reaches from man to Deity. Therefore, through the medium of angel-groups, the breathings of the Great Spirit may pass down to the human soul. Spirits are the appointed messengers of God to convey his truths to the children of humanity. They are with us, though we see them not; they speak to us, though we may not hear their voice. In all the walks of life we are visited with their angelic love. Obeying the mandates of a higher Power, they come and whisper to us thoughts of heavenly purity. As we bask in the beamings of the day, they shed a brighter and holier light within, and when wrapt in the deep slumbers of the night, they unfold to the view of the wakeful spirit,

"Visions all beautiful."

This inspiration from above may be enjoyed by all to a greater or less extent. Its presence may not be fully realized, yet it is felt unconsciously in the soul. Impressions come to the mind so imperceptibly, and are so interwoven with the natural process

of thought, that we do not always recognize the source from which they spring; but in the lays of the poet, the researches of the philosopher, and the dreams of the prophet, we might discern among the flowers of truth the traces of an angel's footstep. Leaving, then, the old conception that the days of inspiration are past, let us feel that there is a source of truth open for man now; and instead of supposing that God comes down to some favored few to impart the lessons of divine wisdom, we should rather imagine that He has established a fountain of inspiration in the spiritual world to which all may gain access. Only let the soul be exalted and refined—let it be free from the impure and degrading influences of earth, and indulge in those lofty aspirations which lead it heavenward, and inspiring truth—sublime and beautiful—shall issue from the depths of visible Nature, and from the heights of the celestial Universe.

R. F. A.

SPIRIT RAPPINGS.

The evidence of spiritual presence and power given through the medium of electrical vibrations, or rappings, so far from being weakened by the continued investigations of the public, is constantly becoming more and more irresistible. To candid and inquiring minds the most incontestible proofs have been furnished, that these sounds are referable to no other than a spiritual origin, and that they are the means employed by the denizens of a higher sphere to communicate with the inhabitants of earth. Among the numerous confirmations of this fact, is the superior intelligence manifested by these invisible agents, in responding to test questions which have been proposed, either orally or mentally. As an illustration of this intelligence, which has proved so great a mystery to the votaries of a material philosophy, we propose to make the following extract from a lengthy statement appearing in the New York Weekly Tribune, which was drawn up by an individual whom the editor pronounces to be a "gentleman of intelligence and truth, who has been for more than a year a close and constant observer of the singular phenomena" of which he writes.—Ed.

On one occasion I heard of the death of a friend, by railroad accident. I sought an interview with his spirit at the house of Mrs. Fish. I inquired of the spirits if I could have a communication from the spirit I then thought of. I soon had a reply that I could. Said I: 'Is that spirit present?' 'Yes.' 'Will he rap to his name?' 'Yes.' I wrote down several, as before, and when I pointed to the right one the rapping came. 'How did you come to your death?' Raps at "Accident." 'What kind of accident?' Raps at "Railroad." 'How many days have you been dead?' Answer—"One." [Correct.] 'How many children have you left?' Answer—"Five." 'Have you any with you?' Answer—"One." This, on subsequent inquiry, I found correct, though I did not then know it. The spirit then called for the alphabet and spelled out: "I am happy, and want you to acquaint my wife that I am so." This was T. J., of B.

On another occasion, I received a letter from a friend stopping for a short time at Detroit, wishing me to inquire of the spirits, among other things, if they would ever rap for him. I at this time was in much trouble and perplexity in regard to the matter, and I hastily replied that it was better for him to let the matter entirely alone—that if the spirits should tell him they would rap for him, he would be placed in a very awkward situation, inasmuch as at every little sound that he might occasionally hear, he would feel disposed to attribute it to a spirit. After I had mailed this letter, on the same day, several friends from a distance called upon me, and desired my company to the "Rappings." I went. We (as is usual) found several persons in waiting upon the spirits. All being seated in a circle around a large table, the spirits were called for, and immediately one commenced rapping very loudly and very strongly upon my chair, so as to cause me to feel the jar quite sensibly, and attracted the attention of all present. Commencing at my right hand, each in the circle inquired if the spirits would communicate with him or her, and all received a negative until it came my turn. I said I had

