

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 NATURE AND PRESENCE OF THE DEITY.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,
BY W. M. FERWALD.

What is God? Where is He? and how does he exist? These are questions which the child puts, out of the simplicity of a pure heart, and of a mind untainted and unentangled with the mysteries of theology. And if, as Christ said, we are to become converted and become as little children,—if this means simplicity—we know not why it may not pertain to any subject which has a direct bearing upon human affections, human intellect and improvement. Manifestly, all greatest truths are most simple. Manifestly, the tendency of all science is to reduce the complexity of Nature's mysteries to the recognition of fewer and still fewer laws, to account for all its manifold movements. We live especially in an age of combination and approaching unity. Intellectual, moral, physical and social science, all are simplifying and unitizing, not only themselves individually, but embracing and uniting with each other. The simplest and truest metaphysical theory is now that which is related most intimately with a refined, organic materialism. We seem to be emerging from the shadows to the substance of metaphysics. The best moral philosophy is that which is based on substantial physical foundations. And so the best and highest physiology is that which has reference to great *moral* and *mental* ends. The best spiritualism is evidently that which is most tangible and substantial. The best social economy is that which unites all these sciences for the refinement, perfection, and combination of humanity. The best theology is manifestly unitarian, and the best unitarianism is that which has not only cleared itself from the theological trinity, but which recognizes the strictest unity of the Divine Mind with Nature. There is a kind of universalism in all this; but the best universalism is that which is least theological and least scriptural, and which plays a unity in universality through the vast and mighty universe. The best thinkers, on almost any subject, are those who have escaped most from chips and fragments, and who can take a central and unitary point from which to view things in the whole.

It is for these and similar reasons, that the child frequently becomes the philosopher—that the illiterate are most truly wise. They have not their minds filled with fractional science; they cannot quote Greek, and are not much versed in history; they do not know what Plato said, and others of celebrity; but they have a most wonderful faculty of suspecting the truth in the whole—of scenting instinctively the mighty sham which there is at the foundations.

Men are not skeptics by nature, but by reason of the schools. There is no atheism by constitution, but only by theological requirements. The child asks—what is God? This is the question of questions. The adult seldom asks it, the church never. Why not? Because error is complex, and truth is simple. Because Nature is full of inspiration, and theology puts up the greatest bars against it. Grown people shudder at this question, for authority has taught them that it is unanswerable. They must be content that God is; *what* He is or how He exists—it is only a vain speculation, and a stifling of the religious sentiment, to attempt any definite information upon a subject so high and so insolvable.

I do not believe this; I do not believe the child would be prompted to this eternal utterance, were it not a fit and proper subject of inquiry,—nay, were it not most simple and easy of solution. And when I hear this almost universal voice against it—when I see the repugnancy of parents, teachers, schools,

churches, against this first demand, almost, of the infant intellect in its religious efforts, I confess I am constrained to think there is almost a universally felt contradiction between the faith of the soul and the requirements of the teacher,—between internal conviction, and external authority and reasoning. I do not mean to say that men are in general skeptical on this subject; I know they are not; but wherein they are—wherein there is not full satisfaction—wherein there is a full belief, but no clear, *intellectual conception* of God, which leads to this general repugnancy to the consideration of what God is, I know it comes from a false theology, which, as the intellect grows and begins to think for itself, leads to still greater skepticism, and if not corrected, will lead to worse and worse.

We come, then, in a spirit fully in accordance with the unitizing and simplifying character of the age, to consider the foundations of all truth, all science, philosophy, religion;—to consider what God is, and how he exists. And we would say here, that the Deity is to be considered both materially and spiritually. Let none be startled with so odd a proposition.

The Deity is to be considered in the first place, materially. That is, matter can never be supposed to have been created out of nothing; it must be eternal. It is the *Body*—the material organism of the Divine Mind. But when we speak of matter in this sense, we have not reference to the matter of this visible nature alone, but to the infinite substance of the visible and invisible universe. It is impossible to conceive of any substance, visible or invisible, gross or fine, earthy or ethereal, which has not a common relation and affinity. The moment we conceive of two substances, we divide the universe beyond all possibility of union. If we cannot, in our chemistry, make a union of fire and water, earth and air, or any two substances of which we are accustomed to say, they have no affinity, it is not because there is none, it is because our chemistry is not so fine as the chemistry of Nature. Nature knows no permanent divisions. Nature is a universal solvent. From lowest to highest, in her dominions, there is a universal reciprocation, exchange, relation, affinity, union, in a higher or lower degree. If it were not so, could the universe exist a single moment? Is it not manifest at once and intuitively, that, speaking of substance, it must be a unity? And whether we consider the earth we tread upon, the vegetation that springs upon its surface, the countless forms of animal existence, the eternal blazonry of the heavens above us, or the souls of all the creatures that exist on every globe in immensity, it is the simplest and most intuitive conviction that substance is one, that it has chemical affinities, that it differs only in degrees of progression and refinement, or it could not compose a united universe.

Here, then, we have the Deity in his *material* existence. We have the Body of the Infinite Mind. And it must be further observed, that without this body the Deity could not manifest himself. Without matter there is no God. The proposition is instant truth. Could the human mind manifest itself without its material organs? Could there be any such thing as mind, without its necessary frame-work? Deity, then, is subjected to the same conditions. The Infinite Mind only is, and can only manifest itself by its conjunction with a material organism. Consider the mineral kingdom. The active principle there incorporated, is simple motion. This is the presence and manifestation of God in the mineral world. But could Deity exist or operate here—could motion exist, without some substratum or body—some matter, in fact, to be in motion? Take a step higher into the vegetable kingdom. The active principle here existing is *life*. This is the presence and manifestation of God in the vegetable world. But could Deity exist or operate here—could life exist, without some matter to be in motion?—possible con-

ception of life without the substance of life? A step higher and we reach the animal kingdom. The active principle here operating is sensation. This is the presence and manifestation of God in the animal kingdom. I care not if you embrace partial reason and man. The principle of highest authority is reason or intelligence. Nor can it exist or operate without the material substratum in which it dwells, and through which it accomplishes all its triumphs over the inferior nature which lies beneath it.

