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AFFINITY;

20
TEACHING FROM THE SPIRIT-WORLD,

12
CONCERNING THE NEXT STATE OF EXISTENCE.

RECEIVED, & WRITTEN UNDER SPIRIT-IMPRESSION,

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PREFACE.

THE writer of the following pages desires to state that their contents have been obtained by him from intelligences in spirit-life. All the ideas, arguments, disclosures and descriptions herein, have been conveyed within a short period, from time to time, as he felt impressed to write by the Spirit influence. Therefore, he has no claim to invention or originality, or anything else that may be viewed as merit in respect of this volume, beyond carefully transferring the inspiration into fitting language. The work is placed before the public as an emanation from the Spirit-world, and is given with as much accuracy as accords with the writer's ability to represent in words the thoughts impressionally received.

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CHAPTER I.

THE NATURALNESS OF SPIRIT LIFE.

It is a common error among mankind to suppose that spirits are in a less natural condition of life than that they experienced in their earth-body. This is an error which almost all classes fall into, and spiritualists themselves are not very advanced in their conceptions of the perfectly natural manner in which spirits exist one with another, and how natural is their conduct and intercourse with mortals.

Such conceptions of the condition, occupation and enjoyments of spirit-life as are inconsistent with Reason and Nature are most assuredly erroneous. The existence of spirits is the result of natural laws as much as earth-life; and the change called death is not such a change as to make the next condition of existence so widely different from the one in which they had hitherto lived, that the experience and attachments of earth-life should not influence them in their new condition. It has been often stated by spiritualists that the spirit-life commences where the earth-life leaves off, and this is perfectly true, but this is only stating the nature of its commencement. Earth-life is a perfectly natural state of existence, and the capacity for enjoyment, and the attachments which exert so powerful an influence over mankind, make that condition of being a perfectly happy one, when knowledge, love, and wisdom, make it natural.

A vast number of people live what must be called unnatural lives. The influence of popular orthodox religion, of modern human laws and the customs of civilized society, are each more or less the cause of such conditions. The teachers of modern orthodox religion tell their hearers, in scripture language, they must mortify the deeds of the body; that the appetites and passions of their fallen nature are all to be kept under, and, if possible, stamped out; that the thoughts of the heart are all evil, that in themselves there is no good thing; so debased is man, according to their representations, that there is no possibility of his living a pure and holy life while remaining in a state of nature. They also teach there is no hope for mankind in the next world unless

brought into a state of grace—they must be justified by faith, and saved through the substitutional sufferings of Jesus. And if they are Catholics of the Roman type, they must be guided by what are called the infallible teachings of the Church. If they belong to the section who call themselves Protestants, they will claim the right of private judgment in addition to their belief in the leading doctrines of the orthodox faith; and this right of private judgment applies to what are called minor doctrines; but in the “essential doctrines” of the Christian religion, as these teachers call them, all who would be saved must believe—“there is no other name given among men whereby they can be saved except the name of Jesus.”

The influence of such teaching is to produce in those who receive it an unnatural condition of the mind, because it is opposed to Nature and reason. The influence of human laws is also inconsistent with Nature and reason, as these are founded on that erroneous idea that man is naturally depraved—that the interests of one class are antagonistic to that of another, and that the rights of power and property are superior to those of humanity. All human laws which are framed with a view to the defence of one class, and the punishment of the other, are in their nature vindictive; and the effect of punishment is not reformation, but being opposed to Nature, it produces in society disunion, hatred, antagonism, and civil war.

The customs of civilized society being the effect of the moral and religious teaching of the priesthood, and the influence the written laws of such society possess, must of necessity be unnatural; but how bold that man must be who would dare to denounce the whole teachings of the Church as being erroneous, the whole of the laws of the State as framed on a false and unnatural basis; and that the whole order of human society is disorganized, impure, demoralizing, and opposed to both Nature and reason.

