

# 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 PHILOSOPHY OF PROGRESS.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER

BY S. H. LLOYD.

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 306.]

If, then, we have not now those grand old temples to beautify the earth—that perfection of art, that physical endurance of the body, what have we to take their places? This, also, is a legitimate question, and should meet with, like the other, a frank response. In the first place, if what I say about the spiral progression of Nature commends itself to the intuition and intelligence that flow into your minds, you must see how the premises must be conceded, even if we have not the particulars at hand. With regard to the present era in which we live, we will see by careful investigation that we are living in a transition period. We are living in a period of dissolution and of revolution. The reverence for the Past is passing away. Old institutions incite no such awe as that with which they were once sustained. Men do not see so much wisdom in a powdered wig as formerly. Thrones are pulled down and churches disbanded—all swept away by the tide of this transition period, and with what feelings they are witnessed you must be aware. Some look at them and fear the results, as though they were some great cracks in the great walls of the universe; others look upon them with the same composure and serenity as do the prophets and saints of all ages at any of the convulsions and transitions of society.

Without stopping to dwell upon the meaning of each of the different periods that have passed since the origin of man upon this planet, let us talk of that which distinguishes the present from the ages that are past, and some of the phases that life now presents, and then I will be able to proceed to a more practical application of our subject.

The great works of antiquity, then,—of those feudal ages now past—when we come to consider them in all their meaning and usefulness, will be found to be the result of a lower law than that of the present, though a law of longer growth and consequently more perfect in its result. How were those ancient castles built, whose walls were bristled along the banks of those deep ancient rivers, and upon the walls of those ancient cities, and states, and empires? How were they built—those ancient pyramids whose mighty tops now peer up above the sands of the desert—those colossal figures, the wonder of the present age? How were they built—those temples whose remains are found on the banks of ancient Egypt, filled with the mighty sculpture and remains of former ages, and great races of men? What was the culture, the general culture of the people, when Plato wrote and Socrates drank his hemlock, in beautiful attestation of his faith in immortality? What was the general culture of the people when Demosthenes poured forth his eloquence before an admiring nation? How, amid all the splendors of the past, amid the gorgeousness of its palaces, the magnificence of its temples, and the glory of its arts, and masculine perfection of the human form, stand out the superstitions and barbarisms, the ignorance and licentiousness, the oppressions and discords of those periods? And what if, by longer durations of time, those walls had risen into colossal strength, and the wealth wrung from a million hands had been expended in building one palace, while the builders were but slaves or serfs, and sought shelter in the rocks for their repose and residences? What if the great men of those periods, born into the world with souls of genius, and having also the wealth of kingdoms lavished upon them, did produce those mighty works, of which only nations or princes can now become their possessors, is not the Present in advance of the Past?

Are you a Christian—and how do you look upon the history of those primitive times when Judaism, the religion of types and shadows was passing away, and a new religion was ushering into birth that should forever distinguish the ages? Talk of the splendors of the temple, where the high priests are entering with bells jingling upon the hems of their garments, and white-robed priests are swinging their censors, and mighty multitudes bow down in those lofty aisles! How it all passes away—sinks into nothingness before the little group assembled around their Master! How, even now, the representation of such scenes as "Christ and the Woman of Samaria," of "Martha and Mary," of "Christ and the Doctors," of "The Woman anointing Jesus with precious ointment from her alabaster box," produced upon canvass, compare with those pictures in which kings and princes, and the mighty ones of the earth have figured!

It is not alone, then, in the simple grandeur or colossal appearance of art or science by which we must judge of its progress;—not by one great man the earth has produced, but by the combined intelligence and culture of the people. Judging by this rule, a nation or society weak in its letters and mighty specimens of art, may be farther advanced than that of another directly its opposite. But differently from this have the conservatives of all ages thought. They ever say to the new as did the Jews—"Destroy this temple and religion falls." The temple fell, but there arose a purer religion!

I have thus far spoken of the Philosophy of Progress in its general principles, and applied it mostly in its application to the general history of mankind upon the earth; but we must not forget that the law is capable, if it be a truth, of a minute and detailed application to society in all its departments and dependencies. In fact, in every thing will this law be found to be applicable. We must never forget that the universe is stamped with the impress of one Mind—that all law proceeded from the same great living Germ, and that as a rosary strung on beads, or as proceeds the regular rhythm and measure of a poem, so Nature every where progresses, only on a higher and grander scale.

In considering any question that comes under the cognizance of this law, I invite you never to lose sight of the analogies of the human soul and the human body. How is it with the child? In the first place, the child is the exact likeness of its parents—the mutual production of each. The quality of the parents decides as to the quality of its soul. It is brought into the world. Through weaknesses and struggles—through doubts and disappointments, it struggles up into manhood. The mind is left not only to develop itself by its own interior impulses and forces, but by the combined result of outward circumstances. And ever by a law that links its being with the Fount of Causation, and all the points with which its being comes in contact, it finds the law of its growth and the path of its progression.

Apply our subject now to literature, art, science, or religion, and you will see the same great law. The first era of the existence or development of a thing, is an era of confusion, and often repulsive. Take the literature of the past—see its origin, rise, and progress. Doubtless there was a time when there was no language, no letters, no books. But by the same law that makes the leaf grow from its native bough, the flower to drink its first drop of dew, and every plant to produce its own particular flower-seed, and every bird its own note, so came the use of language—the origin of letters. So with literature, so with art. There was a time when it had a beginning. Take the origin of architecture. At first men swung in the trees and lived beneath the open skies; then they built huts, then the dwelling, then the palace. Take science in its origin and development. How rude its first rudiments—how gradual its progress—how constant its development! One thing, now, I beg you to observe. That one art, or one science, or any one mode of thought does not advance

alone. They are all united together, linked with one heart—married to one common destiny. Show us, then, a nation with a rude development in soul, and I will show a nation with rude development in every thing else. Show me a nation with a rude architecture, and I will show you a nation with a rude art, a rude science, a rude literature and a rude religion.

