

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

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

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The Principles of Nature.

THE AGENCY OF GOD AND THE AGENCY OF SPIRITS.

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 242.]

CONTRIBUTED FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,

BY W. M. FERNALD.

I have not gone through with this, perhaps to some of you, dry statement, for nothing. I know that man needs—I know that it is his nature to rest on God. And if stern philosophy at first seems to do away with His personality, profound reflection restores it as ever. And we may receive special influences from Him. Why, when an angel or spirit approaches us, it is in one sense necessity, in another free will. How do we extend our assistance to suffering humanity. When you see an object of distress, poor, piteous, destitute, on the road-side, perishing of hunger, you go both voluntarily and involuntarily to his or her relief. You cannot remain indifferent. The fountains of your nature are stirred to their most melting depths, and you are attracted or impelled irresistibly to extend all the aid you can. Here is necessity. You *cannot*—no, you have physical ability, but no moral ability to control your physical powers. You have therefore *no* ability to remain indifferent. You go to the sufferer because you cannot help it, and yet your will is as free to do it as it can be, because it is your choice and delight.

So an angel—guardian of your slumbers, watcher over your dangers and temptations, if you fall by the way, or get enticed, or become suddenly involved in danger, is there on the spot to help you;—to inspire your mind, to prompt thought, to lead you away; and perhaps many others impress and influence other minds for you. Why do they come? Precious nature! they are attracted by a law as irresistible as the steel following the magnet. It is their love, and their connection with you, and your united natures, which establishes the certainty. And how *free* they are! behold, necessity and freedom meet together, they kiss each other. What is an argument compared with the sight of this clear truth? The angels of our guard can no more keep away from our conditions and wants, than the mother can neglect her child. Never a greater necessity, never a greater freedom. As sure and inevitable as fate, and yet all from this personal, conscious will.

Now, carry the argument or the truth up to the Deity. I say there is the same personality. And what if all is law, and necessity, and cause and effect? Is it not all, too, mind and will? But, because mind and will are law, let us not say there is no mind nor will. These are simply the *higher* law. But can it be possible, says one, that we ever receive special influences or impressions from the Deity as we do from an angel? I say yes, certainly, often. Do not be startled with the thought, for it is pure and beautiful and natural as the ever flowing tides and the rising and setting of the sun. It is *higher* nature, that is all. If it is more difficult of comprehension, it is only because it is more vast. There must be mind in the Center, else there were no man in the circumference. And must not that mind operate as mind? It operates by necessity, as an angel's, as a man's mind, but by the same free will. What an immeasurable subject is this? And yet I feel the logical truth of it. I know not the occasions. I cannot, no man can, present the instances of the intercession of the Deity, as we most surely can present a number of beautiful cases of angelic intercession, such as no skepticism can evade, and the proofs of which are overwhelming. Have we not done so in the lectures we have

given? Many, many are the instances, where suffering and needy man has been ministered to by the invisible guardians of our life and peace, and the lives of eminent men, Jung Stilling, for instance, are copious proofs of this spiritual agency. Now, if we can go to the heaven next above this planet, for evidences of spiritual angelic guide and influence, may we not go to the heaven above, or interior to that, and to another, and another, drawing nearer and nearer to the great Divine Source, till we approach the *most* interior, the Center of all life and light, the Divine Mind in particular? And, while I would not attempt to wing my adventurous flight to heights beyond imagination, or to pierce to the secrets of that stupendous Providence which operates in this innermost, holy shrine of the Divinity, yet I do claim the logical deduction, the intuitive conviction, that in a grand and providential sense, here must be the same ever-working Mind, the same over-seeing Eye, only infinite and omniscient, which dwells in the lowest angel who hovers over the mortal companion of his choice. But the Infinite watches over all. It may surpass our imagination, and I do not dispose to dwell disproportionately upon it. But in the universal sense, and in the sense of law, necessity and freedom, personality and will, I must recognize the Father of all, and some special influences from Him.

But what do we mean by the term special? I mean nothing that is contrary to law—nothing like the vagaries of church theory—nothing contrary to universal regularity, unchangeable principles, and, if you please, Nature. I use the term special only in degree. Is it not a special favor for one to give bread to the starving? Is it not more than the mere recognition of his manhood, or the natural favors he receives from the earth and air? Is it not a special providence to receive the ministry of an angel? Is it not more than the highest charity of earth? Certainly, those are special providences, which, when we are in difficulty, distress, or want, bring a host of ministering spirits to our relief. Those are special providences, which, at the right time, prompt the right thought, inspire the right purpose, lead to the right way through all this wilderness of sin and danger. They are not like the wind and rain which bless us by the laws merely of material nature. They are *special* instances—instances of the exertion of personal will by invisible agency. That is special providence enough.

But, are there no special providences from God also? They are all from God in one sense, for He is the author of all. But does not the Deity—the great Central Power of the Universe exert His will sometimes, as specially for particular men on earth, as ever an angel does? I make not the least doubt that there are times when the Divine Mind so quickens itself, to speak thus of a subject so high, as to make itself felt in a special manner, to the remotest parts of His dominions. It may be that we know not the instances—we cannot trace them so clearly as we can the ministry of spirits, but I hold that the stern, logical demands of the subject, require us to admit that high truth. The only caution is that we do not abuse this doctrine to favor anything opposed to law and nature,—that we keep it pure and at one with the nature of angelic will, human will, the rising and setting and shining of the sun, the blowing clover and the falling rain. I can see how harmony and unity extend through all—and that, speaking of Mind it is only *higher* nature, not absence of nature, which blesses us from the Throne of thrones, as from the starlight and the clouds.

Well now, I have not labored to elicit this truth for nothing. Here is a God which no mere forces and powers, as, of gravitation, repulsion, &c., can answer to. Here is something which no form of Pantheism, unless it be this form, can recognize. He is an infinite, central Fountain of Mind. Here are affections and moral principles. Here, in short, is Man—Infinite Man—and that is the God we have to deal with. Here is all, it

this group of mentalities and feelings, which can answer to our conception of Father. Here is soul, spirituality, personality, conscious Deity.