Yet, can a man make himself familiar with the history of his own times without coming to the conclusion in this there is something wrong somewhere? And it cannot be expected that intelligent and thinking men should be longer content with the manner in which the Church accounts for all the discord, selfishness and misery which exist in the world; nor that they will consider the remedy which it offers, as the only antidote for all these evils, as practical and effective.

The pulpit and the press concur in the opinion that wickedness prevails more in these degenerate days than it ever did at any earlier period of the world's history. The former accounts for it on the ground that it is in accordance with the order of Providence, and the result of the extreme wickedness of the human heart, and that such a state of things has been foretold in Holy Writ as sure to occur in the latter days.

The newspaper writers account for it on the ground of man's ignorance of physiological and sanitary science, and the influence of misdirected education and demoralizing example.

Now, if what the pulpit teachers call wickedness is really evil, and the remedy they offer for it is appointed by God, and the only antidote he will ever give for sin; and for eighteen hundred years the antidote for all the evils, (as they call them), afflicting mankind, and yet the evils are more numerous and more painful than ever; are we not justified in asking the question whether wickedness and evil are not misused terms when applied to such acts and conditions of mankind as those to which they refer; and if God's only prevention of and remedy for so-called evil has not proved a complete failure?

We do not hesitate to say that what these pulpit teachers call wickedness of the human heart is not evil, but if there does exist anything in the conduct of mankind which may be called evil, it is that unnatural state of society and condition of the human mind which is the effect of their own unnatural teaching. This is an evil which will affect society less and less as mankind progress in knowledge. Human Nature, although not in a hopelessly fallen condition, is nevertheless in a state of discord and antagonism, and consequently unhappy. And this condition is mainly owing to the ignorance of these so-called *divines*, who call good, *evil*, and *evil* good; who have so misdirected the human heart and mind as to awaken unnatural hopes and fears, and to leave dormant and beclouded that inner spiritual life which it is their province to develop and foster. If instead of this, they, like Jesus, had lived perfectly natural lives themselves, and had lived in a condition of harmony with all Nature, instead of denouncing its operations as being all out of joint; if instead of teaching that God has cursed the earth in consequence of man's disobedience in the garden of Eden—and instead of calling this first stage of material existence “a waste howling wilderness,” they had lived that spiritual life which produces such a condition of mind as is content with Nature as it is, beholding all things in Nature as pure, then they would have taught the people, as Jesus taught them, to learn the lessons of life from the book of Nature—to “consider the lilies how they grow,” which toil not, nor spin, yet are adorned with beauty by our Father's hand.

These pulpit teachers preach an unnatural God, a supernatural Saviour, an erroneous theory of the cause of the evils which afflict mankind, an impossible future salvation, and a certain and eternal damnation. It is therefore not to be wondered at, when we consider the power and influence possessed by these teachers during all past ages, and that the people, even in the present day, are willing to entrust their best interests to their keeping, that if these their teachers are blind the people should be blinded also, and both fall into the ditch of ignorance and superstition together.

We consider that in addition to the power and influence they have exerted over the enactment of human laws, and the customs and habits of human society, they have demoralized the one, and misdirected the other, by taking as their foundational basis an old fable, on which they build a false and unnatural theory of the nature of God, the destiny of man, and of the common lessons of human life.

On this account we point to them, as Jesus did in his day, and say, "ye blind guides" ye will not enter the kingdom of Heaven yourselves and ye take away the keys that those who would enter cannot. We say, that to them we attribute the cause of all that may be called evil which afflicts mankind; whatever mankind suffer which cannot be traced to ignorance, superstition and misdirection, we do not call evil.

Such then is the condition, and such the cause of what we call unnaturalness in human society, and we cannot avoid placing it in contrast with that natural condition in which every developed spirit lives in that world of light and love to which man ascends when he has passed through that mysterious change called death. With what terror has man been taught to look upon this perfectly natural process; with what horror has the poet surrounded it when he says:—"How the frantic soul shrieks with madness; how it rushes to each avenue of its earthly tenement, and cries for help, but cries in vain." Death itself has no such terrors; it is a calm and peaceful slumber, a laying aside of all that is mortal, preparatory to a waking up in a new condition of being—a putting on of immortality. No sooner does the immortal part of man realize its new condition of being, than it exults in the delightful freedom—it feels that it begins to rove at large, freely dilate, extend in full proportion, let loose all its powers.