There is one thing farther I wish you to observe, that if what I state is true, then everything means something. The architecture of a nation represents the thought of that nation, and every thing that is the offspring of that nation is the type of its thought, and is as necessary a part of its existence as the high priests, the altars and ceremonies to the existence of the temple. An analogy is still further seen in the development of the plant. The roots, the trunk, the stems, the leaves and blossoms are all connected—they are not altogether separate—and the state of one indicates the state of the other. As the flower is the combined essence and sweetness of the whole plant, so are the actions of a people a representative of what that people is. I know of no more interesting and pleasurable a study than the unfolding of the different meanings to be attached to every work of art, the science, literature and religion of a people, and to see how in all their departments they rhyme together.

Take the savage; how rude his hut—how full of discord his uncultivated music—how imperfect his language—how simple and undeveloped his religious ideas! See the contrast between his condition and that of the more enlightened nations. Behold their palaces, the divinity of their arts, the glory of their sciences, the conceptions of their religion, and see the perfect harmony in their whole.

In what we have already said, we see then how the first germs of progression are contained in Nature itself. Every thing is just as much the result of law as the growing of the grass, or the sparkle of the star—but that germ contains within itself its principle of progression, not because of its own law, but because of the influx of the life it receives from the Fount of all existences and intelligences. Another fact we would notice is, that while imperfection is every where the law of rudimentals, that all things are also controlled by a law of ultimate harmony and perfection. The idealistic tendency in human nature is the spirit of transfiguration, and its thought, transfiguration itself. And what is transfiguration, but the angel that precedes glorification? Of this the universal heart of humanity attests the truth. If not, why has the cross been every where embalmed? I beg of you, friends, to look at this law—see how beautiful its application. Look at its universal tendencies. If any thing is out of equilibrium, the tendency of nature is to restore it. Behold the flowers by the dusty way-side—see how the very law that parched their leaves and caused the dust to soil their delicate cells, causes a cloud to linger in the sky that will yet leave them as spotless as an angel's soul.

Our subject is useful by way of showing us the precise position we occupy in the history of the world's development. After all that has been said, we certainly cannot think that we have arrived at the ultimate of our existence—that society is permanently crystalized. We have seen by the signs of the times that we live in a period of dissolution and transition. What is now our duty? Shall we cling to the crumbling remains of the past as their elements are gradually falling to decay? Shall we join our fate to that of a temple whose foundations are already upheaving, and whose walls are already falling? Shall we cling to the past simply because that there are the altars of our fathers, or shall we take hold of those new elements now forming around us, and constructing out of the crumbling remains of the past that which will resist the present decay, and go towards forming the new church, the new university, and the new state of the present and future ages? Shall we cling to a law for the enervation of the religion of a slave-holding, a selfish, and a purse-proud nation, as though God had so dishonored himself as to make sin a horn of his altar—as though philosophy makes that a preservative of peace that violates peace, and all purity and religion? Shall we prove the old Scribes and Pharisees to be our brothers who thought that when the temple fell religion would fall? If so, we shall prove that to which all Christian-

dom attests, that when the old temple falls arises a purer and a better.

And now, standing as we do—occupying a middle position between the past and the future,—what a grand cure are the contemplations of our subject to every thing like selfishness in the scholar, the divine, or the statesman. We find we are all linked together—one family are we, bound by one chain, and to one law. In this law of progress, there opens not Heaven to one man if not to all—nor hell to one man if not to all! If one member of the great body forgets its neighbor, it must go and assist that neighbor, or it cannot possess the thing it desires. Not one flower shall a bush have unless the whole of its roots and leaves are favorable to its development. Not one star shall heaven have till there is order and harmony in the operation of all the orbs that spangle the heaven. If you sigh for a thing you do not possess, remember you are not fitted to enjoy it, or God denies it to you to give you a greater when you are fitted for it. Shall he not give you what you earn? Wait, then,—labor for that ideal you desire, and you shall possess it. Would you have a state that is true? Put humanity on board, and you will rise. If not, you will fail. If a religion, put humanity on board, and you will succeed; if not, you will be accursed. If you would form true modes of thought, take unto your mental eye the sweep of the whole heaven of thought and philosophy, and it will possess it. In all behold law and order, beauty and development. Then will the past as you have viewed it without this philosophy, become to you like the dry details of a sensuous historian, and all the scenes of trial upon which humanity has struggled as you have conceived them, like the rude, lifeless pictures that often disfigure his books. The past will become to you a volume of mystery and simplicity, replete with instruction. Then while you behold the present transitions and dissolutions of society, joining wisdom with love in all your thoughts and actions, without stopping to dwell upon the sublime meaning of the future, with what telescopic vision shall we behold that land of palaces, those cultivated fields and gardens, those unitary workshops that shall adorn our transfigured earth, and realize in thought all that poets have sung, all that saints have longed for, and for which the spirit of prophecy awaits!

### Government of the Passions.

The proper regulation of the passions of the mind is of the utmost consequence toward the establishment and continuance of health. He who would enjoy perfect health and long life, should cultivate a perpetual cheerfulness, and maintain a fixed resolution to be pleased with whatever may befall him; this satisfaction and content is within the reach of every one. But he who is constantly repining and fretting for the possession of some visionary bliss, or toiling in the ceaseless pursuit of that which he thinks he has the right to expect the possession of, must not wonder if his health should be impaired by the delusive chase. Persons who indulge this wayward disposition, easily irritable, and attentive only to that which seems faulty and disagreeable to others,—if every thing they could wish for were as their command, would make shift to be as peevish and uneasy as if they had real cause for discontent. Subordination is indispensable, and the foot may as well refuse to perform its functions, because it is not the head, as man become dissatisfied with his state. Every one has an undoubted right to meliorate his condition if he can, but such attempts are by no means inconsistent with the indulgence of continual good humor, with suffering the mind to dwell only on pleasing images, and with acquiescence under disappointment. Nature has indented with us for nothing but food and raiment, and some time ago a wise and good man had learned to be quite contented with them. Let us add, as another means, tenderness to all the animal creation. This softens the mind and endues it with an aptitude for the reception of pleasurable sensations, and of the finest feelings of the human heart. It is in the power of every one to exert his efforts to contribute to the pleasure and felicity of all with whom he is connected, even in the minutest incidents. Seek by all possible means the happiness of others, and you will find your own in the way. In a word, health is to be secured by being active and virtuous.