no questions to ask, and desired the spirits to communicate with some other present: but it insisted that I must ask questions, and rapped so strongly on my chair as to fairly make it tremble. It occurred to me then I would inquire for my friend who had written me. I asked if I had received a letter that day. Ans.—"Yes." 'Will you rap to the name of the person from whom I received it?' Ans.—"Yes." It then indicated the correct name. 'What is it concerning?' Ans.—"Spirit Knockings." I asked if it would rap for this person, and was told it would in one year. I asked if in Michigan? Ans.—"No." In Wisconsin? "No." In New York? "No." In Pennsylvania? "Yes." The friend was then in Michigan, was going to Wisconsin with the intention of remaining for years, but has since been unexpectedly called to his parental home in Pennsylvania, in consequence of the sickness of his mother. The year has not expired.

I will now take a case that I have from the mouth of Mrs. B., an intelligent and highly respectable lady of the city of Rochester. The lady's mother, an elderly lady, but in full possession of a natural, vigorous mind, had become very much interested in the spiritual phenomena, and strongly impressed with its truthful reality. She had lost a most-loved husband and son, and sought frequent opportunities of holding sweet communion with these departed ones. The daughter, wishing to convince the mother of the imposition that was being practiced upon her, accompanied her mother on one of these visits. The spirits of her dear father and brother made such communications and manifestations as to perfectly astound her; and, instead of convincing her mother, she was nearly overwhelmed herself. Determined to satisfy herself beyond all doubt, she went home, and, going into a room by herself, wrote a nonsensical, disjointed sentence or more, commencing it with "Dolly," and folding it up, took it in her hand, and proceeded to make the spirits another call. The spirit of her brother was ready to communicate. 'Now,' said Mrs. B., 'if you are really the spirit of my brother, and wish to convince me of this fact, you will please to spell out to me what I have written upon the paper which I hold in my hand.' It commenced spelling the sentence, the alphabet being repeated by Mrs. Fish, but she stopped on the first few words being spelled, and said, "This spirit is a fool," and she wouldn't repeat the alphabet for it. Mrs. B. told her to proceed, and see what the spirit would spell out. She did so, and all that was written upon the paper was spelled out, *verbatim et literatim*.

When talking with the spirit of her father, Mrs. B. said, 'Now, if you are my father, take hold of my foot.' The spirit replied, "When you sit down to supper, I will." Supper being ready soon, she took her seat at the table, and a spirit called for the alphabet to be repeated. It was done. The spirit spelled out, "My dear A., I gratified your every wish that I could while living; I will do so now." Upon that she felt a hand grasp her foot. About this she said she could not be mistaken, and it was not possible for any one present, as they were then seated, to have deceived her.

On another occasion, I heard this same lady call upon a departed friend in the following manner: 'Is the spirit of the one I now think of present?' As soon as she received a response in the affirmative, she proceeded thus: 'Will you rap to your name?' 'Yes.' The correct name was responded to. 'How came you to your death?' Ans.—"By drowning." 'In a river?' "No." 'In a pond?' "No." 'In the ocean?' "No." 'In a lake?' "Yes." 'What lake?' Ans.—"Erie." 'Were you on a boat?' "Yes." 'What boat?' "The Griffith." 'Were you pushed overboard?' "No; I jumped with the hope of getting to shore." 'How soon was your body found?' Ans.—"Seven days." 'Who found it?' "My brother." 'How far from shore?' Ans.—"Two miles." 'What had you on?' Ans.—"A brown linen and worsted dress, my stockings, and a shoe on one foot." In addition, the spirits told how many children she had left, where they were, and who had charge of them. And I was assured by Mrs. B. that the spirits had answered correctly in every particular.

On another occasion, a gentlemanly stranger entered the room and announced to the company that he was directly from Detroit

on his way East, and circumstances required he should take the next train of cars. He expressed a desire for an opportunity of testing the spirits. All readily and cheerfully conceded to him a preference. One gentleman inquired his name, but he very politely declined giving it, remarking he had reserved that as a test. He took his seat, and with the air of one familiar in putting questions and making investigations, proceeded to question the invisibles. The spirits told him his name—(in the manner heretofore suggested in other cases)—told him how many names he had (three)—the number of letters in each name,—that he was a lawyer by profession—an Englishman by birth,—that he was a widower,—had had two wives (in answer to a *mental* question),—that he had had fourteen children,—that eight were living,—and that he was fifty years old,—that one of his wives' name was Georgiana,—that he had had five of that name in his family,—that he had been fourteen and one-half days from home—and that he lived in Montreal—all of which the gentleman afterward assured us was correct. His name was Edward Adam Clark, an officer of the English Government.