The first thing which strikes an emancipated spirit is the perfect naturalness of all he beholds; and if he has been a member of civilized society, the contrast appears the more striking. His own movements are natural, his coming in contact with others like himself is natural, the manner in which they salute him, and the topics on which they converse, are all perfectly natural.

While attempting to describe the nature, condition, and habits of disembodied spirits, with a view to showing how perfectly natural such a life is, we must be guided solely by Reason and Nature; by Reason, because this is the only infallible guide for man in any enquiry; by spiritual and material Nature because this is God's revelation to man—Nature as we behold it with our material eyes, and spiritual Nature as we behold it with the eyes of faith.

All animated Nature is distinguished by the two characteristics, male and female; and by their natural affinity one for the other the union and perpetuation of material nature is effected. These characteristics also exist in spirit life, the material condition being their birth world, but the distinction of sex in spirit life is not

in the order of God's providence for the perpetuation of the spirit race, but wisely ordained for high and holy purposes; and whatever is consistent with the nature of man, and ordained by God for his happiness in material life, is continued to him in spirit life, in a purer, more perfect, and more exalted form. There is not existing a purely pleasurable sensation of the physical body, a capacity for enjoyment in the intellect, or a delight of which the human spirit is susceptible in earth-life, but is realized to perfection in spirit existence.

It is the order of God's providence that certain races of mankind should rise to the highest position in the civilization of which such races are capable; and afterwards they decline, decay, and die out, while some other nation of the earth may have become the home of the more vigorous of this dying race, and through them a new order of civilization is brought about, and another nation takes the dominant position in the world, and man advances one stage further in progression. Man is destined for an immortal existence, and, as he can only rise to a certain limited condition in material life, when he has reached such condition, he sinks, decays and dies, to again renew that life in a higher form. But because it is a higher form of being to which death introduces him, it is none the less *natural* on that account. This higher life does not consist in a total cessation of all those sources of enjoyment which he possessed in the so-called lower condition of existence; it is rather a more refined, more intensified pleasure which he experiences in the enjoyment of similar things. Spirit life is no more a condition of rewards and punishments than earth-life, the one is as much governed by law as the other, and mankind can no more enjoy freedom and happiness in spirit-life, than he can in earth-life, unless he lives in accordance with Reason and Nature.

Spirit life is a condition in which man perpetuates his existence; his material existence is perpetuated by the renewal of the race; his immortality is life in which the most intense enjoyments are realized; where all that is beautiful in Nature becomes more exquisite—where all that was enjoyable in material life is again enjoyed, without restraint, yet without satiety—perpetual, yet perfectly natural.

Death, which is the birth of the spirit, is dreaded, not so much because of the agonies which are said to be experienced, as for what is feared will follow; not knowing that the law of retribution is equally terrible on one side of the grave as the other, and the spirit birth to be equally natural and wonderful as that which introduces man to earth-life. All mankind have to commence that life in the same manner, all must alike pass through the various conditions of material life—all must pass through infancy, childhood, youth, and full maturity. But their spirit birth

is different ; they are born into that life precisely at that point of human progress at which earth life ceases. If death occurs while the body is undeveloped, no disappointment can be experienced. Every capacity for a perfect development of structure, and the harmonious action of every part of the human organism is most perfectly provided for. Such of man's nature as earth life has not matured is perfected in spirit life, and such as is perfected in earth life finds a most complete and eternal provision made for its enjoyment. Death, although not painful or horrible when perfectly natural, is nevertheless a change which to some is apparently anything but desirable, owing to the unnatural positions they have occupied in relation to their fellow men. Death is the great democratic leveller of all mankind, and, to those whose conditions in life are inconsistent with Reason and Nature, death is indeed a king of terrors.