## Psychological Department.

## BURYING ALIVE.

Experience and observation have proved that the spirit may maintain its connection with the body for quite a length of time after animation has been apparently suspended, and that by the application of appropriate means, many persons supposed to be dead have been restored, while many more, from the want of suitable attention, have been *buried alive*. The following facts, collected from medical history, are painfully interesting and exceedingly profitable to be understood, as they reflect a light on this subject which is much needed.

The diseases in which a partial and momentary suspension of life most often manifests itself, are Asphyxia, Hysterics, Lethargy, Hypochondria, Convulsions, Syncope, Catalepsy, excessive loss of blood, Tetanus, Apoplexy, Epilepsy, and Ecstasy.

Among many cases which have been recorded, the following are particularly striking:

Chancellor Bacon relates that Dr. Scott, nicknamed the *subtle*, was buried alive at Cologne, and that recovering from his apparent death, he gnawed his hands and broke his head in his tomb.

At Toulouse, a lady having been buried in the church of the Capuchin friars, with a diamond ring on her finger, a servant entered the vault to steal the ring, and, as the finger was swelled and the ring could not come off, he began cutting the finger; on hearing a loud shriek from the deceased, the thief fell senseless. At the time of morning prayers, the monks, having heard some groans, found the lady alive and the servant dead. Thus death had his prey; there was but a change of victims.

A street porter in Paris, having died at the Hotel Dieu, was carried with the other dead into the same grave: recovering his senses towards eleven at night, he tore open his winding sheet, made his way to his house, knocked at the door, which was not opened to him without some difficulty, and took a new possession of his lodgings.

In 1756, a woman in Paris was thought to be dead, and the body put on some straw with a taper at the feet; some young men who sat round the corpse, in a frolic overturned the taper. This set the straw on fire. The deceased, whose body the flames now reached, uttered a piercing shriek. Timely assistance was rendered, and she so well recovered, that, after her resurrection, she became the mother of several children.

On the twenty-first of November, 1763, the abbe Prevot, well known for his literary productions, was taken with an apoplectic fit as he was traveling through the forest of Chantilly. Being supposed dead, he was carried to the house of the mayor of the village, and the magistrate directed a post-mortem examination to be commenced. A piercing shriek uttered by the unfortunate man, proved that he was alive. He expired under the scalpel.

Dr. Devaux, a surgeon of St. Come hospital in Paris, had a maid-servant who had three times been carried to a burial. She did not recover her senses the last time till they were lowering the coffin into the grave. That woman having died *anew*, the body was kept six days, lest they should have to bring her back a fourth time.

A Mr. Rousseau, of Rouen, had married a young lady of fourteen, whom he left in perfect health at his starting on a short journey. After a few days he heard that, unless he returned immediately, he would find his wife buried. On reaching home, he saw the funeral ready. In an agony of grief, he had the coffin removed to his room and unscrewed. He placed the body on a bed, and ordered twenty-five incisions to be made on it. At the twenty-sixth, probably deeper than the others, the deceased exclaimed, "How severely you hurt me!" Medical assistance was immediately given. The lady had afterwards twenty-six children.

The wife of Mr. Duhamel, a celebrated lawyer, having been supposed dead twenty-four hours, the body was placed on a table

for the purpose of preparing it for burial. Her husband strongly opposed it, not believing her dead, but in a state of suspended animation. To ascertain it, and knowing that she was very fond of the cymbal, and the tunes which cymbal players sing, he called one. Upon hearing the instrument and the voice, the deceased recovered motion and speech. She survived her apparent death forty years.

Andre Vesale, first physician to Charles V. and Phillip II., after attending a Spanish grandee, thought him dead. Having obtained leave to examine the body, he had scarcely thrust the bistoury into it, and opened the chest when he perceived that the heart palpitated. The relatives of the deceased prosecuted him as guilty of murder, the inquisitor as guilty of profaneness. Through the intercession of the King he obtained to be merely condemned to a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

In the sitting of the Royal Academy of Medicine, on the tenth of May, 1827, M. Chatournelle read a paper on the danger of hasty inhumations. This led to a discussion, in which M. Desgenettes stated that he had heard from M. Thouret, who had superintended the removal of the human remains of the cemetery and the charnel house *des innocens*, that many skeletons had been found in positions showing that the individuals had moved after their inhumation. M. Thouret had been so much struck with this, that he had inserted in his will an article relating to his own interment."

## Impressions during Sleep.

It not unfrequently occurs that individuals receive vivid and truthful impressions during the hours of physical slumber, relating to the condition of absent friends, or the approach of some impending calamity. The following illustration of this power is related by Mrs. Crowe:—

"An accountant in Edinburgh, and a shrewd man of business, relates the following circumstance as occurring to himself. He is a native of Dalkeith, and was residing there, when, being about fifteen years of age, he left home on a Saturday to spend a few days with a friend at Prestonpans. On the Sunday night he dreamed that his mother was extremely ill, and started out of his sleep with an impression that he must go to her immediately. He even got out of bed with the intention of doing so, but, reflecting that he had left her quite well, and that it was only a dream, he returned to bed and again fell asleep. But the dream returned, and, unable longer to control his anxiety, he arose, dressed himself in the dark, quitted the house, leaping the railings that surrounded it, and made the best of his way to Dalkeith. On reaching home, which he did before daylight, he tapped at the kitchen-window, and, on gaining admittance, was informed that on the Saturday evening after he had departed, his mother had been seized with an attack of British cholera, and was lying above extremely ill. She had been lamenting his absence extremely, and had scarcely ceased crying, 'Oh Ralph, Ralph! what a grief that you are away!' At nine o'clock he was admitted to her room; but she was no longer in a condition to recognize him, and she died within a day or two."