Reliability of Spiritual Communications.

The simple fact that an intercourse has been established between us and the inhabitants of the celestial home, is supported by an amount of evidence which cannot be successfully controverted. Hundreds of individuals who are respected for their intelligence and sound judgment, have been convinced, not merely by the testimony of others, but by demonstrations which appealed directly to their own senses, that it is possible for man on earth to commune with the spirits of the departed. Indeed many, by the force of such evidence, have been redeemed from the cold regions of skepticism, and brought forth from the shadows of doubt and fear, to rejoice in the reality of an immortal existence. A question, however, seems to naturally arise as to the degree of *reliability* which should be attached to communications received from the Spirit-world. Some imagine that the spirits holding intercourse with mortals are *evil* in their nature, and hence that instructions imparted from this source should be utterly disregarded; while others have supposed that the spirit, on being disengaged from the material organism, enters into a *perfect* state, and consequently that the messages given by the inhabitants of the Second Sphere, should be always truthful and faultless. Both of these opinions seem to be on the extreme, and are equally at variance with the more rational conceptions which should be entertained of the heavenly state. According to instructions received from the departed, we are to believe that spirits are neither perfect on the one hand, nor inherently evil on the other, but that, like all things else, they are in a *progressive* state, advancing towards higher spheres of glory and perfection. Consequently we may suppose that communications having a spiritual origin, are reliable to an extent corresponding with the degree of progression to which the communicating spirit has attained. If, for example, we enter into communion with a spirit which is only partially unfolded, and has not yet outgrown its previous false impressions, the communications received will be correspondingly imperfect; but if, by a pure and elevated state of mind, we attract spirits of a higher order, whose perceptions are unclouded by the shadows of earth, the messages we obtain will be characterized by truthfulness and wisdom. In all cases we are required to exercise reason, in determining the reliability of any spiritual instruction. We should remember that as no finite being is perfect, so no communication from the departed is *infallible*; yet, on the other hand, we should not forget that the teachings of all pure and advanced spirits, uniting with the voice of the inner being, constitute for us a safe and *reliable* guide of thought and action.

B. F. A.

If we would obtain the truth, it must be won by the attraction existing in our own souls. When the inner sanctuary is made a fitting place for its residence, it will flow to it through the influence of a mutual affinity. In this fact we learn the true philosophy of inspiration;—the inherent purity of the soul will attract elements of kindred nature.

An Impromptu Offering.

The following lines were received from a female correspondent, and we cannot resist the temptation to present them to our readers. We trust the writer will excuse the liberty we take, when she remembers that each expression of the truth-loving soul, may excite a kindred flame in the hearts of others:

"I have read many numbers of your excellent paper, and would tell you how highly I prize it, but find that words are inadequate to express the deep pleasure and profit I have received in their perusal. How pure, beautiful, and soul-elevating are the sentiments that speak from each reason-illuminated page. I rejoice that a "Messenger" so fraught with truth, is, with other spiritual teachers (such as "Nature's Divine Revelations," the "Great Harmonia, &c."), going forth to dispel the darkness and superstition that has so long held sway in this our otherwise beautiful earth.

Messenger of peace and love,
Speed thee onward in thy flight;
Chasing doubt and gloom away,
Turning darkness into light.

Speed thee onward—never rest,
Thine's a glorious work begun;
Right must triumph over wrong
E'er the victory be won.

Firm in hope, thy course pursue;
Truth o'er error will prevail;
Boldly meet each threatening foe,—
God's appointed cannot fail."

To Our Patrons.