Between earth-life and spirit-life there is a great contrast ; for though it is possible for man to live a whole life-time in violation of the laws of Nature and the instincts of reason ; when he arrives in this new condition of existence he is no longer able to plead ignorance of Nature's laws. This condition is not only more favourable to the acquisition of knowledge, but the institutions of society in spirit-life are all in accordance with Nature and Reason, and it is only as man adapts himself to such a condition that he can be happy.

This contrast consists in the one being natural and the other unnatural. The laws of Nature are never infringed by mankind with impunity, and suffering is endured as the ordinary lot of mortals, and man in his ignorance supposes that the evils and misery which afflict him are unavoidable in this state of existence. Spirits are better informed, and they tell us that obedience to universal law, whether in earth-life or spirit-life, will secure perfect health and perfect happiness ; and the contrast between the one and the other does not exist where an individual is so advanced, physically and spiritually, that his life is in harmony with material and spiritual nature ; and it is within the bounds of possibility for all men thus to live.

Mankind to be happy must live naturally. When they learn this, and practice it, the union of the two worlds will be more complete, and the purity, bliss and perfection of the spirit state will be realized.

In earth-life mankind suffer because they are striving how not to live a natural life ; in spirit-life mankind are happy because they are in a condition of life which is ordered in perfect accordance with Nature and Reason. The morality of earth-life therefore is not natural, and that which pulpit teachers call purity and
 ✕ charity is regarded by enlightened and advanced spirits as a violation of Nature's laws, and opposed to the dictates of Reason.

Chas. J. J.

AFFINITY.

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But that purity of heart which can alone produce charity of life, and which consists in the natural development of humanity in love, is considered to be all very well in its way, and when it is recommended as the only condition of life in which mankind can be pure and happy, those who are bold enough to advocate it are pointed at with the finger of scorn and set down as infidels or visionaries.

When mankind are more natural they will be more loving ; and when Jesus taught his hearers to love their enemies, he laid down a rule of life which must be adhered to by all successful reformers throughout all time. If mankind are ever to rise to a perfectly natural life, it must be by their learning the power and influence of universal love ; and they will never learn that grand and eternal principle until those to whom the world looks for example, as well as precept, learn themselves to return good for evil, and overcome evil with good.

Very good teaching, say these pulpit instructors, very good, and, if there was not associated with pure Scripture truth that diabolical spirit intercourse, such teaching would be regarded by us as a beacon light on the road to heaven. But, because of this, we see you do not speak in accordance with "the law and the testimony;" this holy book condemns you, and it is our duty as defenders of "the faith once delivered to the saints," and as the teachers and guides of the people, and the shepherds of the flock of Christ, to expose your errors and denounce all such theories as the productions of a diseased brain, or the work of "the father of lies."

This is how the pulpit teachers of the people, these shepherds of the flock of Christ, show their love for those they call their enemies. The life and teachings of Jesus were natural because they were purely spiritual ; the lives and teachings of his professed ministers and followers are unnatural, because entirely material. To be spiritually minded is life, but to be carnally minded is death.

Mankind will never fully enjoy all the blessings of material life until they enjoy them in that perfected form which we call spirit life. Spirit life is material life perfected and made natural ; not human life made supernatural. To be a spirit is not to be a something above Nature, but a being in accordance with Nature. There is no reason why man should be terrified at the thought of seeing a spirit, as the disciples of Jesus were. Spirits are only men and women in a purer and happier condition of life. No spirit visitant ought to be feared, but loved and welcomed wherever seen. Spirits always bring messages of love with them, and it is ever to the interest of mankind to pay attention to them, instead of imitating John Wesley by bowing them out and requesting them not to trouble you any more, thus treating your spirit friends as unwelcome intruders. Their object in arresting

your attention is that they may have the opportunity of doing you good ; the means they employ for this purpose are those best adapted to accomplish this object, and at the same time in accordance with natural law. Spirit apparitions, or sounds produced by spirit agency, are not opposed to natural law ; but the laws of Nature unite the two states of existence, and spirits are by these simple means enabled to bring themselves in communication with mortals.