## Interior Sight.

No man can show it to be impossible to the Supreme Being to have given us the power of perceiving external objects without the organs of sense. We have reason to believe that when we put off these bodies, and all the organs belonging to them, our perceptive powers shall rather be improved than destroyed or impaired. We have reason to believe that the Supreme Being perceives every thing in a much more perfect manner than we do, without bodily organs. We have reason to believe that there are other created beings endowed with powers of perception more perfect and more extensive than ours, without any such organs as we find necessary. However astonishing, it is now proved beyond all rational doubt, that in certain abnormal states of the nervous organism, perceptions are possible through other than the ordinary channels of the sense."—*Dr. Reid's Works*.

## THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

R. P. AMBLER, EDITOR.

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## SPIRITUAL COMMUNICATIONS.—No. 1.

## TENDENCY TO FANATICISM.

Assuming the actual existence of spiritual communication as a fixed fact, it may be well to examine its tendency and the effects it will probably have on those who actually believe in it. These effects are, and will continue to be, as various as the different minds with which the demonstrations come in contact. It was well, perhaps, that the first men and women who undertook the investigation in Western New York, had outlived, outgrown, or had never been subjects of the false theology, or religious fanaticism of the times. It was this very absence of all feeling of wonder and superstitious awe, that allowed them to investigate with calmness, and with enough of doubting and skepticism to see facts, and state them without that color or cant which is sure to pervade the statements of those whose minds are warped and cramped by religious dogmas and creeds.

A thing of this kind could not, and should not, be confined to any class or sect; and, as every other discovery that savored at all of the marvelous always has, this had its fanatical advocates. So educated and prone are the present generation to manifest some kind of superstition under the name of religion, that this was seized upon as a convenient theme on which to found the dogmatism of a new sect, or to get the peculiar views of some particular circle endorsed, and then declare it to be true because the spirits had said so. This spirit of fanaticism is not confined wholly to those already professing the religion of some sect. There are not wanting men who, having been schooled in sectarianism and bred its preachers, had thrown off the name of sect, but who were impulsive in their organizations, and had the slumbering embers of old religious excitement within them, ready to be fanned into a blaze at the first breath of any thing new and marvelous. Such have too little philosophy to give rational and common-sense explanations of the matter, and too little penetration to avoid being imposed upon by designing and dishonest skeptics. They have therefore run into a wild excess of fanaticism at their first introduction to the new phenomena,—every creak of the table was a "dear angel," although they could give no rational account of the angelship,—every real spirit was sure to be the "guardian" called for, although no signal could be obtained, and no proofs could be had that the spirit was not mistaken, either in regard to the person called for, or its own identity, or was—which is possible—intentionally deceiving. Such enthusiasts are sensitive in the extreme when the right to "try the spirits" is insisted upon, and they will declare everything to be direct from the "angels," and all true and correct, until some "Phebe Newel" dispels the illusion, and proves that it is sheer fanaticism to count our present mode of communication with spirits perfect, and that we find deceiving spirits in the flesh, as well as ignorant and unreliable ones out of it. Although we should make all due allowances for these unfortunate organizations, we should equally pity the cause which they may attempt to publicly advocate.

A few instances of this tendency to run a rational thing into fanaticism has come to the personal knowledge of the writer, and it may not be unprofitable to allude to one or two in the present connection. One was a case where a little girl was the medium, and for a long time no demonstrations could be had until all the spectators had knelt down and repeated the Lord's prayer. It would hardly be necessary to state that most of the manifestations here were discordant and boisterous, and much on the Doctor Phelps order. Lately, the writer, for the first and only time, visited the same place, and, although they had dispensed with the formality of lip prayer, there was an evident feeling of superstitious awe pervading all who were of the family or that partic-

ular "circle." In a very short time after forming the circle, the sounds commenced and directed the darkening of the room, in order that some unusual demonstrations might be made. It was accordingly done, and in a few seconds very loud and boisterous raps commenced, which were, no doubt, independent of the human beings present (in the flesh), but manifested very little intelligence. One young lady had her chair moved back entirely away from the table, while her feet were on the rounds of her own chair. She was considerably agitated, although she was familiar with the manifestations. She soon fell from her chair, and was raised up apparently swooned and senseless. The friends thought she was magnetized, but there was not the slightest appearance of magnetism or trance, and she did not appear to be faint. She soon revived so as to speak, and exclaimed that she saw "heavenly things," but on being particularly questioned, she could give no definite answer, and appeared quite as much in the dark as the firmest believer in the popular theology. She finally said she saw Franklin, Swedenborg, and Paul, and a little child. It was a matter of surprise to many that no "every-day," common spirits could be seen; but it should be remembered that these people of large wonder have a great veneration for great men and great names. This subject continued ranting and exclaiming very much after the manner of persons having "the power," in a camp meeting, for some time. She ceased gradually, and with no seeming change of condition save that of ceasing to make a noise. All that could be made of this by a candid observer, was a case of excited wonder and marvellousness, and a disposition to magnify mole hills into mountains.

This is one of the lower, and perhaps the least injurious phases of fanaticism, as called forth by the new manifestations; lower, because manifested without much intellect, and all the less dangerous for the same reason. There are abundant instances of this kind of ranting fanaticism in connection with this matter, and what is to be peculiarly lamented, but what always accompanies ignorance and fanaticism, is that such persons always imagine that they are the *ne plus ultra* of spiritual philosophers; hence the only way seems to be to let them, by dear experience, find out their errors. These persons, who rushed with wild fanaticism into the belief and beauty of this mode of communication, are the first, when they find there are real or seeming contradictions, to fly to the other extreme, condemning all as a cheat, or as an emanation from the devil.