I have said that motion, life, sensation and intelligence, were the presence and manifestation of God in the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human worlds. This, perhaps, is the *lowest* idea that can be given of that Infinite energy which is the active principle of all matter, visible and invisible. It is God manifest in the world—the God recognized by the intellect. But when we reflect upon the unnumbered myriads of worlds, created of the same original and eternal substance, and having developed on their surfaces all the phenomena of motion, life, sensation and intelligence, and all beautiful affections, the Deity becomes to us the object of infinite and overwhelming thought. But the great point is, that God thus becomes appreciable—that He exists materially as well as spiritually—that in fact He does not exist spiritually only by the material body through which the spirit plays and manifests itself. The simplicity and unity of the conception is, that substance is one, and that the Infinite Mind is the energy, power and motion of the substance. God is *not* the theological chimera which has created all the confusion and all the skepticism in the world;—not a spirit-substance, having no qualities in common with all other substance, no fine, chemical affinity, but which is eternally and totally different, unnatural and incomprehensible, and which works upon matter by artificial and unnatural means. Alas! how much we need to deal with the first abomination—this mother of discord—this fruitful cause of all the grossest superstition and priesthood in the world. If we would harmonize the mind, we must put it at one with Nature. If we would establish faith, we must do it by the most simple and most unitarian theology. I had as lief believe in three Gods as to believe in two substances! The one is not a whit more unreasonable than the other. We cannot unite these two substances any more than we can unite three Gods. There is no unity, harmony, or consistency in the conception. I know that many learned men, and many timid theologians, say very confidently that we know not what matter is, any more than we know what spirit is. We would as confidently assert, and in all simplicity, that we know what *both* are, better than the common philosophy knows either. Matter is all substance, and spirit is all the *energy* of that substance. But, if I only occupied the common position—if I believed in two entities, called Spirit and Matter, I should say, we *do* know more of matter than we do of spirit. We see it with our eyes, feel it with our hands, taste it, smell it, hear it. But who ever saw, felt, tasted, smelt, or heard, this other substance that men call spirit? I will not dispute that a spiritual *body* has not been seen—a being from the celestial regions; for I know they have been seen by the internal eye. But the moment you give a body to it, you affirm it to be substance or matter. You may say we *feel* the spirit, are conscious of it. But I should answer, that very feeling and consciousness are nothing but the *play* or *motion* of the spiritual substance itself. Can it be said at all, that we have as much evidence of the existence of spirit as a separate substance, as we have of matter? I say, we have no evidence at all of it. We do indeed have as much evidence of *Motion, Life, Sensation and Intelligence*—as much evidence of *Mind* as we have of Matter. But we have not the *first intimation* of two separate entities for the production of these mental phenomena. And how can any man, learned or unlearned, stand up in this glorious universe of Matter, and say, in his senses, that he knows not what matter is any more than he knows what he conceives to be a separate entity of spirit? We may not know what its *essence* or *elements* are, but do we not know that matter is refined into atmosphere, electricity, and magnetism? Do we not see it in motion, and that there is not a single particle of it inert or dead, but that chemical composition, decomposition, and recomposition, are doing their ceaseless work, and that all things

are full of innate life and energy? I say, we know *much* of matter, much of its refinements, much of its motion and properties, but we know *nothing* of spirit as a separate entity—cannot affirm the first proposition of it. And this indeed seems to be the true state of the case. These philosophers and theologians who first conceive that there is such a thing as spirit—substance separated by nature from all other substance, truly say that they know not what matter is any more than they know what spirit is; that is, they know no more of its *essence*, its ultimate elements. But what I insist on is, they do know it is *something*; but they do not know that spirit is a *thing* at all. At most, they can say, they feel and know of power and energy. But power and energy are no *things*—they are only the *action* of the one original substance in some one or more of its infinite variety of forms and degrees of refinement.

I wish to be understood here, when I say spirit is no *thing*, to speak most strictly and abstractly. For in truth, those beings which we call spirits—the souls of the immortals, are only termed spirits by way of refinement. They are of course substance, and so matter; but their *minds*, their *thoughts*, their spirits in *this* sense, are no *things*, but only the action of the refined organism in its interior relations. So we would embrace the whole spiritual universe—all the heavens of immortality, all the angels of God; and though we should call it spiritual by way of refinement, yet, of the *substance*, philosophically speaking, we say it is nothing but matter in its endless degrees of progression and development. And the *spirit* of all this, most strictly and truly, is simply the energy, the power, the motion manifested in all the mind, thought, and affection of the mighty whole.

Now, therefore, we may know what God is materially. He is all substance. He is Matter, from grossest earth to the most refined bodies of the highest angels. I say it in simplicity and truth. And what is God spiritually? He is Energy, Power, Motion, Life, Sensation, Intelligence. And what is all this? Simply, the different degrees of action, of the infinite substance of the universe. Is not this true? Is it not simple and unitary? Has theology a better conception? But I say here also, it is hard for the human intellect to comprehend much of God—much in degree, by reason of that glorious infinity which embraces all in all. But I tell you, you can comprehend God's nature. I should be ashamed to speak theologically to you, and tell you that you could not comprehend God's nature—that He was in this sense past finding out—that He was a great invisible, incomprehensible—that he created matter out of nothing—that we could not all comprehend the mode of His existence—that He had a personality, and was in matter, and yet that matter was no part of God—that the more we tried to comprehend him in this way, the more we should be involved in obscurity—that human reason was here confounded, and nothing absolutely could be known—that clouds and darkness were not only round about His providence, but His whole philosophical nature and mode of being. And yet this is the foundation, and this the intelligent preaching, of nearly all the religion in Christendom.

Last summer, in Cambridge, I listened to the sermon preached before the graduating class in divinity. The preacher stated explicitly, that seeking after God's essential nature was a hopeless and impossible work—that the more we sought out God in this way, the further he was from us—that darkness gathered upon darkness at every step of our progress in this field of theological investigation. I am sure I give the preacher's idea, if not his words. And I was struck also with the fact that here was the most eloquent passage of the sermon—in the poetical darkness which the preacher contrived to throw around the Divinity, and the profound ignorance in which human spirits were plunged in this mighty theological deep.