I say, man requires nothing less than this truth. He is mind himself, and his highest tendencies are to the Infinite Mind. He does not always know it—he thinks sometimes that nature is sufficient—or that the angels are sufficient, and in his state at that time, I make no doubt they are frequently sufficient. I am far from thinking it necessary to force upon man what his state and development cannot bear. But as he grows, and in his higher moments of most interior reflection, he feels that there may be something in this old idea of God. A little learning, said Bacon, I believe, turneth men's minds to Atheism; a little more bringeth them back to faith.

"A little learning (I think it may hold sometimes here) is a dangerous thing;

Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.
There, shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
But drinking largely sobers us again."

It is so in this matter of philosophical Theism. It is likely to become so in the distinct, spiritual philosophy of the angelic ministry. If we would become fully harmonious, we should not rest in the contemplation of the angels, but remember that all created spirits have proceeded from that infinite Central Spirit, "of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things." The right and harmonious faith is to recognize both Deity and the angels, in distinct personality and free will, yet philosophically, naturally included in one vast system of connected and necessary Being. I trust that I have said enough on this point, and now let me invite your attention to another point of equal truth and beauty.

I allude to the Spirit-world in particular. It is undoubtedly true that our chief blessings of a spiritual nature come through the agency of the spirits next above us. They are all from God in one sense—in the sense that the angels derived their existence from Him; and some of them are from God directly and specially, as explained; using the term special, even in the high reference to the Deity's original volitions, only to signify a difference in degree, in the operation of His mighty acts. Do not let us, even in the will of the Deity, forget the eternal law and necessity of the thing. But I say most of our spiritual direction and blessing proceeds immediately from the surrounding spiritual world. And with all our sense and affection for the Deity as the Great Original, what we most need, in the present condition of our theology, is a knowledge and remembrance of the agency of spirits. It is plain, I think, that God *never* influences us, when he even exerts His will for that special purpose, only through the mediation of angels. I conceive of a regular gradation of spiritual being, order below order, from the Central Spirit of the Deity, to the lowest mortal on the lowest earth. And it were neither in accordance with philosophy, nor felt as harmony in human nature, to suppose that the Deity *ever* exerts His will to affect us, only through the mediation of angels. We could not bear the sight or touch of that Central Power, and live. It is enough that it comes directly, and sometimes specially from Him. The media do not detract from its value or influence. But the media, I do conceive, should be more distinctly recognized; and our affections for the Spirit-world should be more definite and quickened. If there is any thing which mankind need at this day, to quicken all their moral and spiritual susceptibilities, it is this recognition of the nearness and ministry and providence of the Spirit-world. These angels, we may say in a very great sense, *of their own accord—of their own love and free will*, originate an indefinite amount of thought and feeling and care for us. To be sure, they derived their natures from God, and so did we; but is that any reason to prevent the exercise of our gratitude and thought and remembrance for the kindness of a friend, or the labors of a philanthropist? We know that we freely indulge in it, and are not much accustomed to refer such blessing directly to the Father of all mercies. By the same reason, we need to know and remember the agencies of the Spirit-world. We say then, *nothing* comes from the Center, God, only as it passes through the spheres below Him of angelic being and ministry. And most of

our providence of a spiritual nature, *originates* in the Spirit-world nearest to ours, as we originate the thoughts and plans for benevolence and mercy. And it is that fact which we of this day most grievously overlook. To me, it is the chief glory of faith. I do not mean to forget God, but to recognize His nearest and most natural influences.

"In considering special and universal providences with a belief of the understanding, (says one who claims spiritual sight on this point,) the highest and greatest comfort flowing therefrom is based upon the glorious and already (to me) demonstrated *truth* that our earth is environed by a Spiritual World. And not only is our earth thus surrounded, but so likewise are all the earths or planets belonging to our solar system. In truth, there is a *great* sphere of spiritual existences, which, touching it, girdle the material sphere, a part of which we are at present existing in; and again, encircling that sphere, are a galaxy of *greater* spheres, more refined and more magnificent; which are inhabited by spirits, drawn onward by the eternal magnet of Supreme Goodness. Thus there is a chain extending from man to the Deity. And all that we can desire in the form of attention and dispensation, is abundantly supplied, and handed down to us, by and through the spiritual inhabitants of higher spheres. the links in that chain of Love."—Davis, *Special Providences*.

Let it be remembered, too, that we have there an indefinite number of friends, relatives, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, children, and relatives of a nearer and more equal connection, spirits perhaps which we have never seen in the flesh, who have received their birth in physical organisms on this planet, and passed through the same experience that we have, and who are naturally attracted to our natures and conditions, and who are the immediate sources of a large number of thoughts, suggestions and ideas, which are inspired by them for our guidance and assistance.

This is what I mean by the agency of spirits in distinction from the agency of God. And let it be observed that the laws of nature are as observable here, as in the revolution of planets round the sun. Why do the planets follow the sun? why do they not depart from it? why does the moon follow the earth? why the tides lifted up to her presence? Because of an affinity established in all matter, by which matter of a kindred nature, birth and relationship, forms an association together. In like manner, by law of spiritual affinity, are our spirits associated with the spiritual world. And the agency exerted by spirits there, is not a providence any more special, only in degree, than that by which the needle of the compass invariably points to the North. It is a beautiful instance of a higher necessity and a higher free will, than any that exists on earth. So when we rise to the Deity, the Eternal Magnet is the same. It is *infinite* necessity and infinite freedom. If we desire truth—if we are anxious on a particular point of theological or spiritual truth, if the mind is free so that we *can* receive it, not shut up in pre-established theories, it is likely that some spirit familiar with that truth and having an affinity for us, will draw near and impress us with its own thoughts. The desire on our part attracts the spirit, who freely comes, because it cannot resist the attraction. Here again is free will and necessity combined. If we are seeking for information on social matters, having a desire thereby to benefit society, some one interested in the same movement will draw near from the upper spheres and impress the mind in a particular direction. When we write, we are frequently subject to the same high influence, and the thoughts of angels flow faster than our own. If we are seeking to benefit some poor sufferer who is reduced to poverty and embarrassment by any cause, then the guardian spirit of that sufferer may be attracted to us, to put us upon the right track, and suggest the thoughts and means which we ourselves should not have been led to. And wherever danger and temptation are thickest and most threatening, there are the spirits most numerous and active to prevent misery and secure virtue. It is by this means that we are to account for those thousand "God-sends," as we call them,—help at the particular time when most needed, and from a source frequently least expected. How infinite and varied and minute is this providence!