Mankind have, for many ages, had a superstitious dread of things unseen, and because it is not possible for spirits to be seen by the ordinary organs of vision, there have always been a certain class who have doubted their existence, and have fully believed such existences were opposed to natural law or they would be able to make themselves seen or heard. It appears to this class of mankind more natural for an impassable barrier to exist between the world of mortals and the world of spirits, if such exist. But I ask why it should seem more natural for death to be a complete separation between two whose lives are bound together in the closest and most natural bonds of love, where such separation entirely destroys the happiness of the one left behind ? If such existences are a reality, the possibility of their intercourse with mankind appears to us more in accordance with Nature and Reason than that the tenderest ties on earth should be ruthlessly severed without the possibility of any compensating consolation. The difficulties which are found in the way of that free, familiar and natural intercourse between mankind and their dear departed, cannot be traced to causes existing in the spirit state ; nor does any law exist unfavourable to such intercourse.

The difficulties in the way of free and natural spirit intercourse are very numerous, and in some cases totally insurmountable ; but they are of earth, and in the power of mortals to prevent or remove. They are the result of the violation of natural law ; and so long as mankind remain in a state of ignorance and misdirection on matters of such vital importance, so long must they suffer the loss of those most dear to them, without consolation except a feeble hope of a joyful resurrection at some future indefinite period. If then you both be found in the faith, you may again be united ; but if one should be an unbeliever, there is eternal separation, misery and despair. This is the only hope orthodoxy can give to sorrowing humanity, and it is inconsistent with both Nature and reason.

These causes mankind must endeavour to remove, if they desire to obtain that intercourse with the other world which brings knowledge, consolation, love and wisdom ; for they are included in the unnatural condition of body and mind in which men live. The common diet, personal, domestic, and social habits of mankind are unnatural ; and these violations are commonly practised, and generally admitted to be infringements of the pure laws of

life which if mankind strictly obey they must enjoy a happy and harmonious existence.

When mankind are in this natural condition, the difficulties which spirits experience in making themselves seen, heard, and identified, are almost entirely removed; if they live a purer life in harmony with Nature, spirits can obtain access to mankind, and in such intercourse all ignorance and misconception as to the pure, happy and perfectly natural condition in which those beings exist is very soon dispelled. Mankind are soon brought, by such wise teaching as their spirit friends impart, into a condition of harmony with the spirit-world. The main difficulty which advanced spirits have to contend against is this unnatural condition of mankind, and their consequent ignorance of the simplest matters connected with spirit-life; their thoughts and desires, being selfish and unnatural, are consequently impure; while spirits are unselfish and perfectly natural, consequently pure, and to them all things are pure.

The communications of advanced spirits are never carelessly or indiscreetly given, but always in accordance to the condition of those to whom they are addressed. As mankind advance in knowledge the character of these communications from the spirit-world advances in like proportion. Such are some of the causes which hinder mankind from fully appreciating all that spirits desire to communicate concerning themselves. If mankind were more natural, their conceptions of the conditions of spirits would be consequently more natural. If the whole truth concerning the life and natural habits and customs of spirits was indiscriminately given, man, interpreting such truth in accordance with his own unnatural condition, would form the like impure and unholy conceptions of life in the spirit-world as of life in the earth-world.

To be natural, is to be wicked, immodest, unholy and impure, in the eyes of the majority of mankind in the present day; and to live a life in accordance with the instincts of Nature is to violate the holy teaching of pulpit orators, and the unnatural laws and customs of modern society.

If spirits tell mankind that their habits and customs of life are in direct violation of the preconceived opinions of mankind as to what are purity, charity, honesty and truth, they are exposing themselves to be judged by human law, and condemned by what is considered a superior morality exhibited in the lives of holy men and women on earth—holy, according to earthly conceptions of what holiness is: a spirit's conception of holiness, is the result of more advanced knowledge—more in accordance with wisdom, nature and reason.