I do not wonder at the atheism of the poet Shelly, at the master reasonings of D'Holbach in his System of Nature, or at the most daring blasphemy which has ever been uttered from the unbelieving world. It is chargeable direct to the unphilosophical spirit which has characterized the whole theology of christendom. These men had vast philosophical attainments, or an inspiration of nature quicker and higher than the boasted christianity of the church. They felt and saw God all



around them, in the divine laws of harmony and order, but they could not so do violence to their minds as to imagine a separate chimera—a spirit that could not be defined—and a being whose greatest philosophical excellencies and perfections have been made to consist, as the greatest of atheists says, “in the *absolute negation of all ideas* which men are capable of forming to themselves.” The more incomprehensible theology has been able to make God appear, the better has it thrived, and the more perfect and divine has the divine Being been supposed to be. And as D’Holbach tells us—“The object which men in all ages have most considered, reasoned upon the most, and written upon the most, remains, nevertheless, the least known.” Can it be possible that this darkness is to remain much longer, so universal?

Psychological Department.

VOICES FROM THE SPIRIT LAND.

NUMBER ONE.

There are Voices from the Spirit Land which sound to the inhabitants of earth like the revelations of fancy; but the time will come—IT IS DAWNING ON THE WORLD—when many men shall hear these voices, and comprehend the mighty truths their tones impart.—*Great Harmonia.*

During one of those evenings upon which our little circle was in the habit of meeting to converse with those bright spirit messengers, from the sphere where man looks for better and happier rest than is to be found amid the cold forms and customs of earth, I witnessed a scene that can never be effaced while Truth guides, and Reason controls me. Answers had been freely given to our questions, and communications readily spelled for us, as usual. Between the hours of eight and nine o’clock, the alphabet was called for, and directions given to “take the light out of the room.” After complying with this request, and re-seating ourselves around the table, our attention was attracted to the space above our heads, where seemed to be music, the most beautiful that it has ever been my privilege to listen to. Pen cannot describe the sweet tones that seemed to come from directly above us. With much regret I have to say that, by nature, I have not a love for what the world pronounces music, but with joy can say that for such strains as there sounded in my ears, I have often at midnight longed and listened, rejoicing that such soothing, soul-inspiring notes were to be heard on earth. Our attention had been directed towards the sounds some time, when I began to behold, floating above and around me, mists, clouds, and vapors, of light and brown colors, reminding me of the color of those snow-tipped clouds which traverse space above earth, and of earth’s dark surface when Fall winds and chilling air have taken from its surface all the rich products of its fertile bosom. At first, only two passed before us, but this number soon multiplied, and many were to be seen moving from us, and then back towards us, continuing to traverse the whole space above our heads, like things of life and animation. The music had ceased, and the only evidence that our guardians were among us, aside from what was to be seen above, was repeated touches, received from invisible hands, upon our shoulders, faces, hands, and backs. Gradually their movements seemed to grow less rapid, and the lighter vapors to first assume slowly the form of human heads, the darker ones following, and soon, what had seemed to be a grand panorama of moving vapors, was no longer shapeless mist, but faces recognized as those of the dear ones known on earth. They no longer moved in the air, but seemed stationary before us, and, after a time, slowly disappeared from view.

Long will this night’s scene be impressed upon my memory. Time cannot bury it. There was one, and still a charm, accompanying those forms that can only be known when felt. Often when we have met together, have we witnessed similar scenes, and even more, of which I shall speak of at some future time, even at the risk of being called “insane,” and “visionary.” But one of the company present at the time alluded to, was known to be in a clairvoyant state, and though her observations were the same as my own, our minds were not guided or dictated by her expressions, having myself witnessed what I have

related previous to her assertions as to what she had seen. Whether this be the “dawning” of that better day spoken of in the extract standing at the head of this article, others can judge. A few of us who have met often, and *seen, heard, and experienced* much, feel that it is; and, were the world prepared, we would rejoice to open our private journals, and tell what blessings have been spread before us.

I shall continue, in future numbers of the *Messenger*, to give brief accounts of what to me has been good evidence that the time “is dawning on the world, when many men shall hear these voices, and comprehend the mighty truths their tones impart.”

H. D. B.

Auburn, N. Y., 1850.

SPIRIT-SEEING.

Many instances are on record which serve to show that departed spirits have, under certain circumstances, the power of presenting themselves in bodily form to their earthly friends. The philosophy of this phenomenon may not be at present fully understood, but well authenticated facts appear to sufficiently establish its reality. Viewing the spirit as an indestructible substance, preserving its identity hereafter, and governed by the same laws of attraction which bound it to its kindred here, it is not to be regarded as incredible that this has power to sometimes manifest its presence in the manner described. We give the following extracts from “*The Night-Side of Nature*,” which may be interesting to our readers:

“Mrs. Matthrs relates in the memoirs of her husband, that he was one night in bed and unable to sleep, from the excitement that continues sometime after acting, when, hearing a rustling by the side of the bed, he looked out, and saw his first wife, who was then dead, standing by the bedside, dressed as when alive. She smiled, and bent forward as if to take his hand; but in his alarm he threw himself out on the floor to avoid the contact, and was found by the landlord in a fit. On the same night, and at the same hour, the present Mrs. Matthews, who was far away from him, received a similar visit from her predecessor, whom she had known when alive. She was quite awake, and in her terror seized the bell rope to summon assistance, which gave way, and she fell with it in her hand to the ground.

Professor Barthe, who visited Oberlin in 1824, says, that while he spoke of his intercourse with the spiritual world as familiarly as of the daily visits of his parishoners, he was at the same time perfectly free from fanaticism, and eagerly alive to all the concerns of this earthly existence. He asserted, what I find many somnambules and deceased persons also assert, that everything on earth is but a copy, of which the antitype is to be found in the other.

He said to his visitor, that he might as well attempt to persuade him that that was not a table before them, as that he did not hold communication with the other world. “I give you credit for being honest when you assure me that you never saw anything of the kind,” said he; “give me the same credit when I assure you that I do.”