But here I am moved to encounter an objection which we fre-

quently hear from the minds of many contemplative persons, on beholding the suffering and misery of the world. Look at it! say they. See how human beings live. What wretchedness in a single city! What poverty, what horror of destitution and misery! Merciful heavens! if there is a God, and a God as you say of absolute personality and infinite power and goodness, why does not he interpose for this hopeless and miserable humanity?

Now I say that this consideration suggests the truth of all we have been saying of the Divine Will. I have said that will is law, just as much as gravitation is law, or as chemical affinity is law. And all the laws of nature are so much of the Divine Will. But outward and material nature is not governed by so high a law as inward and spiritual nature. Spiritual nature is more free than material nature;—the mind of man more free than the growth of a tree. Hence free will itself is subject to these outward necessities. And the higher law cannot control the lower law, so as to annihilate it before its time. There is a law of progression. Therefore the Deity himself, or the central, most interior Nature, cannot put itself into forcible contact with the outermost of creation, and perfect it before its time. Personality in the Deity, as we have explained it, is akin to the personality of man. Can a man educate his child in a moment? Can he proceed contrary to law? Now I say, the existence of this horrible suffering shows clearly one of two things—either that there is no separate personality in the Deity, such as some people suppose; or else, if there is, that He has neither infinite wisdom nor goodness. For the wisdom of man is competent to say that if He had, He would not permit such a scene of suffering and distress. It would avail nothing to say that all this will result in good, or was meant for good. Why is it not good now? Inasmuch as it is not now, and has not been, highest good, it is a deduction from the wisdom or goodness or power of the Infinite, considering the Infinite as operating by any other means than law. But the truth is, it is all law—inevitable, irremediable law—first and last, from center to circumference, and God is not such a separate person as He has been taken to be. But this, I insist, destroys not the qualities of mind. For mind itself, and love itself, and will and wisdom themselves, are as much law and necessity as any thing else. Behold the illustration. Why does not an angel do more for us? Because he cannot. No spirit can work against all material laws and gross conditions. No spirit can say to an infant, be thou a man; to idiocy, be thou wise; to organized inferiority, be thou superior; nor, by any amount of spiritual impression and direction, lift us from a concatenation of circumstances in which we are involved by the disorders of present society, and the growth and development of present conditions. Nor can God. God and Nature are one. In one sense, it is all but one stupendous system of Nature, the inward, spiritual and personal, and constantly acting on the outward, but not able to conform it in a moment to the high order to which it is destined.

But there is a great relief from this tremendous pressure of truth. It is the truth that the spirits of the surrounding heavens are ever trying, all they can, and do frequently succeed, in impressing the spirits of this wretched population, and others for them, the higher for the lower everywhere, and so are manifesting from the invisible world, personal regard, and all the love and wisdom of angels. And so it is also a truth, as I have labored to illustrate in this discourse, that the Deity himself, from his Center of centers, exerts some special will for the lowest and remotest of all his rational children. And the beauty of the whole truth is, that it is so natural and so systematic. The beauty of the whole is, that there is such a Nature and such a Mentality combined;—that God is God, and angel and spirit are realities;—that we are not left to wander hopeless and orphanless and alone, but that the Eternal Father is so true, and that His agency and the agency of spirits, are so constant and watchful, and everlasting, and progressive—that life here is so short—that, compared with the eternity that awaits us—compared even with the duration of the first heaven, it is but a breath—only a momentary struggle in this birth-place of human souls, and that "our light affliction, which is but a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The joy is the greater

by comparison with the suffering. Without imprisonment there would be no deliverance. And as all are to be raised and benefited by death, it only becomes us in this brief scene of checked good and ill, to make the most of all the truth and all the opportunities we have, that we may have a more abundant entrance administered unto us, of the heavenly and eternal. Then, perhaps, amid other joys, we ourselves may be invested with the office of ministering spirits to the poor and the deserted. If now, we have any faith in the agency of God, and the agency of spirits, it is our best business to co-operate with that agency, and help on the commonwealth of the world.

Psychological Department.

Somnambulism.

The various instances of psychological phenomena are possessed of a peculiar interest, as they reflect much important light on the powers of the soul and its relations to the physical frame. The ensuing cases of Somnambulism, related in foreign publications, are worthy of notice.

An officer had been a somnambulist from his infancy, and preserved during his sleep the faculty of hearing what was said to him, and of answering. One day several of his friends came upon him in his chamber, and resolved to put the reality of the story, which they had often heard, to the proof. They began to converse with him, and received short but direct answers. One of them took it into his head that he would begin a quarrel, and addressed some offensive words to the sleeper. The officer replied in high wrath, and his countenance assumed a threatening expression. His gestures were furious, and the dispute came to such a pitch, that it could only be ended by a duel. This was proposed to him and accepted. A pistol was put into his hand, with which he took aim, and fired. Awakened by the explosion, he was greatly surprised to find himself in the midst of his friends, all laughing at the amusing scene which they had witnessed. He remembered nothing, and they were obliged to explain the whole to him. I forgot to say, what the professor from whom I had the fact, told me, that they found it necessary to touch the sleeping man before he could bear testimony to what was said to him. Another case of the same nature is as follows: A young man, a familiar friend from infancy, of a very worthy physician, addicted himself very eagerly to poetry. One day he had attempted in vain to polish and render more correct some verses which he had composed. During the night he got up, opened his desk, sat to writing, and then read aloud what he had written, applauded himself, bursting into fits of laughter, &c. He then returned to bed, and continued to sleep. In the morning he recollected with uneasiness the incorrect state of his verses; he paid a visit to his manuscript, took it out, and found the deficiencies supplied with his own hand, and in the happiest style. Full of astonishment, and not knowing whether this was the effect of his good or had genius, he begged his friends to explain the mystery, which he could not himself comprehend.