Subscribers to the Messenger are reminded that the present number completes the first half of the current volume. Those who have paid for only six months, will perceive that the appropriate time has arrived for a renewal of their subscriptions; and we trust that all who have gone with us thus far in our course of investigation, will be induced to continue their patronage. To the friends who have generously strengthened our hands in this enterprise, we present our grateful acknowledgements. With their assistance, we have been enabled to accomplish even more than was at first anticipated. Subscriptions have come in gradually from almost every part of the Union, not as the result of any special effort of our own, but from the attraction furnished by our little sheet. Still, in order to successfully prosecute the work on which we have entered, we shall need the aid of all our present patrons, with many more added to the list. May we not venture to hope that each subscriber will feel a personal interest in the prosperity of the Messenger, and that he will use his influence in such a manner as to increase the number of its readers? —Ed.

Back Numbers.

Back numbers of the Messenger will be furnished to all subscribers who desire to begin at the commencement of the volume. We should say, however, that the edition of Nos. 1 and 9 is at present exhausted, so that these numbers cannot be supplied until they are reprinted, which will be some time during the current year.

Sample numbers for gratuitous distribution will be cheerfully furnished to our friends, who may desire in this way to extend the circulation of the paper.

Correspondents who have heretofore contributed to the Messenger, are desired to continue their favors; and we shall hope that many more, inspired by the irresistible influence of Truth, will be induced to do likewise.

The series of poems entitled "Glimpses of the Spirit-Land," will be continued next week. We did not receive the manuscript of No. 5 in season for the present number.

Poetry.

SONNETS.

BY S. H. LLOYD.

I.

THE WELCOME.

Once more with sunny heart and beaming eyes
 I welcome thee—the magic of thy Art,
 It is the welcome poured upon the skies
 When summer breathes, and buds begin to start;—
 For thou hast oped new founts within my soul,
 And spread new beauty round this heart of mine,
 And with sweet pictures traced its hidden scroll—
 With characters whose tints are all Divine.
 'T is not the tinsel that this life displays
 That captivates and chains my soul to thee,
 But that thy heart each tone and look portrays,
 - Revealing there thy soul's rich jewelry.
 'T is this that makes my heart with thine entwine,
 And me a pilgrim at thy holy shrine.

II.

THE QUESTION.

Hast thou not gazed at eventide alone
 On some bright star that gem'd the dewy sky,
 And felt that Love made that sweet star thy own,
 And felt e'er more the soothing star-light nigh?
 So does my heart retain the good it drank
 While listening to thy speech that on it fell,
 Entranced like flowers beside the streamlet's bank,
 That musing, owned the magic of the spell;—
 And as that stream reveals in its sweet flow
 Each gushing rill through beds of roses strained,
 The falling spray, the rosy-tinted bow,
 And changing skies that on its bosom rained;
 So doth thy speech reveal the hidden sky,
 The founts and rills that in thy spirit lie.

III.

THE WISH.

I would that while I muse and sing of thee,
 I might then hold thy trembling hand in mine,
 And in the blue within thy star-lit eye might see
 Whether my own is there enshrined in thine!—
 Or like the leaves that glide neglected by,
 Or often heedless trample 'neath our feet,
 Or warm south winds that pass us with a sigh,
 Thou dost these humble breathings greet.
 E'en then the thought would not oppress my soul,
 Nor vain regrets across my bosom steal,
 For then, in thee, I'd own thy sweet control
 To lift the veil that hides my fond Ideal.
 Not thus this welcome comes to thee, I know,—
 The cloud reject the stream it taugth to flow?

IV.

THE APOLOGY.

If while you read these lines I've penned so free,
 The thought should softly steal across thy heart
 That I too much by Love have mused of thee,
 Let now the thought no more in thee have part;—
 It is that thou hast stood 'twixt me and all
 My soul has loved in woman's soul and name,
 And canst sweet glimpses to my soul recall
 Of all that Love has kindled into flame;—
 The silent joy that on my heart was shed,
 Like some sweet star that lingered o'er my way,
 The secret thought that o'er my footsteps led
 And fashioned me by its controlling sway;—
 Forgive me, then, if now these pictured skies
 I see engraven on thy soul-lit eyes.

V.

GLIMPSES.

With vision rapt, as towards the spangled skies
 The lone Astronomer doth bend his sight,
 And nightly there, within the blue, espies
 Each shining orb that gems the brow of Night,
 And finds his joy to note each changing view,
 That bursts upon his sight, a joy new-born,
 And never tires, but finds his task more new
 'Till o'er the hills there breaks the coming Morn;
 So doth my heart ne'er tire to gaze on thee,
 Sweet star that Love has planted in my sky,
 Which on my soul-lit disk I now may see,
 And still in loving thee would draw more nigh!—
 Tires not while I recall thy looks and tones,
 As shells their loves within their sea-washed cones.