The more dangerous kind of fanaticism is that which arises from a strong sectarian bias and a determination to get certain creeds or dogmas endorsed by the spirits, which, under certain circumstances, is no very difficult task. The writer was once present when an individual called for the purpose of hearing the "rapping," while it was yet a new thing in Western New York. He was satisfied that such communication could be held, and he was decidedly bent on having an endorsement of certain things he had concluded to be true. Among the first questions was, whether the questioner was right in his construction of certain portions of the book of Daniel, in regard to the final destruction of the world. No answer was given at all. It was suggested that he (the querist) might be wrong, and the spirits saw that he was not ready to receive a contradiction of his theory. "I know I am right," said he "and if they answer otherwise I shall know they are evil, lying spirits." He spoke with a warmth that plainly showed that he was not seeking for truth, but for confirmation of a cherished theory—the endorsement of a creed—the building up of a sect. For such these communications are, and will probably continue to be, a stumbling-block, and all men and spirits who do not agree with them, will be for and of the devil. This friend of truth, as he *knew* it was, soon found a medium, formed a congenial circle, which gradually widened, and from which have emanated some very curious publications in the shape of "scripture interpretations," and later (with the addition of finer, but fully as impulsive intellects) something equally curious, purporting to emanate straight from the apostles and eminent poets.

As the soul is the life of the body, so is love the life of the soul.



## THE BIBLE AND SLAVERY.

It is known that the Primitive History has long been regarded by Christians as the authentic and inspired word or testimony of God. This volume has therefore elicited a blind and indiscriminating reverence, and from it have been professedly derived the various creeds and doctrines existing in the Church. So strong, indeed, has been the popular faith in the divine authority of the Scriptures, that every system of theology which does not apparently accord with its teachings, is rejected as false; while he who even dares to breathe a suspicion as to the truthfulness of certain portions of these writings, is regarded at once as an incorrigible heretic. It is not a little singular, however, that when some great subject is presented which pertains to social and political interests, and on which the moral and intellectual faculties are brought in action, the teachings of this revered Book are quite willingly dispensed with, and people venture to talk loudly of a "higher law" which is entirely independent of all biblical authority. A pointed illustration of this apparent inconsistency is presented in the following article, which we extract from the Sunday Times, in relation to the Bible and Slavery:—

"The Bible is one of those books always talked about, much praised, little read, and less comprehended. Probably there is not one person in a hundred that knows what the Bible doctrine of slavery is. Even our preachers do not understand it—if they do, they do not preach it. Upon a point of this kind there should be no misunderstanding, and we therefore give the Scripture doctrine for the benefit of whom it may concern.

In Leviticus, chapter XXV., beginning at the thirty-ninth verse, it is written:

'And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee, thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant:

'But as a hired servant, and as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, and shall serve thee unto the year of jubilee:

'And then shall he depart from thee, both he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possessions of his fathers shall he return.

'For they are my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as bondmen.

'Thou shalt not rule over him with rigor, but shalt fear thy God.

'Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of these shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids.

'Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession.

'And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen forever; but over your brethren, the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigor.'

Thus saith the Lord. Here is a full recognition of slavery; a full permission of slavery; a recognition of slaves as property, as a possession, and an inheritance forever. Is this the 'higher law' we hear so much about, or is there some higher law than the Bible? This was the direction and command of God to his chosen people: it bears upon its face the word 'forever.' We do not know that God has changed, or that this law has ever been repealed. This nation—at least a great majority of it—profess to believe in, and be governed by, the Bible: how then can we condemn in our southern brethren what God expressly directed the children of Israel to do. How can we talk of a higher law than that which bears the sanction of Almighty Wisdom?

Take the dilemma, and meet it manfully. If slavery is wrong now, it was always wrong, and God commanded what was wrong. If slavery is contrary to religion, it is not the religion taught in the Bible: there can be no mistake upon this point. If we believe the Bible, God authorized slavery—slavery as it now exists; a slavery in which the slaves and their children

were chattels, possessions, inheritance—things to be owned, bought, sold, and held as an inheritance forever. The distinction between servitude for debt, reclaimable bondage, and this perpetual slavery, is clear and well defined in the above passage. No law was ever expressed in clearer terms; there can be no mistake in its meaning. It is in vain to say that the law we have quoted is abrogated in the Christian dispensation. Christ came to fulfill the law; the apostles observed it. There is not the shadow of proof that chattel slavery, as above established, was interfered with by Christ or his apostles, or by the primitive church. Where, then, is the "higher law?" Slavery, the Bible expressly tells us, is a divine institution. There is no escape from this conclusion, but by denying the authority of the Bible. Our southern brethren plant themselves on that authority. They say—'An institution established by God himself, for his chosen people, and as a part of the domestic policy of a nation he had founded for his own glory and as a model for the world, cannot be wrong. God cannot condemn in us what he expressly commanded for the children of Israel. What was right then cannot now be wrong. Circumstances may alter cases, but the laws of God do not change.'

What answer is there to this reasoning? Upon what do we pretend to base a higher law than that contained in the Bible? If we prove slavery a wrong, we prove the Bible to be the teacher of that wrong, and the Bible and slavery must stand or fall together. Those who repudiate the Bible may denounce slavery, but no man who believes in the Bible and pretends to be governed by its precepts, can consistently do so. The Bible does, and must, and will sustain slavery, as long as it is a rule of faith and practice.

Many of the abolitionists, therefore, are open infidels. They denounce the Bible, and all churches and religious systems based upon it; and they are entirely consistent in so doing, for if they admit the inspiration and truth of the Bible, they must admit that God is the author of slavery. There is no escape. They cannot denounce one without denouncing the other.

But what are we to think of those clergymen who, pretending to believe this revelation, are denouncing slavery from their pulpits as a heaven-daring sin—the sum of all iniquities—an outrage calling for divine retribution? Why denounce southerners as horribly wicked, for doing what God but a few ages ago commanded? What strange and perverse inconsistency is here, or what gross ignorance of the very Bible they pretend to reverence!

Admitting the divine authority of the Books of Moses, and the Divine origin of the Jewish dispensation, we are driven to conclude that slavery is not an evil; that man may hold property in man, even as a possession and inheritance forever; that such an institution, divinely appointed, must have had some good purpose known to the wisdom of the Almighty. We submit to the candid reader, whether the text quoted above does not fully justify our comments."