The *Courrier de la Gironde* relates a curious instance of somnambulism, in a village near Bordeaux. A small farmer, after passing the evening by his fireside, with his wife and family, retired to rest; but at night, when in a state of somnambulism, got up, dressed himself, went to the stable, harnessed his oxen to the plough, made them drag it to his field, at some distance, and proceeded to plough the field. At 6 o'clock in the morning he had entirely ploughed the land and he returned home with the oxen. Meantime his family had missed him, the oxen, and the plough, and were scouring the village to find them. They fancied a robbery had been committed, and were about to call on the gendarmes, when the man re-appeared. He now awoke, and was greatly astonished to find that he had passed the night in ploughing. His father and grandfather were noted somnambulists, and used frequently at night to run along the roofs of the houses.

In the purity and harmony of the soul consist the true joys of life

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

R. P. AMBLER, EDITOR.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., MARCH 15, 1851.

CLAIRVOYANT REVELATIONS.

MR. EDITOR:—Is it not quite time that Clairvoyant Revelations in general should be rebuked for their presumptiveness? I observe in your paper of the 1st inst., several of them. They contain many things good, but the point to which I would now direct attention, is their descriptions of the future life. Mr. Gordon describes the Spirit-world as all beautiful, pure, and glorious, "where all evil is banished, and all are united as in one vast reservoir of wisdom, in which the spirit bathes with unspeakable bliss." "The spirit, freed from its earthly organization, resides in the Spheres where all is purity and love, and where no impurity can exist, for old things have passed away, and all things have become new." No greater falsehood than this could be uttered of that world.

Your other clairvoyant, in the same paper, says—"An inferior state of spiritual darkness called Hell, and a superior state of spiritual light called Heaven, are in strict accordance with the unchanging laws of the all-wise and all-perfect God of Nature." This is more like the truth. Though, I observe that this clairvoyant speaks of God generally by the term "Jehovah," which, among other things, shows that clairvoyants, being in general but imperfectly freed from the body, and even then not freed from their own peculiarities of thought, are not to be depended on.

I have done with criticism. If there is any one truth which we need to know of the Spirit-world, it is that all is not smooth, harmonious, and glorious beyond death. My spirit being united with the body, and my body being wide awake, will undertake to reveal more truthful things.

Behold humanity! There are men in every city and almost every large town, who would do almost any thing for a dollar—men but little above the brute—having reason and conscience, but oh! how imbruted and stupified in iniquity. Read the police reports of any great city. See what some men are. The heart sickens, and would fain turn from a description of those who haunt the cellars, gaming-rooms, and brothels of society, and whose chief evidence of humanity is in a human form, and a little glimmering, remaining reason, almost buried in filth and crime.

These, to be sure, have claims upon our pity and our charity. They were born in sin and shapen in iniquity. They were educated in corruption; and their necessities, in hereditary organism, education, and social position and circumstance, make an overwhelming plea of mercy and consideration for them. God will regard that. The heavens are just. But remember, all this alters not the character; it only shows more strongly the necessity of their very low and imperfect position in the world to come. The laws of nature are unchangeable as fate.

These wicked are raised by death to a spiritual world, and to societies corresponding to their own state and nature. *Death makes no change in the quality of their spirits.* To be sure, it does make a change around them. They now see what they never saw before. Immortality is a truth, and Nature becomes an expanse—I will not say how great—but enough to fill them to a good extent with emotions of awe, and to suggest to them better things. They have not there the *body* to provide for. They are consequently freed from this anxiety, and from the various temptations to which poverty, and its host of miseries, expose so many in this world. I think it impossible to say that the improved external circumstances which are attendant on an introduction to that world, do not *better* the condition of the very lowest. Again, on removing the corporeal, and its clogs and hinderances, the spiritual faculties are elevated, quickened, made more lucid, and susceptible of much greater improvement.

And this in general is all we can say of mere death. It is

just a getting out of the body into a better external world, with enlarged and quickened susceptibilities, *but with the same peculiarities of moral and intellectual constitution, habit, character and spirit.* It is going from one room into another. But the man is the very same man that he was before. He may be in a better room, better furnished for his convenience and progress, with more books and a better school there, of more splendid apartments and spacious privileges,—in short, of grander architecture and furniture. And that, I think, is the least we can say of the materialism and privileges of the Spirit-world. It must be a grander house for the lowest. But the man enters one or the other of these heavenly mansions (and some of them, I think, will hardly justify this term heavenly) with the same soul he had before. There is an enlargement, both external and internal, but the *proportions* of character are exactly the same. I will say, then, he may make progress. Progression appears to be a law of all nature, both material and spiritual. But I know not how long he may remain in a low and miserable state, or how much truth precisely may be embodied in that term miserable. The wicked are undoubtedly in the *delight* of their life, and so are swine wallowing in the mire. My opinion is, however, that none are *more* miserable than they were here, but that many—yes, millions, must be spiritually destitute, dark, deformed, disquieted, not so high nor so happy as many of us are to-day, I think is a truth following from what we see around us.

Such is my spiritual sight. And I would not exchange it for any amount of semi-disembodied, discordant, moon-shiny and presumptuous clairvoyance in all the land. God be thanked for reason in the body, and the body wide awake. "A man's a man for all that."

Clairvoyance is chiefly valuable for the evidence it gives of the soul's independent powers, the certainty of a future life, the connection of the spiritual world with the material, and many undoubted truths which it reveals of the soul's powers and destiny. But these truths are to be received, not by mere faith, but by the reason making use of these revelations, thankful for the advantages they confer, but deciding frequently as superior to them. Let us remember, too, that many minds are partially clairvoyant, or spiritually illuminated, when they know it not.

I hope Mr. Editor, you will not lend your influence to the promotion of a frothy, sparkling, unphilosophical, injurious dazzle of glory and immortality for all beyond death. Depend upon it, there is no such truth. There is much to hope for, and much to fear. You and I have both lent our influence long enough to what is called "Universalism;" for one, I *never* preached the "death and glory system;" and if there is any one truth which mankind now need to be told, when the immortal world is opening upon us, it is that they must not think lightly of life's duties, or wish too speedily to get away from its trials and sorrows, in view of supreme felicity beyond death. Let us have no morbid, foolish dread, but let us have wisdom. The spirits themselves are showing us now that they are deceivers, that they either know not the truth, or will not tell it, but falsities; a fault plainly not ascribable in all cases to the imperfection of the medium, or the method of communication; and what I say to one I say to all—Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they be of Truth.