With respect to the faculty of ghost-seeing, he said, it depends on several circumstances, external and internal. People who live in the bustle and glare of the world seldom see them, while those who live in still, solitary, thinly inhabited places, like the mountainous districts of various countries, do. So if I go into a forest by night, I see the phosphoric light of a piece of rotten wood; but if I go by day I cannot see it; yet it is still there. Again, there must be a rapport. A tender mother is awakened by the faintest cry of her infant, while the maid sleeps on and never hears it; and if I thrust a needle among a parcel of wood-shavings, and hold a magnet over them, the needle is stirred while the shavings are quite unmoved. There must be a particular aptitude; what it consists in I do not know; for of my people, many of whom are ghost-seers, some are weak and sickly, others vigorous and strong. Here are several pieces of flint; I can see no difference in them; yet some have so much iron in them that they easily become magnetic; others have little or none. So it is with the faculty of ghost-seeing. People may laugh as they will, but the thing is a fact, nevertheless.”

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

APOLLOS MUNN AND R. P. AMBLER, EDITORS.

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THE PROCESS OF REFINEMENT.

In accordance with the universal law of progress established in creation, the earth, as well as other planets, is constantly undergoing a purifying and refining process. The particles of which matter is composed are in perpetual motion; the changes of growth and decay, assimilation and repulsion, composition and decomposition, are continually going on, thus evolving and separating the interior essence from the unrefined matter with which it mingles. Nature thus presents to our view an extensive and ever active *laboratory*, in which principles are established and elements are at work, necessary to subject gross substance to a constantly increasing refinement. In this manner there is formed a systematic, graduated scale, one department rising above another, and each developing higher and more refined qualities, until at last is unfolded the ultimate and sublimation of all matter, which is *spirit*.

This process, which is one of the most obvious in the economy of Nature, is essential to accomplish the grand design of creation, and evinces the order and wisdom of the Supreme Mind. We may rationally suppose that the earth, when first evolved from its Parent-orb, existed in a state of igneous fluidity. It was not at that time, therefore, nor for many ages subsequent to its formation, adapted to the production and nourishment of vegetables, animals, or man. The elements of all these higher forms were to be developed by a gradually refining process. Having thrown off a large portion of its inherent heat, the surface of the earth at length became more dense and consolidated, and new combinations and appearances began to be made; primarily the most gross and rudimental forms of matter being developed, then gradually more refined and organic substances appearing, until at last, the globe, which during long ages had been a barren and uninhabited waste, presented the manifestations of life, beauty, and intelligence. From the birth, therefore, of a crude, inorganic mass, which was a primary effect of the law of reproduction, constant and successive changes, developing higher and still higher forms, have been introduced, all tending to produce as an ultimate the distinct, individualized spirit, which is formed in the human frame. The whole process is gradual, progressive, and beautiful. The beginning contains the undeveloped elements of the end, and the end is attained, not by any special interposition of divine power, but by the operation of natural laws. Spirit is not breathed into the human body as a foreign and independent substance, but as something born within and unfolded from it, the essence of which exists in all the lower forms of nature. So the body itself is not a disconnected and independent creation, as is implied in the Primitive History, but is merely an embodiment of elements existing in less perfect combinations, which have been here arranged and united by the unceasing process of refinement.

But let us now observe more carefully the beautiful process to which reference has been made, that we may have a clearer perception of the result to which it leads. In the first place, to descend no farther than the visible surface of the earth, we meet with gross, rudimental, undeveloped substances, comprehending minerals, rocks, and all inorganic formations. These, it should be observed, are constantly subjected to the principle of *motion*, which is established in the whole universe, by virtue of which they have an inherent tendency to the production of higher forms. From the mineral, therefore, is unfolded by degrees a more refined organization of matter termed the *vegetable*, in which, through the principle of motion acting on the minute particles of which it is composed, is manifested *life*. This is the first and simplest attribute of an organic substance. In the continuation of this refining process, the vegetable, having passed from the lowest to the highest degrees of perfection, naturally

develops the inferior orders of the *animal* creation. Here, in addition to the vital principle as seen in the plant, is exhibited the quality of *sensation*, which results from a more complete physical organism, and manifests the first dawning of the mental principle. As animals, like all other natural objects, are subject to the law of progress, their structure becomes farther perfected, and sensation gradually develops another attribute which may be denominated *instinctive intelligence*; by which I mean an intelligence which is received alone through the medium of sense, and depends on the association of ideas with the physical world. This is the faculty possessed by brutes who are in a sphere of being next below that of man. It is an attribute which is superior to mere sensation, and which forms an important link in the chain of animal existence. In the instinctive intelligence of animals, we may recognize the spirit in its embryo form. Here is the rudimental frame-work of the spiritual being—the germ or essence of that, which, by farther unfolding, would become individualized and perfected. Let us now ascend the scale still farther. Advancing, then, from the brute creation, a still higher form of matter is presented in the human body. This is the most perfect and complex of all organized forms. It stands at the head of the whole animal kingdom, and comprehends all which is below it in the scale of being. In the constitution of man are contained the essential elements of all matter. The component parts of the mineral, vegetable and animal, are here concentrated in a far more refined and perfect state, so that he constitutes in himself an epitome of creation—a *miniature universe*, in which the wisdom and goodness of the Divine Mind are eminently displayed. Thus man is made the perfection of animal nature, and exhibits the combination of all that is beautiful and valuable in inferior beings. His erect form, his exalted head, and countenance beaming with intellectual light, sufficiently proclaim his native dignity, and assert his superior exaltation. In man, therefore, besides the life, sensation, and intelligence, manifested in the lower forms of animate matter, are found the development and perfection of all these qualities in the existence of a distinct, individualized spirit.

This end, which is so gradually attained, is the necessary result of an established law. The embryo contained in the brute must be perfected in the human structure;—the germ which exists in the bosom of nature, must become unfolded when matter has reached its most perfect organization, as in man. In the gross earth a seed is planted, corresponding to *motion*; this sprouts in the vegetable, and produces *life*; it buds in the lower order of animals, and creates *sensation*; it blossoms in the higher order, and causes *instinctive intelligence*; and at last in man, having reached the highest stage of its development, it bears ripened fruit, and unfolds the human spirit. Thus matter, undergoing as it does the process of a gradual, but increasing refinement, ultimately results in the formation of an individualized spiritual intelligence; and that intelligence is first embodied and perfected in the human frame, because this is the most refined of all animal forms, and embraces within itself the essential elements of the whole universe.