## A Rule that Works both Ways.

In a late number of the "Spirit World," one of its contributors, in referring to the editor of this paper, expresses the opinion that we are more likely to be deceived, because we do not believe in evil spirits. If we mistake not, this rule will be found to work quite as well the other way. Let me say, then, that the writer of the article above referred to is much more likely to be deceived, for the very reason that he believes in evil spirits; because the mind engaged in the frequent contemplation of this subject, necessarily revolves in a low and degraded sphere, and will thus naturally attract the particular class of spirits—if any such exist—on which the thoughts are habitually placed. Believing we do that God is infinitely pure, and that all existing creatures are derived primitively from Him, we cannot believe that the downward being on which the divine image is impressed, is intrinsically evil. Still farther, as to the matter of expediency, not but regard it as much more safe and beneficial to our aspirations to rise upward to a higher and purer state, they should be suppressed by the contemplation of hell or the fear of evil spirits. The popular the

isted in the world for a sufficient length of time to show us the legitimate influence of a belief in these heathen doctrines. No person was yet made better by a constant association of mind with that which is evil; and instead of being on the *safer side* by such an association, we not only deceive ourselves, but are liable to be deceived, from the low and debasing state of mind which is thus induced.

B. F. A.

### Influences of Spring.

"Still let my song a nobler note assume,  
And sing the influence of Spring on man.  
When heaven and earth, as if contending, vie  
To raise his being and serene his soul,  
Can he forbear to join the general smile  
Of Nature?"

Thompson.

The ever-revolving wheels of time have again brought the delightful season of Spring; and is there a heart that is not touched by its genial influences?—that can gaze unmoved upon Nature, adorned in her most lovely attire,—inhale the balmy air, and listen without emotion to the soul-stirring music of the feathered songsters, as they chant their songs of praise? If there is, cold and desolate indeed must be that heart, and it most deeply calls for our sympathy and commiseration. Every season brings with it its peculiar pleasures, and its peculiar lessons to man; but if any one is calculated more than another to develop his spiritual nature, to kindle the dormant fires that slumber within his breast, and to lead his thoughts "through Nature up to Nature's God," that season is *Spring*—joyous and lovely Spring. At this delightful season I love to wander forth into the verdant fields, "over hill and dale," beside the flowery banks of the murmuring river, or through the green and shady grove, and there listen to the carolings of the feathered warblers as they sport among the trees, or soar aloft into the air, making it vocal with their joyous notes.

Scenes like these are calculated to awaken in the contemplative mind, the most pure and delightful emotions—emotions that words in their feebleness cannot utter, for the thoughts rest not with the things seen and heard by the external senses (which must soon wither and fade away), lovely though they be; but he who views them aright, reads in every blade of grass, in every leaf, in every flower that blooms beneath his feet—in short, upon every page of Nature's instructive book on which he casts his eye, the most eloquent and impressive moral and spiritual lessons—lessons calculated, if rightly improved, to elevate his being above the sordid selfishness of this unprogressed world, to communion with more pure and celestial beings. And above all, he sees in the re-animation of decayed nature, the universal life and joy that prevail throughout the earth, the air, and the water, where so lately nought but silence and desolation reigned, a beautiful though faint emblem of that era in the eternal life of the soul, when it shall escape its gross and rudimental body, spring forth to a new and more glorious existence, and wing its way to the sunny bowers of the Spirit-land, there to flourish in the vigor of immortal youth, from pain and death forever free, where the chilly winds of autumn and the wintry blast can never come to mar the beauty of the scene; but

"Where everlasting Spring abides,  
And never-withering flowers,"

and where he hopes to meet the loved-ones that have gone before him to that better land, there to roam in the blissful fields and shady groves, or by the placid waters of the Spirit-home, where every flower is perennial, and "where there is fullness of joy, and pleasures forevermore."

Let us, then, improve this delightful season in such a manner as to give us more exalted conceptions of the Author of Nature—the bountiful Giver of all good, and to our own advancement in moral and spiritual life, comforted under all the trials and afflictions through which we may be called to pass in this tempestuous state of existence, by the firm assurance that

"The storms of wintry time will quickly pass,  
And one unbounded Spring encircle all."

Abington, May, 1851.

N. E. C.

### Writings of Mr. Davis.

Many critics have expended their powers in analyzing the sentiments of the book known as "Nature's Divine Revelations." It may be that their conclusions on the merits of this book are correct in some respects and erroneous in others; but all should understand that Mr. Davis does not recognize infallibility either in himself or any other human being. He says: "Let what I am impressed to state, then, be received as true, or rejected as false, according to its appeals to your judgment;" and again he says, "I know I shall, like all others, progress eternally; therefore I do not promise to believe to-morrow exactly what I believe to-day, for I may know more." It is true that the writings of Mr. Davis may partake somewhat of the individuality of his own mind, like the productions of all other authors. The written ideas of every person are in a measure the expression of his own individuality, or a symbol of the inspiration peculiar to himself. The several books of the Bible bear an obvious impression of the individual minds of the persons by whom they were written. Hence arise the different styles and modes of expression which are here apparent. Moses, David, Isaiah, and St. Paul, all had their peculiar styles of writing, according to the measure or degree of inspiration. It is so, also, with modern writers, both poets and theologians.

Some persons question the propriety or consistency of entitling the book referred to, "Nature's Divine Revelations." In reply let us ask, is not visible and invisible Nature a complete embodiment of the Divine Mind, representing both its outer and interior manifestations?—and is not this volume a transcript of Nature in all its multiplied forms and infinite ramifications, and also of God in the unfathomable depths of his love, power, and wisdom? If so, then, does it fully possess the very character which is indicated by its title.

I would not defend the errors of Mr. Davis, if any exist. Let them be fairly and candidly pointed out. But we are compelled to regard his writings as the triumph of clairvoyance, and when we reflect that these are the work of an uneducated young man, and then consider his profound philosophy, his far-reaching powers of thought and reason, together with the surpassingly beautiful language he employs, we say that these things combined form the greatest wonder of our age. Can the history of mankind furnish another instance of a person who has thus risen, without education, and while a mere youth, to become a distinguished author on the most abstruse, metaphysical sciences—exhibiting in all these the most astonishing resources of thought and knowledge which would have cost other men, in the usual way of obtaining them, a long life-time? I say can history clearly show a case parallel to this? And have mankind yet fully appreciated this startling development of mental power?