It is a mighty fine doctrine to proclaim—all love, purity, glory, hallelujah, in the Spirit-world—but alas! there is no truth in it. Prepare now for life in this world, and life in the next. The good are greatly blessed on leaving the body; the bad will find to their sorrow that there are some pains and purgations beyond the grave. Enough that God and Nature are vindicated by a highly improved external world, and faculties released from clogs, and made *susceptible* of more speedy improvement.

W. M. FERNALD.

To the foregoing article it may be proper to append a few remarks in relation to the seeming discrepancy in clairvoyant revelations as referred to in the above criticism on this subject. It seems to be an object with Mr. Fernald to show that the statement of Mr. Gordon in reference to the purity and happiness of the Spirit-world, is not correct, while he considers the revela-

tion of Mr. Howard, a clairvoyant at the west, which was designed to illustrate the several degrees of refinement and perfection in different Spheres, to be "nearer the truth." We apprehend that in taking a calm and philosophical view of the subject, no actual discrepancy will be discovered in these two revelations. The vision of Mr. Gordon, it will be observed, was designed to unfold the light and purity of the celestial abode in comparison with that of earth;—hence this was represented as being fully pervaded with purity—a Sphere in which the dark corruptions of the flesh can find no place. On the other hand Mr. Howard desired to impress us with the truth that all spirits do not attain the same height of perfection—that in the future state there exist different degrees or spheres of light and refinement, the highest of which may be properly termed Heaven, while the lowest, in comparison with this, may be represented as Hell. Now both of these revelations may be seen to be true, when viewed in their proper light. It should be remembered that all descriptions relating to the Heavenly Spheres, must in the very nature of the case be given comparatively, inasmuch as everything is in a progressive state, and there exists no absolute perfection, except in Deity. When we speak of light, joy and purity as connected with the celestial world, we do not employ these terms in any strict or absolute sense, but comparatively as contrasted with lower degrees of perfection; so that while relatively speaking it may be said that the Second Sphere is a state "where no impurity can exist," this same sphere when compared with the superior degrees of purity and refinement that rise above it, may be viewed as dark and unlovely.

We have made these remarks, not with any desire to criticise the article to which they are appended, but simply with a view to illustrate the fact that the same scenery, when beheld from different points, may be differently described, and that apparent discrepancies arising from this cause, may be reconciled by a consideration of the manner in which they are produced.—Ed.

THE PROGRESSIVE WORK OF HUMANITY.

There are seasons when the writer is subject to seemingly uncontrollable feelings of despondency. At such times the entire race of mankind appears to me like a panorama of lost and polluted beings which cannot be elevated or improved as a whole. Then again I am cheered with the bright sunlight of the New Philosophy, and the evidences of human progression, which are now so numerous, stamp the impression on my soul that this is really a universal law of our being. In accordance with this conviction, it appears that the revealments of Science when correctly understood and applied in all their various bearings on the interests of men, must ultimately work out the complete salvation of humanity.

To me, one of the greatest hinderances to human progress, seems to lie in the doctrine of penance and atonement, which has apparently been imbibed by a large proportion of society. So long as mankind are taught to lay their burdens of sin on the shoulders of an imaginary Christ, or trust their all to the paying of penance, the performance of certain ceremonies, or the mumbling of unmeaning prayers, they will be scarcely able to grow in knowledge or increase in righteousness. The world needs to be taught, that to avoid the consequences of depraved and perverted organizations, the unchangeable revelations of the Father in our own being must be strictly followed. It should be clearly understood that the violation of physical laws cannot be escaped through the shedding of the blood of a thousand Christs, and that therefore it is entirely unnecessary that men should be longer instructed in such a mode of salvation. The beauty, order and harmony that cluster around all the manifestations of the Divine Being, call loudly for the children of this age to break away from those false traditions which have bound their fathers to a more than heathenish idolatry. Life and Liberty have long been sacrificed on the altars of the Church, and human dogmas, clothed in the habiliments of Christ, have spread destruction and misery in the paths of earth. From this cause a large proportion of the world's inhabitants are to-day slumbering away the very principle of life, almost wholly unmindful of

the past, and seemingly not less indifferent to the future. To stem the opposing tide which is thus created, it would seem that the hope of the reformer must be large, and frequently stimulated. Old errors are too deeply interwoven in the mental structure to be easily eradicated, and the laws of our nature have been too extensively violated for a perfect organization to be at once attained. Still, the progressive tendencies which are manifested in the constituent properties of our spiritual and physical being, prove that the soul will ultimately enter the glorious mansions of the Father at an infinitely higher stage of advancement than it would, were it still to follow the gross teachings of a false theology. Happily, the evidences are increasing in our age which show that doctrines detrimental to the growth of the spirit, have received a wound from which they may never recover. Dark, dismal, and foreboding as the pathway of humanity has been, in the future we behold the unmistakable promises of increasing light, purity, and perfection.

If we are disposed to take part in diffusing the light of truth, we have a work to perform in which even angels might delight to engage. Before us lies a vast field peopled with millions of undying spirits, whose destiny is dependent on their own exertions and the influences by which they are surrounded, and whose happiness in the abodes of bliss must be meted to them in proportion to their appreciation and accumulation of truth as revealed in the great Book of Nature. Were we prompted by that universal love which moved and sustained the living Christ, methinks the last half of the present century would be remembered through all succeeding stages of human progress. What a soul-cheering mission is before us! To lift up the bowed down—to relieve the distressed—to break the fetters of the enslaved—to rationalize the theories of the dogmatist—to dispel the fears of the superstitious—to elevate the aspirations of the lowly—to teach charity, patience and hope, and to entwine around our own hearts the peaceful principles of the Harmonial Philosophy, are only a few of the duties and privileges which are attached to the mission of reform—a mission which is ordained of God, revealed in His laws, and traced in letters of light on the unfolding soul.

T. S. S.

Randolph, N. Y.

Mission of the Angels.