VI.

THE SHRINE.

What joy is thine that through thy spirit flows,
 The gift that nature gave thy generous mind,—
 A woman's soul that through thine eyelids glows,
 Where truthfulness and beauty sit enshrined;—
 And these so tempered in so fine a mould
 That there sweet Poesy may claim her bower,
 From whose fair shrine there spring such sweets untold,—
 The rich aroma of thy soul's sweet flower,
 That 'round thy form an atmosphere there seems
 To make all hearts for seeing thee more fair,—
 Through which the beauty of thy spirit gleams
 Like star-light through the pure, translucent air;—
 And thus entranced I go from seeing thee,
 More worshipful, those rays had met in me.

VII.

THE FAREWELL.

Once more thy music dies upon my ears,
 Like distant waves upon the sea-washed shore,
 My soul is hushed, and now in silence hears
 The parting voice it ne'er may listen more;—
 But still my moistened heart within, doth lie
 Like grass and flowers beneath the sheltered wood,
 Through which the falling rain-drops from the sky
 Between the leaves invade the solitude.
 Ah ne'er, though seas may roll 'twixt thee and me,
 And life bewilder by its toil and care,
 Can I forget the good thou wert to me,
 Or Love the blended sweets it used to share;—
 Forgive the hand that thus in silence bore
 The torch, no other soul may kindle more.—*New Englander.*

THOUGHTS.

BY C. D. STUART.