G. H. L.

We continue to be gratified with many letters of encouragement, received from different parts of the country. It affords us satisfaction to be assured that the Messenger is welcomed with pleasure by its readers, and that it serves as a means to diffuse the light of truth which is now bursting so gloriously upon the world. We would invite a general correspondence from the friends of the Philosophy, with reference to the progress of truth in the several regions where their observation may extend. In this way a more intimate and fraternal relation might be established between circles in different places, and the efforts of all be enlisted with an increased earnestness.

There are certain sweet and hallowed joys in life which are not to be compared with the ordinary pleasures adapted to the sensual; and among these, one of the most prominent is the joyous consciousness which we often feel, that in the deep and solemn stillness of night, when the tumult of the busy world is hushed, we are visited by angelic beings who watch over us amid the slumbers of the body, to elevate and tranquilize the soul.

There is a beauty of the soul and there are flowers in the realms of mind, of which all the glories of Nature seem but the outward symbol.

## Poetry.

## THE HAIL.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,

BY MARIA F. OHANDLER.

The crystal hail, the crystal hail—  
It falls in gem-like showers;  
To shed new beauty on the earth,  
And sparkle 'mid the flowers.  
Gay Nature with a sportive air,  
Hath flung her necklace on the ground,  
The scattered pearl-drops, glittering fair,  
Leap up with a merry bound.

The stormy clouds have passed away  
From heaven's expanse of blue;  
The sunbeams now are hastening down,  
Those scattered pearls to woo;  
The rays those frozen drops have felt,  
The spirit-chill of frost departs;  
Thus kindly smiles the ice-drops melt  
That cling 'round human hearts.

## FAITH.

Ye who think the truth ye sow,  
Lost beneath the winter's snow,  
Doubt not, Time's unerring law  
Yet shall bring the genial thaw.  
God in Nature ye can trust,  
Is the God of Mind less just?

Read we not the mighty thought  
Once by ancient sages taught?  
Though it withered in the blight  
Of the mediæval night,  
Now the harvest we behold;  
See! it bears a thousand fold.

Workers on a barren soil,  
Yours may seem a thankless toil;  
Sick at heart with hope deferred,  
Listen to the cheering word;  
Now the faithful sower grieves;  
Soon he'll bind his golden sheaves.

If Great Wisdom has decreed  
Man may labor, yet the seed  
Never in this life shall grow,  
Shall the sower cease to sow?  
The fairest fruit may yet be born  
On the resurrection morn!

## ETERNITY.

BY C. D. STEWART.

Thou rollest on, oh deep, unmeasured sea—  
Thy length and depth a mystery profound;  
Days, weeks, years, centuries in immensity  
Pass on, nor leave a footstep nor a sound.  
Thou lightest up thy smooth, unwrinkled brow,  
Beyond the limit of the utmost thought,  
A shoreless space—where ages mutely bow,  
Like bubbles on thy bosom, and are not!  
We hear a tramp of feet—we see a throng  
Of generations flashing through the gloom.  
They fade, and others rise, and far along  
Thy caverns yawn, and Nature finds her tomb  
In thee; but thou nor young, nor old, art—evermore  
One all pervading space—a sea without a shore!

## Miscellaneous Department.

## MIRZA.

BY CARLETON SEYMOUR M'KEE.

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 312.]

Something soothed me into tranquility, and I reposed. Then I heard again the voice which, ere this, had spoken to me. It came to comfort, and to my mad ravings against my hapless life, answered—

"Oh, mortal, thou hast forgotten the chief good of existence. Is there not something more to live for?"

"I would not live longer. Let me die—let me die!" I exclaimed, in the madness of my despair. "Who could live, thus driven out from my exalted station—stripped of all splendor—deprived of the joyous scenes in which I have reveled? Wouldst thou tempt me to plunge into a deeper misery, by living long years of shame and regret? No! no! I would die and have all forgotten!"

"No temptation proceedeth from the celestial world, repining man! Charge not the spirits of light with thine own folly. Does God choose to remember that thou art but a creature of dependence upon Him? Can the All-Just depart from the goodness of His attributes to tempt a frail mortal like thee? Presumptuous, unjust, thoughtless being, to hazard thus thy endless peace!"

I buried my face in my hands and wept tears of contrition. The heartfelt sorrow of the wayward, who mourn their transgressions, is an eloquent advocate with the Almighty. So the spirit unseen murmured—

"'Tis well to weep when the heart is sorrowful. But that sorrow I can dispel, even as the gloom of night fades before the sun's effulgent light. Hearken, Mirza, to my words. I am the Spirit of Love, and I descend from the most exalted Heaven!"

"Teach me," I responded. "Thou art from God, and God is surpassingly good. I cannot comprehend how excellent He is, but I would follow where He bids me go. Then, pure spirit, lead me, guard me, or I stray and fall."

"Hast thou not read in the books of sacred lore, how the Creator gave his creatures sublimest precepts of morality, to guide them in peace through this mortal life? Hast thou not heard the teachings of religion, bidding thee to look on high with unfeigned gratitude to Him from whom proceedeth all that is pure, and just, and glorious? Hast thou not seen youth made happy, manhood noble, age peaceful, by the hallowed influences of a virtue unalloyed? Wouldst thou not thyself have often gladly laid aside thy princely attire, and given up thy lordly domains, to have been contented as the poor husbandman, who labored in thy vineyards and olive groves? Ah! Mirza, hadst thou but chosen virtue long ere this, it had been well with thee."

"But I have rejected the counsels of heaven too long. I have strayed too far, I fear. Men point at me as one of the vile beings who abuse the highest privileges, and have no gratitude for the noblest blessings. On the morrow they will trace my footsteps and pursue me, that their vengeance may have its full sway. Men forget not; yet, perchance I may escape them. But can God forget? Can I escape when He pursueth?"