The great work of humanity was not to be entirely accomplished through the agency of earthly beings. It was necessary that a revelation should be made from a higher source—that spirits disrobed of the corruptible form, should unfold to man the superior excellencies of truth. Hence amid the dreary night of earth, when only troubled dreams had visited the sighing souls of men, the dawning of celestial light breaks upon the slumbering world, and the radiance of truth flows from its own heavenly fountain. Earth is now visited by the dwellers of a brighter Sphere, and the ears of man are delighted with the audible tokens of their presence. Forms of surpassing beauty linger in the atmosphere of this dark planet, and voices of ineffable sweetness are heard echoing in the chambers of the soul. Then as the aching heart is cheered by the messages of departed kindred, the blessings of spiritual intercourse begin to be realized and enjoyed. The windows of Heaven seem to be opened to the soul, and its gaze can reach into those distant regions whence before no traveler had returned. Angels are now our ministers and companions. They approach us, that they may labor for our advancement in truth and purity—that they may impart strength as we toil along the rugged paths of life, and cheer the gloom of our earthly pilgrimage with the radiance of heavenly love.

Glorious indeed is the mission of the Angels! They have come, not to alarm the fears or cast gloom upon the hearts of men—not to darken and depress the soul with visions of future woe, nor to cramp and restrict its energies with the chains of sectarianism and bigotry. They have a higher and nobler office. It is theirs to bind the broken heart, to proclaim liberty to the captive mind, and unfold those exalted and consoling truths which burst like morning light upon the world. It is theirs to introduce a new era of joy and freedom—to feed the famished

soul with bread from heaven, and lead it to drink from the clear well-springs of eternal life. At a time when darkness covered the earth—when ignorance and superstition overshadowed humanity, they have come to proclaim the glad message of heavenly truth. It is theirs to whisper of another and better world; theirs to satisfy the yearning spirit with the revelation of a diviner life—to rend the dark veil which has so long rested upon the tomb, and open to our longing view the glories of those celestial Spheres where man shall live and worship forever. So, through the ministry of the heavenly messengers, shall the great work of human progress be carried on, and the sublime objects of human desire, which have appeared so long in the bright visions of hope, shall be speedily and gloriously attained.

R. P. A.

The Law of Kindness.

In all our efforts to advance the cause of truth and remove the mouldering ruins of superstition from the earth, there is one principle above all others which should warm the heart and nerve the arm, and by which every thought and action should be governed;—it is the law of kindness. Constant care should be taken, that, in the strife and struggle for intellectual freedom, the soul may not imbibe that dark and threatening spirit which has been manifested in the establishment of erroneous doctrines. The records of the past are marred with the stains of religious intolerance and persecution. Violence and blood have followed the unholy dogmas of the Church. Moved by a flaming and destructive zeal, the arm of Persecution has been raised, and the degraded masses have been compelled to receive that by profession at which both the heart and judgment revolted. In the career of the false prophet, Mahomet, in the dark scenes of the Spanish Inquisition, as well as in the more recent manifestations of religious bigotry, we may behold the breathings of this ungodly spirit. It is to be observed that the progress of truth depends on a far higher and diviner power. Its advocates need not to labor in its defense with the implements of physical force, or the authority of arbitrary law. Our zeal requires no aid from an overbearing dogmatism, or the infernal engines of cruelty. The law of kindness must be made the governing principle of action. Resigning the rod of persecution, and the anathemas of bigotry, we are required to speak in the mild accents of persuasion, and appeal to the reason of the interior man. In short, our zeal must be kindled with the fire of love—it must come forth pure from the hallowed sanctuary of the affections. Though we wrestle with principalities and powers, we must not sacrifice the grace of charity. Though we are zealous in the upbuilding of the truth and labor to expose the darkening errors of the world, we must not violate the principle of love. With this heavenly flame burning on the altar of the heart, we may contend earnestly for the advancement of that pure and spiritual faith which whispers peace to the very soul of humanity—a faith more precious than the miser's gold, or the brightest gems that deck the monarch's brow.

R. P. A.

The Spirit of Love.

Breathing from the hallowed sanctuary of Nature—in the still, deep voices of all living things, comes the divine spirit which forms the essence of the great animating Soul. Love is the divinity which dwells within each visible form, and its inspiring influence steals softly on the subdued and tranquil heart. In every gentle breeze that fans our brow—in every ray of light that flows from star or sun—in every beauteous flower that gladdens the fields of earth, that spirit is manifestly enshrined. It is this which renders the revelations of Nature so divine, and which leads us up from the contemplation of gross, material forms to the presence of the all-pervading Deity. There is no aspect or mood of Nature that does not contain the revelations of love. Though the angry winds may howl over the silent waste—though dark and threatening clouds may overcast the sky, and the fearful tempest may spread destruction in its path, we are enabled to discover, even in this apparent confusion of the elements, the evidences of benevolent design. It is through the might of the

hurricane that Nature regains her equilibrium and tranquility, and in the raging of the storm the atmosphere is cleared of its impurities, while the earth is clothed with renewed life and beauty. Thus everything is made the minister of love;—its spirit is the presiding divinity that rules the world, and its inspirations are the joy of every human soul.

R. P. A.

The Messengers of Truth.

It is a conspicuous and remarkable circumstance, that the propagation of great truths has been entrusted to seemingly the weakest and humblest instruments. The great, the wealthy, and the wise, are seldom the appointed messengers of those mighty principles which are designed to renovate and improve Society. In all ages, the glorious work of reform has been intrusted to an opposite class. We are reminded that the primitive Apostles were those who moved in the lowest ranks of life, who were engaged in the most humble occupations, and were utterly destitute of the honors and riches of the world. Meek and lowly as their Master, they went forth on their errand of love;—there was no crown upon their brows—no scepter in their hands. Thus we learn that the most humble messengers of truth may become the most efficient—that, possessed of its divine power, the weak may be made mighty, the lowly honored, and the ignorant, wise. We may learn, also, that Truth relies for its support and propagation not merely on an outward instrument; that it depends not on the authority of kings, the arms of the warrior, or the wealth of the great, but that, by its own inherent and exalted power, it flows onward in the lowliest channels and is promoted by the weakest and most despised agents, and that, though it may not echo in regal courts or worldly fanes, it is received in hearts subdued by the spirit of God, and bursts from lips that are moved by the breath of Inspiration.

R. P. A.

Sleep.