The course of refinement, however, does not end here. The spirit itself is made to undergo the same process. Germs of internal purity are ever unfolding flowers of immortal loveliness; springs of spiritual life are sending forth their purifying streams, and the holy influences which breathe around us,—in the outward world, light, beauty and harmony,—in the inner, love, wisdom and truth,—have a constant tendency to refine and elevate the soul. So the spirit is moved onward in the path of eternal progress. All which may cling to it of a gross and sensual nature in its connection with the material, is removed by the unailing process of refinement, which is carried on by the operation of definite laws. Man cannot forever remain in his present state of imperfection; the spiritual elements of his nature cannot be always obscured and suppressed, but as every thing in creation is advancing towards its proper end, so the human soul, purified from corruption, and filled with the freshness of immortal life, is destined to rise through ascending spheres of love and purity, towards the great MAGNET of the Universe.

R. P. A.

THE STRATFORD DEMONSTRATIONS.

We learn from various respectable sources, that manifestations of spiritual presence, intelligence, and power, continue to be made at the house of Rev. ELIAKIM PHELPS, in Stratford, Ct., through the medium of a son and daughter of Mrs. Phelps, by a former husband. The manifestations have already made a deep impression on the public mind, which is fast settling down in the opinion that we are in reality surrounded by a world of invisible beings. The skeptic, the atheist, and the theological bigot, have been baffled in their efforts to trace the phenomena to other than spiritual causes; and, as it becomes more and more evident to the careful observer, that the increasing light which flows from the higher spheres is gradually undermining, and preparing to sweep away, the foundations of antiquated opinions respecting the future life, the sectarian who "snuffs danger in the tainted air"—who perceives the departing magic and power of the peculiar *creed*—and who sympathises with the well-paid *priest*, as his salary flits before him like a ghostly vision of the past—avails himself of his skill in a certain branch of church tactics, and declares that these spiritual demonstrations are the handy work of that mythical phantom which he does not hesitate to denounce as *the Devil*.

Our friend of the Springfield Republican, a gentleman for whom we entertain strong fraternal feelings, which are not in the least disturbed by our differences of opinion, exhibits, occasionally, a little mental agitation about the supposed operations of his Satanic Majesty at the residence of Dr. Phelps, which we feel strongly inclined to quiet by a gentle opiate. The Republican says:—

The mysterious phenomena at Stratford still continue. A gentleman visited Dr. Phelps recently, and witnessed the throwing of peach stones, apples, &c., by invisible hands. Some of these little missiles struck individuals in the room. Will our friends, Messrs. Munn & Ambler, explain the nature and mission of the spiteful agents who thus disturb the harmonial philosophy of Dr. Phelps? It really appears as if the Occidental "Mythology" had more devils than the "Oriental."

We must first assure our timid friend, that we confess ourselves unable to perceive any indications of *spite* on the part of the invisible spirits, who tossed the peach stones and the apples in the direction of individuals in the room. They were doubtless anxious to witness some demonstrations of that spiritual power, of which they had heard or read, and the spirits of their departed friends thus innocently responded to their desires, with a view to their gratification or conviction.

We have never heard the acts of the unseen visitants denounced as *evil*, except in connection with their demonstrations in Stratford. Now it must be remembered that Dr. Phelps is a *Presbyterian Clergyman, of many years standing*, and his lady is a member of the same sect. They have long believed in the existence of a devil and evil spirits, and do not hesitate, we understand, to express the opinion, that the spirits who manifest their presence in their house, are evil spirits. Hence they feel very much annoyed in view of the manifestations which they cannot prevent, and occasionally indicate to their spiritual visitors, in no selected terms, that "their room is preferable to their company." The attraction of *affinity*, or some other law of nature, it seems, will not permit the spirits to yield to the passionate impulses of the Dr. and his lady, and they still remain, in spite of the marked discourtesy with which they are received. One of the angel visitants, who often attempts to communicate, and who has succeeded already in imparting much valuable information to the family, is the spirit of Mr. Nicholson, the first husband of Mrs. Phelps, and the father of the two children whose systems furnish the peculiar electrical medium, through which spirits can act upon grosser substances, and transmit, as by the electric telegraph, intelligence to their friends in the body. This affectionate spirit—this soul of love and life, who still lingers around the objects of his early affection, we are sorry to say, has often been repulsed by his former companion—who, on one occasion, is said to have informed him, in answer to his expressed desire to communicate further with her, that she regarded him as an *evil spirit*; that she *knew* from the bible that such spirits were suffering the torments of *hell*!

For the edification of our friend of the Republican, who seems to think the "harmonial philosophy of Dr. Phelps" has been disturbed by spiteful spirits from the other world, we would submit the idea that the Dr. has *no* "harmonial philosophy" that can be disturbed. He is a sectarian—an orthodox minister of the strictest faith—and of course does not recognize that spiritual philosophy which illustrates the truth that all men are brothers. He therefore believes that his house is infected with troubled and evil spirits. Suppose for once, we should admit this to be true. The question would then arise (as no other persons are thus disturbed), why it is that the Lord suffers the Devil and his victims to thus afflict a sectarian minister and his christian companion? What have *they* done that Infinite Wisdom should see fit to besiege them with the spirits of the damned?

Our sectarian friends will thus perceive that, in their *last shift* to save their popular opinions, they have again crucified reason, and attempted to prove a point, which, if true, serves only as an admonition to the world, that the path of safety from "evil spirits," leads not within the pale of the church or the ministry.

We trust that this brief and hasty explanation, will prove satisfactory to our friend of the Republican, who, in the extract we have quoted, has kindly invited an expression of our opinion on this subject.

A. M.

THE SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY.

BROTHERS:—I have been an advocate, in some form, as far as I was capable of its comprehension and appreciation, of that philosophy of which your paper treats, for many years. But connected, as I was, with the theological movements of the day, it was in vain I attempted to embody my thoughts in any comprehensible or intelligible form.