"Thou knowest not God, for thou art but human," answered the spirit. "How canst thou behold the sky if thy gaze is ever on the earth beneath thee? Shall he that was always blind declare that creation has no beauties? So if thou hast never looked beyond terrestrial blessings, to the throne of Him from whom they come, then canst thou presume to know how great are the mercies thence proceeding? I would speak comfort from Heaven. Wilt thou listen?"

"Gladly—oh! very gladly!" I answered. "My heart is sorrowful—oh how sorrowful!"

"Arise, then, and take thy way over the desert which is nigh thee. Thou shalt thus escape the ruler's vengeance. Fear not to encounter the perils of the way, for there is One higher than

thou art, who can guard thee and provide for thee wherever thou goest. Then when thou hast gone into another country, thou mayest live as man ought to live, and die as thou wouldst wish to die. But remember he is a madman who forgets his God, or who trusts in his own strength rather than the power of the Almighty. Remember, too, that he who soothes the sick, who relieves the weary, who teaches the erring, and gives glory to his Maker, achieves a more noble honor, and shall have a more exalted reward than the mightiest prince can reap from the greatest empire. Be just, be peaceful, be forgiving, Mirza. Hasten hence, and be happy!"

The spirit left me, and I arose to obey. Gratefully acknowledging the hospitality of the poor widow, and receiving her blessing, I departed.

My journey over the desert was one fraught with pain, with danger and privation. But I felt that I had a Protector ever nigh me, and I bore all with a cheerful heart.

Arrived at last at a place of security, where I was utterly unknown, where no friends came to greet, no traitors to sacrifice, no enemies to crush me, I sought out a retreat, far away in a mountainous country, where the few and humble people busied themselves not with the affairs of state, nor sought to rush into the perils which accompany wealth and majesty.

Here I resolved to get my friends by virtuous actions, and to live in the exercise of good-will to my fellow-mortals. Never allowing myself to wish for aught but calmness, peace, and a happy termination of my career, I have avoided all the cares of temptation. No thought of pleasure, no hopes of riches, no desires for glory, could ever draw me from my retirement.

Blessed be those with whom I have dwelt; eagerly seeking to enlighten the ignorant, guiding aright the wayward, expending all my stock of superfluous goods upon those who needed my aid, I have gradually withdrawn from the vanities of life to its substantial blessings.

Already I have a rich recompense. I see peace and contentment all around me. I have no courtiers to flatter my failings; no envious rivals to undermine my prosperity. Ah! I have tasted the hopes of ambition, I have enjoyed the splendors of power, reveled in the gladness of affluence, but the sweets of virtue have excelled them all. Its holy influence has smoothed my path, its sacred counsels have breathed consolation, its hallowed truths have secured my felicity.

Methinks that far off I shall see the gentle spirit whose voice was with me, to cheer me when I wept, to lead me gently away from the fallacies of earth to the realities of Heaven.

The scene grows darker,—scarcely now do I distinguish the trees waving in yonder forest, nor does the bright sunbeam penetrate the mists which have formed a somber twilight around me.

But a gentle murmur greets my spirit. It is not of earth. "Come, Mirza, come," it is whispering. I gladly obey the voice I have heard before, but never so sweetly as now. I go to behold the hidden splendors revealed at last to those who live justly, guided by the holy influence of Heaven.

"Now," whispers the angel, "bid farewell to the terrestrial and come upward with me!"

I must away, for it is the Spirit of Love, and I am going now where all is joy, where all is peace, where all is glory, and splendor shines unceasingly from the throne of the Everlasting.—*Arthur's Home Gazette.*

### Guardian Angels.

If there is one thought more beautiful than all others, it is that which whispers of guardian angels. There is something in the idea that partakes of the ethereal brightness of the Spirit-land, and sheds a halo of glory around every occurrence of life. The thought that when danger surrounds us, and clouds are wreathing over our pathway, there are ministering spirits hovering near, encircling us with their protecting wings, and shielding us from harm, is one of the brightest fancies that has ever gilded earth with its presence. Who would ever be lonely, who would

ever weep, if they could feel that sympathizing spirits were near, breathing around them an atmosphere of affection, and ready with their snowy pinions to brush away every falling tear, and shed smiles in its stead? Could we rely upon the reality of this, we should scarcely mourn when friendship withered, or sigh that its echoes had died away.

### The Stream of Life.

Life bears us on like the stream of a mighty river. Our boat at first glides down the narrow channel, through the playful murmurings of the little brook, and the windings of its grassy border. The trees shed their blossoms over our young heads; the flowers on the brink seem to offer themselves to our young hands; we are happy in hope, and we grasp eagerly at the beauties around us; but the stream hurries on and still our hands are empty.

Our course in youth and manhood is along a wider and deeper flood, and amid objects more striking and magnificent. We are animated by the moving picture of enjoyment and industry which passes before us; we are excited by some short-lived success, or depressed and made miserable by some equally short-lived disappointment. But our energy and our dependence are both vain. The stream bears us on, and our joys and our griefs are alike left behind us; we may be shipwrecked, but we cannot anchor; our voyage may be hastened, but it cannot be delayed; whether rough or smooth, the river hastens towards its home, till the roaring of the ocean is in our ears, and the tossing of the waves is beneath our keel, and the lands lessen from our eyes, and the floods are lifted around us, and the earth loses sight of us, and we take our last leave of earth and its inhabitants, and of our further voyage there is no witness but the Infinite and the Eternal.—*Bishop Heber.*

### Live for Something.

Thousands of men breathe, move and live—pass off the stage of life, and are heard of no more. Why? They did not partake of good in the world, and none were blessed by them; none could point to them as a means of their redemption; not a line they wrote, not a word they spoke could be recalled, and so they perished; their light went out in darkness, and they were not remembered more than insects of yesterday. Will you thus live and die, O man immortal! Live for something. Do good and leave behind you a monument of virtue, that the storms of time can never destroy. Write your name, by kindness, love and mercy on the hearts of thousands you come in contact with year by year, and you will never be forgotten. No, your name, your deeds, will be as legible on the hearts you leave behind, as the stars on the brow of the evening. Good deeds will shine as brightly on the earth as the stars of heaven.—*Dr. Chalmers*

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