Man is susceptible of no condition that is more remarkable for its beauty and its mystery than sleep. The outward senses are sealed up, and our connection with the external world is severed. The eye and the ear are dull and insensible; our earthly plans are all forgotten; and the objects disclosed so vividly in our dreams, are discerned through an inward spiritual medium. Thus sleep is a temporary death. The frequent recurrence of this state prevents our becoming wholly absorbed with the affairs of earth. It disengages the mind, in a degree at least, from the scenes of its grovelling and its imprisonment. Angels come and lead us away to the very confines of mortal being, that we may stand for a brief season by the veiled portals of the invisible Temple, and question the radiant beings who frequent its courts, or worship at its shrine.

S. B. B.

THE PRISONER'S FRIEND.—This publication, edited by Charles Spear, is doubtless already favorably known to many of our readers. As its title indicates, it is devoted chiefly to the cause of criminal reform, breathing a message of mercy to the prisoner, and exemplifying the divine principle of love in the treatment of the sinful. The editor of this magazine stands prominent among the philanthropists of the present age, and has already accomplished much good in his elevated sphere of labor. Through his efforts as a main instrumentality, a favorable change is rapidly taking place in public opinion, and one of the most odious relics of barbarism seems about to be removed. We can heartily wish that the labors of such men may be speedily followed by their appropriate results.

REMOVAL.—As will be seen in our statement of Terms on the last page, the office of the Messenger has been recently removed to the South-east corner of Main and Union Streets. Friends from abroad who may visit Springfield, are respectfully invited to favor us with a call.

The "Glimpses of the Spirit Land," close with the present number. We shall expect other similar favors.

Poetry.

GLIMPSSES OF THE SPIRIT LAND.—No. 9.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,
BY S. H. LLOYD.

O Land of Bliss, my heart now turns
With longing hopes to thee,
As long the blossoms for the spring
The sun-beams strive to free;—
O stream of Time, on whose sweet wave,
Like flowers upon thy breast,
My thoughts thy flowing tide doth bend
Towards that sweet Land of rest.

O Land of Fruit, that hangs so rich
Upon thy bending trees,
O when shall I beneath thy shade
Inhale the swelling breeze?—
And with these rapturous eyes behold
The white-robed angel band,
And drink the flowing landscape in—
The sweet and dewy Land?

And with me too, the beings loved,
Find all of sorrow o'er,—
When shall these tearful partings cease
On life's retreating shore?—
And by those living streams may pluck
The amaranth and rose,
And drink the nectar from the streams
Where deathless water flows?

O Land of Bliss, my heart now turns
With longing hopes to thee,
As long the blossoms for the spring
The sun-beams strive to free;—
O stream of Time on whose sweet wave,
Like flowers upon thy breast,
My thoughts thy flowing tide doth bend
Towards that sweet Land of rest.

STRIVE ON.

Strive on—the ocean ne'er was cross'd
Repining on the shore;
A nation's freedom ne'er was won
When Sloth the banner bore.
Strive on—'tis cowardly to shrink
When dangers rise around;
'Tis sweeter far, though linked with pain,
To gain the 'vantage ground.

Bright names are on the roll of Fame,
Like stars they shine on high;
They may be hid with brighter rays,
But never, never die.
And these were lighted 'mid the gloom
Of low obscurity,
Struggling through years of pain and toil,
And joyless poverty.

But strive—this world's not all a waste,
A wilderness of care;
Green spots are on the field of life,
And flow'rets blooming fair.
Then strive, but oh! let Virtue be
The guardian of your aim!
Let pure, unclouded love illumine
The path that leads to fame.

Miscellaneous Department.

THE ANGELS.

Another year for the inhabitants of earth, had been written in Heaven. The day of its advent was beautifully calm and bright, and in that calmness, and that brightness, were a voice and a look, which seemed to be calling upon the travelers to an eternal world, to yield themselves to quiet meditation upon the progress already made. Yet was the gentle exhortation for the most part unheeded. Here and there, a circle might be found, engaged in holy conversation upon the periods that measure our journey to the Spirit-land; here and there, a heart, before whose secret tribunal were arraigned the motives of the past;—and many were the scenes of festive mirth, many the hearts beating wild with irregular and excessive anticipations of the future. Poor and frail humanity! were it not that bright Spirits have charge over thee, how dark were thy condition. But the watch is set, and till thou art redeemed, will the angels forget not their ministries.

While the hours went thus carelessly by on earth, a bright conclave had assembled in that shadowy land, which lies just beyond the reach of human vision; the abode of those ancient mythic forms which have been Christianized by the poetry of a purer faith. And among that company of spirits, was one who still looked the classic divinity;—the God of the golden age, and the undiscovered Hesperus. We like not, indeed, the symbols of destruction, with which he was wont to be invested; instead of them, we have embroidered his vestment with the scattered column, and the creeping ivy; but he carries still the measure of the hours, and his ever onward look proclaims him the angel, Time. Before him, fluttered a light-winged seraph, invisible upon his near approach, yet ever springing forward into new form and varied beauty; and fading away into the utterly impalpable, and ever again renewed.

"Listen to me, Hope," said the angel, Time. "Thou art a deceiver. Those prospects of coming pleasure, on which thou art ever fixing the gaze of mortals, are as delusive as the bubbles which the school-boy in his sport throws out upon the air, to glitter one moment in rainbow beauty and to vanish the next. Even the truth of thy representations has such a fictitious coloring, that instead of blessing me as the fulfiller of thy promises, they but curse me as the destroyer of thy illusions."

"Better thus," said the other, in a tone of gay blandishment, "Better thus, than a prospect all cheerless. How should I refuse my aid to those whose need of it is so manifest? The first paradise lies in dim obscurity upon the very border of thy dominions, the second is far above them, the promised home of the pure; and but for me, how would the eye droop, and the heart grow faint by reason of the long way. My promises are for briefer periods, and though they fail, I am never reproached, if another promise succeeds. What wouldst thou have me do?"

"Tell them only of such things as will surely come to pass."

And Hope laughed with a silvery-sounding laugh; then sinking her voice to imitate the mournfulness of despair, she replied. "Tell them of losses and partings of estranged hearts, and gray hairs; of grief and pain, and death, for such thou bringest upon the children of man."