BRAVE Thoughts are pioneers of mighty deeds;
 They stir the sea of souls, as winds control
 The currents of the surge, which ever roll
 Where'er the boundary of the ocean leads:
 They pierce the dimness of old temples, and old creeds
 Break, as the fierce tempest breaks the fragile reeds.
 They are like axe-men, who go forth to wake
 The sleeping echoes of the wilderness,
 And plant new seeds of progress where they break
 Earth's virgin soil, which sun nor shade did bless:
 They are the Heralds, in whose pathway press
 Strong millions to new eras—Lo! they make
 The golden ages, unto which aspire
 All human souls, as light cleaves unto fire!

~~~~~  
Souls see each other clearAt one glance, as two drops of rain in air  
Might look into each other, had they life.

## Miscellaneous Department.

## The Beautiful.

List, reader, list, and I will tell what is beautiful :—

A good man struggling with misfortune, and preserving untainted his reputation.

A dutiful child obeying the mandates of parents, and walking in the way of righteousness.

Sinful mortality on bended knees, craving from on High a pardon for past transgressions : "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

Mortality relieving the wants of mortality by advancing the cause of the destitute.

For 'tis most beautiful to roam 'mid the forsaken haunts of despair, to still the groans of sorrow, and spread bread on the empty tables of the famishing. Ay! and rescue the fallen, and make glad the overcharged heart of the oppressed :—

"Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,  
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;  
And, with some sweet oblivion's antidote,  
Cleanse the foul bosom of that perilous stuff  
That weighs upon the heart."

And beautiful is woman around the favored bed of sickness, pillowing the pale cheek, bathing and binding up the fainting brow, and, like a form of brightness, whispering "hope" where else there had been none :—

When man is waxing frail,  
And his hands are thin and weak,  
And his lips are parched and pale,  
And wan and white his cheek—  
Oh! then doth woman prove  
Her constancy and love.

'Tis beautiful to cast over the fables of the brother worm the broad and divine mantle of mercy, and to forgive thy erring sister, as thou wouldst that Heaven may be merciful to thee.

God has given us a beautiful world as a transitory abode, and the rivers, the streams, the fields, the flowers, the birds, the trees, and all around are beautiful.

The sun is beautiful as he ascends the sparkling sky, and the moon as she reflects her brilliant rays o'er the heads of all.

And thou, oh! High and Holy One, art the summit of all beauty :

Beautiful is thy realm!  
And thy throne!  
Thy promise to man,  
And thy protecting care!

The angels of Paradise are beautiful; the spirit's ascent is beautiful; the soul in its purified condition is beautiful.

## The Printing Press.

There it is, like a huge volcano, belching forth fire, smoke, ashes, and lava; little, compared to the mighty whole which issues therefrom, can be converted to the good of man. But even as it is, let us not despise this mighty engine, for it is designed for noble and glorious ends—it is designed for no less a purpose than bringing about the regeneration of the human species. Although, as yet, the press has been, for the most part, the unwilling slave of error, and the instrument of kings, priests, aristocrats, and imbeciles, in carrying out their irrational, ambitious, uncivilizing designs—but despair not, ye lovers of truth, for it will ere long trample these minions, the imbeciles, under its now trammelled feet!—Even now it shows a disposition to revolt! Even now Truth is to be seen smiling in the distance of its operations, while monarchs stand and frown—priests scowl—aristocrats tremble, and imbeciles are sent to the tomb of all the capulets! Yes, monarchs frown, priests scowl, and aristocrats tremble—for it no longer exclusively obeys their infernal mandates! Reader, did you ever see a printing press? That small machine, insignificant in itself, but mighty in its results, is destined to be the grave of ignorance—the tomb of monarchy—the sepulchre of priests—the vault of aristocracy—the mausoleum

of error! The press is designed to mature the mind of man—that mind which is at present only in its infancy; it is designed to eradicate error, and to establish truth; it is designed to dethrone vice and folly, and to establish in their stead, virtue and wisdom.

## Reward of Benevolence.

Some thirty years since, a lad of one of our Eastern States, about ten years of age, was sent by his employer to carry a basket, heavily laden with wares, to a purchaser. While staggering under its weight up a somewhat steep hill, a gentleman of about thirty years proffered his assistance, and beguiled the tediousness of the way by a pleasant anecdote, good advice, and kind words.

They parted—fifteen years passed away—the senior of these two, now nearly fifty years of age, sat in his study with a melancholy countenance and a sad heart. His door opened, and his young and fascinating daughter, just blooming into womanhood, entered to announce that a gentleman desired to see her father. "Show him in," said he, "my darling daughter, and do you, my child, leave us to ourselves." The old gentleman entered. "Well, sir," was his salutation, "have you considered my proposition?" "I have, and have determined, happen what may, I will not force or sway, by any act of mine, the will of my child. She shall be left to her own free choice." "Then, sir, to-morrow, by three o'clock, your property must go into the hands of the sheriff, unless you find some friend to pay the twenty thousand dollars." This he said with a sneer, and coldly bowing, left the house. The poor father's heart was racked. "I am a beggar—my daughter is homeless—I have no friend to offer assistance in this hour of my severest trial."

In the midst of these bitter reflections, again his daughter entered, introducing a gentleman of some twenty-eight years of age—a stranger. "Am I in the presence of Mr. G——?" was his opening remark, which being affirmatively answered, he continued by saying that he was a successful merchant in New York, had heard of the misfortunes of Mr. G——, and come on purpose to ask the amount of his liabilities, that he might loan the necessary funds to relieve his wants. Nor was he shocked at the mention of the large amount of twenty thousand dollars. He handed him his check, which was duly honored—the father was once more a happy man—his daughter was not homeless—he had found some friend to pay, despite the sneer of his hard-hearted creditor. "But pray, sir," said he, agitated, "to what am I indebted for this munificent kindness, from an entire stranger?" "Perhaps you have forgotten," was the reply, "that some fifteen years since you aided a friendless boy, of ten years of age, to carry his loaded basket up a hill—that you gave good advice and kindly words. I am that boy. I followed your advice—I have lived honestly—I have gained wealth—and now, after many years, I have come to return to you, kind sir, the bread you then so freely cast upon the waters."

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

We have also for sale an interesting pamphlet, entitled "Philosophy of Modern Miracles, or the Relations of Spiritual Causes to Physical Effects." By "a Dweller in the Temple." Price 25 cents.

TERMS.—The SPIRIT MESSENGER will be issued every Saturday, by R. P. AMBler, from his office in Elm Street, a few rods west of the Post Office, 2d story in Byers' building, directly under the office of the Hampden Post. Price of subscription \$2 per annum, payable in all cases in advance. For a remittance of \$10, six copies will be forwarded.

Printed for the Publisher, by G. W. WILSON, Book and Job Printer, corner Main and State Streets, Springfield, Mass.