In the fall of 1848, I became acquainted with that extraordinary volume, "NATURE'S DIVINE REVELATIONS," by A. J. Davis. In this, though I read it with an eye more than half fixed on my old theology, I found embraced, in a form more beautiful than I had ever conceived, the philosophy of all my most natural and intuitive meditations, vastly enlarged and improved. For a while I was in a whirl of amazement. It was not long, however, before I found myself able to decide between natural truth, everywhere manifest, and the arbitrary and dogmatical expositions, of and contradicting comments upon, that history called "the Bible," which constitute the theology of the schools. The door through which I had been passing, stealthily, as it stood ajar, was now thrown widely open, and I was let in to a world of free thought, and beautiful and joyous contemplation, of the existence of which I had but faintly conceived, and which I had had no power to approach. I need not attempt to tell you the burst of pleasure—the ineffable delight which I experienced on finding myself able to throw off the shackles and fetters of prejudice and preconceived opinions, and the restraints of old forms and usages, and to breathe the pure air of nature—to bask in the sunshine of purifying and elevating truths, with which I found myself everywhere surrounded. I felt that unmeaning church usages and theological disquisitions were fruitless; and that piles of granite, reared and ornamented by the *blood and sweat of the toiling poor*, however gorgeous, were tame things compared with that temple whose area is limitless, whose walls are garnished with the gems of infinitude, whose interior is embellished with the beauties of nature—the breathings of divine goodness, and in whose magnificent dome presides the Spirit—the infinitely intelligent, all-pervading ESSENCE OF THE UNIVERSE. Men deceive me, books deceive me; but nature and reason tell me the truth.

I have been a patron and admirer of the Univercælum. I wept when it was discontinued. Its course was brief, but brilliant. It evolved a great light, which nature continues to supply elements to perpetuate, and it will plague the world to extinguish it.

It is exceedingly gratifying to know that the heaven of natural and psychological science, with its humanizing and tranquilizing influences, is so actively fermenting the masses of mind at

the present day. In a few short years it has revolutionized, rationalized, and republicitized the theology of thousands. It everywhere exposes the *unnatural legitimacy* of sects and castes, and breathes a spirit of universal brotherhood. It cultivates a charitable consideration for such as are unfortunately situated—for such as are unfortunately surrounded with circumstances and conditions unfavorable for improvement and happiness, and urges a reformation upon social usages. And it, moreover, reveals the important fact that this and the spirit-worlds are in immediate contact, and that the most secret thoughts of our hearts are read and known by the disembodied spirits of the neighboring spheres. Now a philosophy fraught with all this, and infinitely more, altogether calculated to restrain the angularity of the froward, and to exalt, purify and spiritualize intellectual life, will very likely produce a strong sympathy, and an abiding affinity among its adherents and advocates. A paper where such sympathies may be expressed, whose columns shall be devoted to free inquiry and philosophical investigations, would seem exceedingly important. So far as I am able to judge, I think the Messenger well adapted to the purpose. I recognize in it several familiar initials, as well as style and diction. Mr. Davis' contributions will add much to the interest of the paper, and the familiar poetic strains of FANNY GREEN, are like the notes of my favorite bird on the return of spring. I rejoice in your enterprise, and you may be assured of the *mite* which my efforts may contribute to your success.

Yours fraternally, L. S. R.

Kinderhook, N. Y., Sept. 17, 1850.

PROGRESSIVE LIGHT OF THE PRESENT.

Truth is the "Magnet" of the nineteenth century. In no previous age has the interior powers of man presented such soul-cheering hopes of freedom, as now gladdens the heart of every reflecting individual. Science, the great illuminator of Nature, is shooting forth new rays of beauty with the dawn of every morning's light and shade of every evening. Germs, buds, blossoms and fruit, develop a world of thought, illimitable in extent, and still they are only mites in the great laboratory of life, light, and beauty, evolving continually from the hand of Deity. Thought is the refining instrument by which man may attune his spirit to the order and wisdom ever before his mental vision. Mechanically he gives expression to his impressions, and thus compares his intuitions and deductions with those of his brother man. Scraps and relics of history pertaining to past ages, have long been the guides of mankind. Seemingly, a portion of humanity are now at rest in comparative security with the teachings, threatenings and promises of an inferior, heathen, mythological religion. With a ritual, sensual system of religion, the world seems to have slumbered (with startled dreams occasionally it is true) ever since we have had any data of the birth of humanity. The century in which we happily live, is becoming replete with demonstrative realities of spiritual existence. While master minds have passed from earth to the spirit-land with only pleasing *hopes* of immortality, it is left to the present age to *know* and *feel* that man possesses within himself the elements of never-ending life. The true poet, the true painter, the true sculptor, the true teacher, all combined, fail to conceive sufficient brilliancy of expression, in all their varied delineations of Nature's beautiful laws, to satisfy the aspiring spirit. The unbounded field of light opened to us through the communications of our departed friends and associates, imparts new life, new hopes, new desires, through every avenue of the heart. Hushed be thy unnatural fears of the future, oh my soul! Drink in the truths and revelations unfolded from the world of spirits! Stay not longer beneath the cold and gloomy folds of a soulless church. Bask thou in the eternal sunlight of Nature's teachings, and learn those divine principles which emanate from the fount of Order, Wisdom, and Love.

Deity through ever unfolding processes of Nature, calls humanity to this feast of reason and happiness. Superstition, Fanaticism, Idolatry, will not forever hold man in bondage. The spell is broken—the magic wand departed, and the secret, selfish

springs of modern theology will ultimately cease to control the mental world. Rejoice, brethren, that henceforth our pathway will be illuminated with increasing knowledge, unfolding still greater beauties, and revealing an eternal succession of new truths relating to the "Spirit-Home." T. S. S.

Randolph, N. Y., Sept. 13th, 1850.

The Science of the Soul.

There are no truths in the whole range of intellectual inquiry more pleasing and profitable than those which relate to the human soul. Next to the physical organism which forms one of the primary objects of sensuous observation, the indwelling spirit, embracing its nature, offices, and destiny, becomes the most sublime and interesting subject of contemplation. This field of investigation, I am aware, is comparatively new, and one which has been heretofore regarded by many as too sacred and extensive for the human mind to explore. It is one, however, which to the inquiring mind is possessed of a peculiar charm, and which embraces those divine, spiritual truths, so admirably adapted to man's higher nature. Here, in fact, must lie the foundation of the noblest hopes and the purest faith of humanity;—here must be found the repository of that heavenly food from which the soul derives its best nutriment. To the investigation of spiritual truth the innate desires of man naturally lead; and O, it is sweet to feel the privilege to enter on that ground where religious bigotry has so long placed its ban; it is sweet to breathe the pure atmosphere of intellectual freedom, to feel the shackles falling from the aspiring soul, and to see the light of new and higher truths bursting in a flood of radiance upon the world.