"Scoffer," said Time, "Scoffer, as well as deceiver; knowest thou not that these things are appointed for holy purposes, and that they have been made more frequent, and more bitter by thy delusions? Knowest thou not, that many; led by disappointment to a brighter Spirit, have learned to detect thy falsehoods, and to trust thee in nothing that their better guide would not approve?"

"Yet still to trust," said Hope, "for when the nearer prospect can charm no longer, I paint the joys of the celestial world, and the earth-wearied eye grows bright with renewed courage."

"And even in the views thou givest of the spiritual world,"

replied Time; "thou hast sought to gratify the passions and the follies of mankind. Yet thine is an office of blessing even now, and the hour is coming, when it shall be made glorious. I will bring the most beautiful of the ministering spirits, to be a familiar guest in the hearts of men, and through their love for this spotless angel, thou wilt learn to exchange thy falseness, for the spirit of prophecy. Thy dreams of earth shall be only of the conflict and the triumph, and thy anticipations of Heaven, the rich promises of revelation.

"I would see this brighter spirit, this better guide; this most beautiful of the ministering angels," said Hope.

"Look then," said the other, and she turned her gaze backward upon the innumerable attendants of Time. Shading her eyes with her wings, (for Hope fears to look upon aught that may even seem unlovely;) she beheld beyond the nearest, an advancing form, with a countenance bright as morning among the lingering shadows of night, and an eye clear as the blue depths toward which it so frequently turned. And the shadowing wings of Hope drooped down in the wonder she felt, at the glory which burst forth around the steps of the approaching angel; and the strange changes wrought upon many of the spiritual forms, on whom this glory fell. Some who had before appeared beautiful as the stars that gem the bordering of the evening sky, grew dark and earthly, and many of those on whom Hope had trembled to look, were glorified into forms of surpassing beauty. Still onward came the Spirit, and even Hope bowed her head in acknowledgment of the prospective triumphs of the angel, Truth.

L. M. B.

Humility and Perseverance.

A FABLE.

From the side of the mountain there flowed a little rivulet. Its voice was scarcely heard amid the rustling of the leaves and grass around, and its shallow and narrow stream might be overlooked by the traveler. This brook, although so small, was not inspired with a good spirit, and murmured against the decree of Providence, which had cast its lot so lowly.

"I wish I was a cloud to roll all day through the heavens, painted so beautifully, as those lovely shapes are colored, and never descend again in showers; or, at least, I wish I were a broad river, performing some useful duty in the world. Shame on my weak waves and unguarded bubbling. I might as well have never been, as to be thus puny, insignificant and useless."

When the brook had thus complained, a beautiful tall flower that bent over its bosom, replied:

"Thou art in error, brook. Puny and insignificant thou mayest be; useless thou art not, for I owe half my beauty, perhaps my life, to thy refreshing waters. The plants adjacent to thee are greener and richer than the others. The Creator has given thee a duty which, though humble, you must not neglect. Besides, who knows what may be thy future destiny? Flow on, I beseech thee."

The brook heard the rebuke, and danced along its way more cheerfully. On and on it went, growing broader and broader. By and by other rivulets poured their crystal waters into it, and swelled its deepening bosom, in which already began to appear the fairy creatures of the wave, darting about joyfully, and glistening to the sun. As its channel grew wider, and yet other branches came gliding into it, the stream began to assume the importance of a river, and boats were launched on it, and it rolled on in a menacing course through a teeming country, refreshing whatever it touched, and giving the whole scene a new character of beauty.

As it moved on now in majesty and pride, the sound of its gently heaving billows formed itself into the following words:

"At the out set of life, however humble we may seem, fate may have in store for us great and unexpected opportunities of doing good and being great. In the hope of these, we should ever pass on without despair or doubt, trusting that perseverance will bring its own reward. How little I dreamed, when I first sprung on my course, what purposes I was destined to fulfill! What happy beings were to owe their bliss to me! What lofty

trees, what velvet meadows, what golden harvests were to hail my career! Let not the meek and lowly despair; Heaven will supply them with inducements to virtue."

A Comparison.

The life of man may be likened to a river. His birth is the source thereof; and as the river for the first few miles of its course struggles feebly along, and is choked with weeds and turned aside by every obstruction, so is man, during the first few years of his life, the feeble subject of anxiety, death and danger. But soon the river begins to increase, numerous little springs and streams add their mites, and the river leaps joyously from rock to rock, gathering force at every turn. So does the vigor of man increase with his years; food nourishes and enlarges his frame, and learning expands his mind; every day he gathers new ideas and thoughts. The course of the river is often crooked, and its tranquility disturbed by falls and rapids, and man is prone to turn aside from the way of rectitude into "by and forbidden paths"—his temper is often ruffled and disturbed by disappointment and anger. The river near its end flows on more still and tranquil, and is less subject to deviation; so does man in his old age, when he draws near his end, more strongly desire retirement and exemption from the noise and press of business. And, finally, as the river passes into the great ocean, and mingles its waters with the rivers of all the earth; so does man die and pass away, and his ashes are mingled with those of the countless multitudes that have gone before him.

Poetry, Music, and Painting.

Poetry breathes a charm over the cold realities of life, and imparts a brilliant coloring to every object that surrounds us, and an interest to the most trivial incidents that occur. Seen through her glowing medium, earth is paradise, and love is heaven. Music etherealizes humanity, and lifts the soul to its original sphere; with a powerful hand she strikes the sensitive chords of memory, awakening alike the thrilling recollection of former enjoyments, or the mournful remembrance of past sorrow. But Painting possesses the power of an enchantress; beneath her magic pencil spring those forms which are endeared to us by love, or rendered sacred by esteem and reverence. Over these cherished shadows death hath no power! we wear them in our bosoms, we place them in our closets, and enjoy with them a sweet and holy communion in our hours of retirement. As relics of those who sleep in the dust, they seem to confer with us in the language of other years; and while we remember some useful precept of friendly monition which once passed their lips, we regard them as benignant spirits still hovering in our paths, to remind us of our duty, and that we are also perishable.—Mrs. Ware.

The sweetest flowers are those which shed their odors in quiet nooks and dingles; and the purest hearts are those whose deeds of love are done in solitude and secret.

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