Breaking, then, the chains which ignorance and bigotry may have wound around us, let us roam freely through the fields of spiritual science, and inhale the joys which flow from the untrammelled action of the soul, and the reception of divine knowledge. R. P. A.

Spiritual Manifestations in Springfield.

Mr. GORDON, of Bridgeport, Conn., has been passing a few days at Springfield, and many of our citizens have sought opportunities to witness something of the spiritual phenomena which are manifested in his presence. A large number have become convinced of the reality of spiritual presence and power, and hundreds are deeply interested to see, hear, and read more of the facts and communications. Many beautiful and convincing tests have been furnished to unbelievers, and interesting messages given, some of which we may hereafter copy and publish. The editors of the Messenger were desired to give their readers the following short, but significant communication, which was dictated by a spirit who was well known and respected while in the body:

"The world shall receive spiritual manifestations and communications soon, with great joy. Knowledge of God and Heaven will increase love and unity among mankind."

Our readers will be gratified to learn that we are endeavoring to make arrangements, by which we shall secure one of the best mediums yet developed in the world, through which we may hope to receive communications for the Messenger of a high character, from some of the purest spirits of the second sphere. As soon as such arrangements are effected, the fact will be duly announced. No efforts of ours shall be wanting to make our little paper a welcome Messenger to every heart that loves humanity. A. M.

When the mind of an individual breaks loose from the superstitions and theological teachings of the past, and begins to think and reason for itself, it longs to range through the wide fields of knowledge, and search for truths which have a tendency to elevate and expand the soul. Nature and Reason take him by the hand and lead him to the attainment of true wisdom. Thus he is enabled to learn the nature of true happiness, and thus he becomes *free indeed*. A. M. W.

Selfishness and Benevolence Illustrated.

The selfish man that lives for himself alone, who neither ministers to, nor cares for, the kindly sympathies of others, is like the stagnant pool of water,—a lifeless, useless being, fit only to infest the social world with pestilent, moral disease; while the benevolent heart, that is ever open to the sympathies of others, and continually sending forth its springs of kindness to minister comfort to needy souls, is like the beautiful lake among the hills, which receives unto itself the cool rivulets from the mountains, warms them in its own sun-lit bosom, reflects back again the smile which admiring heaven bestows on its own loveliness, and then sends forth its gladdened waters, in rejoicing streams, to give new verdure to the plains, and beauty to the meadows below. You will always see fragrant lilies floating on the bosom of such a lake, and cheerful smiles playing on the countenance that radiates the loveliness of *such* a heart.

S. F. C.

☞ We are happy in announcing to our readers that we have just received a complete and accurate account of the communications made by the spirits of Webster and Parkman at the residence of Mrs. Fish, Rochester, N. Y. The account is undersigned by Mr. A. Reynolds, and Rev. C. Hammond, and we cheerfully comply with their request to publish it entire, although we have previously published an unrevised portion, contrary to the expectation of Mr. Reynolds, who sent it to a friend in Boston for another purpose. It shall appear in our next number.

Eds.

Poetry.**THE MIGHT OF TRUTH.**

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,
BY J. RICHARDSON.

From out the little fountains,
There swells a mighty tide,
Upon whose broad elastic back
The broods of commerce ride.
And on the winged tempest
A little seed there flies,
Whose roots strike down, whose giant arms
Reach upward to the skies.
And so the little slighted truth,
At length more mighty grown,
Shall fill the nations with its power
And make the world its own.

There is a flower that trampled on,
Doth still more richly bloom;
And even to its bitterest foe
Gives faith its sweet perfume.
The rose that's crushed and shattered
Doth on the breeze bestow
A fairer scent that further goes,
E'en for the cruel blow.
And so truth's crushed and trampled flower
By injury stronger grown,
Shall win its very foes to love,
And make the world its own.

The wrong that highest lifts its head
Shall soonest lose its crown;
The error that seems mightiest
Shall quickest be cast down.
And thus "the first shall be the last,
The last shall be the first,"
And that which all men praised before,
Shall be by all accurst.
And so the little slighted truth,
Shall the old wrong dethrone;
And driving ancient error out,
Shall make the world its own.

Oh! truth's fair flower is fanned by sighs,
And nourished by the tears,
That on the dungeon's stony floor
Have rained for weary years;
And from the cross and fiery stake,
The streams of blood that pour,
Have scattered wide its living seeds
To earth's remotest shore.
And thus the scorned and hated truth
By injury mightier grown,
Shall fill the nations by its power,
And make the world its own.

The head that once was bowed to earth,
Up in the heavens now towers;
And the martyr of a former day,
Becomes the saint of ours;
While he, who now denounced and scorned,
Speaks boldly for the right,
Shall in the glorious future shine
A prophet crowned with light.
For then the scorned and hated truth
At length more mighty grown,
Shall move the nations with its power,
And make the world its own.

The letters from Columbus
Indignantly are hurled;—
And he is hailed with loud acclaim
Discoverer of a world!
And for his dungeon and his woes
Immortal fame atones,
And up among his kindred stars
Galileo enthrones.
And thus the scorned and slighted truth
At length more mighty grown,
Doth move the nations by its power,
And make the world its own.

The man rejected and despised
Is worshipped and adored;
And the felon, scorned and crucified,
Becomes a glorious God.
And bright with gold that blood-stained cross—
The emblem once of shame,
Raised high above all human signs
Exalts his blessed name.
And thus the truth, the hated truth,
Each day still mightier grown,
Doth move the nations by its power
And make the world its own.

LINES,

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,
BY MISS S. E. SMITH.

A glorious light on the world is breaking,
There dawneth a better and happier day,—
The shadows of night before it are fleeing,
And mists from the mountain-tops rolling away.

With the early dawn a messenger cometh—
A beauteous spirit of truth and love,
And on its bright pinions it ever bringeth,
Tidings of peace from the angels above.

We welcome thy presence thou true-hearted one,
The soul with delight thy message doth hear,
That the loved ones on high ever do come,
In mild, soothing whispers, to speak words of cheer.

As the free bird that heralds the coming of morn,
Thy sweet, plaintive voice, gentle spirit shall rise;
All nature enchanted shall join in thy song,
And in harmony tuned ascend to the skies!

Albany, N. Y.

Miscellaneous Department.

MINISTERING ANGELS.

A fair young girl sat by the shrouded form of her departed mother; tears of anguish, unsoftened by one bright hope for the future, clouded a face cast in nature's finest mould. Her only earthly protector had been taken from her, and she in her innocent girlhood must guard and support the young brothers and sisters left, with no hand but hers to guide them in the uncertain future. What wonder that her heart sunk within her, and that hope waned till its last faint shadow disappeared in the thick darkness which to her seemed impenetrable. She was very beautiful, that pale, sad watcher, and the waves of sorrow rolling over her, seemed about to swallow up in their bitter waters, the frail form which enshrined a pure and energetic Spirit. Gradually sorrow for the dead gave place to anxiety for the living, and the brow of the mourner became clouded with a worldly care. Suddenly a smile brightened her face as a flood of sunlight irradiates the young morning,—she knew not that she was touched by an angel's passing wing. "Ah! yes," she murmured, "for the sake of the dear ones who are now dependent on me for protection, I will strive to hush this great sorrow and live only for my God and them. Surely my angel mother will watch over me and strengthen this holy resolution." There by the bedside of the departed, that young girl nerved her heart to the performance of duty, and in after years no murmur escaped her lips, however severely tried. Cheerfulness sat enthroned within her heart, angels ministered to her wants, and mortals wondered that one burdened with so many cares could smile so sweetly.

A child sat playing midst the flowers, his golden curls danced in the sun-light and his blue eyes were merry with the happiness of careless childhood; but suddenly an air of thoughtfulness rested on his childish brow. "Whence came this beautiful world! yonder brilliant planets! the bright flowers and glittering dew-drops!—his own tiny form with its wonderful machinery, his beating heart and power of vision, oh! who would tell him of these undeveloped mysteries!" A low voice seemed whispering "all things are of God and he is good." Ministering angels were around him, throwing a bright halo around a heart that was to be powerful for good or evil. A sublime realization of the beautiful, chastened into purity the days of his boyhood, and strengthening as he was ushered into manhood, restrained him from wrong-doing. He knew not, and others thought not, when listening to words of burning eloquence from his lips, that unseen spirits threw around him an irresistible influence, thus guarded by his faithful watchers, and through their magic power he assimilated many hearts to his own likeness. Minds there were, so wrapped up in materiality that they could not understand and appreciate his more spiritual nature, yet still he toiled on unheeding alike the assaults of ignorance and the cold rebuffs of indifference.

A middle-aged man sat at his desk, his head leaning on his hand, while troubled thoughts swelled his heart almost to bursting. He was on the eve of bankruptcy. Misfortune had followed misfortune, till ruin seemed inevitable. "How could he endure the misery of seeing his family suddenly reduced to poverty? How break to his wife intelligence so distressing? And infinitely more painful than all, how would the dear ones so tenderly nurtured, bear this reverse of fortune?" A happy thought occurred to him and illuminated his face with the cheering beams of hope. "Why should he distrust the affections of those who had ever proved themselves true? Acting upon the impulse of the moment his cares were confided to his family and by their united efforts his falling fortunes were retrieved. He knew not that guardian angels hovered around, beckoning him away from the brink of the pit he had prepared for himself. A poetess sat writing out her pleasant day-dreams on a fair page before her, never thinking that angelic beings inspired in her heart the pure and beautiful thoughts that were charming the poetical world, and rendering her own life a fairy picture; and wondering admirers read on without ever suspecting they were drinking in the inspiration of a higher and better sphere, though

their hearts were none the less affected by its deep purity. A young mother sat watching her sleeping babe—it was her first-born, and around it clustered all a mother's fond hopes. Bright anticipations of the future virtue and greatness of her child, swelled her bosom with pleasant emotions. Alas! for her visions of glory! she knew not that fame is purchased only by unceasing toil, and is ever unsatisfactory to the longings of the human heart. As she gazed with increasing fondness on the sleeping babe, its face wreathed into a sunny smile; even then it was touched by an angel's passing wing. But a few days and that sweet child was ripened for the tomb, and the angel that had watched its brief sojourn on earth, bore its freed spirit to the home prepared for the redeemed and purified. For a while the mother mourned as one that would not be comforted, but gradually she came to think of her child as not dead, but living! in the bright but dimly defined future, and with a beautiful resignation, she exclaimed: "Not my will, but thine, O, God, be done!"—*Universalum*.

The Goddess of Flowers.

According to the ancient Romans, the goddess of flowers was *Flora*. They really believed that such a being existed, and they offered her sacrifices, paid her divine worship, built her temples, and reared statues in honor of her. The poets described her as the daughter of the West Wind, and as a blooming and beautiful female, with a wreath of flowers in her left hand. The people believed that they could actually see this lovely being at midsummer morn, floating along on some sunlit cloud, or glancing like a wreath of light over the meadows and gardens.

Now, although we know that this is a vain belief, yet we cannot deny that it was very beautiful; and to this day it is common for poets and others, in order to give life and reality to abstract ideas, to speak of *Flora*, a beautiful spirit, imagined still to preside over the roses, and lilies, and camellias, and columbines—and all the numerous sisterhood of blossoms.

THERE IS A RELIGION in everything around us. It is a meek and blessed influence, stealing as it were upon the heart. It has no terrors—no gloom approaches. It rouses not the passions, and is untrammelled by the creeds, and unshadowed by the superstitions of men. It is from the hands of the Author, and growing from the immediate presence which pervades and quickens it. It is that which lifts the spirit within, until it is tall enough to overlook the shadows of earth—which breaks, link after link, the chain which binds it to materiality, and opens to our imagination a world of spiritual beauty.

THERE are moments when the soul expands, as if it wanted elbow-room in the little house it inhabits; and it is then that a man feels surprised—amazed at his ever having committed a mean or cruel action.

☞ The Nineteenth Century shall witness the resurrection of humanity to a more glorious life.

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

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