Mankind, especially that class who consider themselves "holy of the Lord," who have "washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb," who call themselves a peculiar people, the children of the Most High, and possessing a hope blooming with immortality

beyond the grave—this class, whatever name they call themselves by, all belong to one order. And while they consider that they are “the pure in heart, who shall see God” they condemn the whole world as being in a condition of impurity, ignorance and wickedness. They never will see God except in his fury, “in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and ever.” If therefore, a spirit writes or speaks about the nature, condition, and habits of the society in which it lives, it does so in such a manner as accords with the condition of those addressed; ever urging them to seek to attain to higher spiritual conditions, that they may become the mediums of more advanced truth concerning spirit-life. Spirits are not reluctant to give more advanced information, but they find it impossible to make their communications intelligible to the conceptions of their earthly friends, unless they dilute their spiritual truth with earthly error. This is the reason why the communications of advanced mediums seem to contradict those given at an earlier stage of development, which, when rightly apprehended, is seen to be the result of this necessity to adapt communications to the condition and capacity of those to whom they are given.

Spirits earnestly desire the progress of mankind from this condition of ignorance about the true nature of spirit-life, knowing that it is impossible for them to form correct ideas of its perfect naturalness, while their habits, diet, and modes of thought, are so inconsistent with Nature.

The chief object of spirit teaching is to raise mankind to a purer condition of mind and body, that more natural ideas, both human and spiritual, may be possible.

The naturalness of the life the spirits live does not accord with the ideas mankind at present have as to what a natural life is; and when they first enter spirit-life, a long period is often spent in nothing else but unlearning the erroneous notions they have acquired on earth.

Mankind think the elegancies, luxuries and superfluities of civilized life are superior to Nature; they have the impression that Nature is imperfect, and that the arts of civilization are the means appointed by God for the perfecting of what He has left incomplete.

Civilization may develop Nature, or it may obstruct its harmonious operations; and, unfortunately for the happiness of mankind, the civilization of the present age does chiefly the latter—instead of bringing mankind into more harmonious relations with Nature, it is ever inventing some new means of infringing its perfect laws. Mankind having lost, (through the refinements of art, and the excesses of ignorance), those pure and holy sensations of Nature, are ever seeking some new sensation; and it matters not however opposed to reason it may be, they welcome it, and pay dearly for it. When partaken of, like the apples on the shore

of the Dead Sea, it is only sand and gravel, in the mouth, (although very beautiful to look upon,) compared with such sensations of the body and mind as are in accordance with Nature and are given by God for the happiness of man.

Civilization need not of necessity lead mankind further from Nature; and if civilization is an effect of progress it will not.

There are no discoveries of science, no inventions or adaptations of art, consistent with Nature and Reason, and which are the effects of the law of progression, but are productive of usefulness and happiness to man.

When we say that mankind must progress, because it is a law of Nature; we do not mean that they must become so highly civilized as to substitute art for Nature, and become so exceedingly clever as to live an entirely artificial life. Alas, mankind are trying so to live in this our day, and reaping the bitter fruits of such vain attempts to live contrary to Nature.

Mankind are continually regretting the influence of the vices of civilized life upon the barbarous nations with whom they come in contact. If therefore civilization was, compared with barbarism, really a condition of progress, could the effect of contact with each other be injurious? Is it not those habits of civilized society which are opposed to Nature and reason, the immutation of which brings imbecility, physical disease, premature death, and the final extermination of such as have previously lived in accordance with the nature and reason of their barbarous condition? If mankind in his civilized condition lived in accordance with Nature, as perfectly as the man who is ignorant of the arts and excesses of civilized life lives in his barbarous condition, would the contact of the two prove fatal to the health, happiness and existence of the less civilized?

The influence of man upon man for good is very great, and is designed to be a means for his development to better conditions; how great, therefore, is the responsibility resting upon the Europeans of the present day who emigrate to all the nations of the earth, and wherever they go they carry with them the blessings, and some of the vices of civilized life. Those vices consist of habits which have been gradually contracted in civilized society, and are opposed to Nature and fatal to health, as is plainly apparent in their influence over what are called the inferior races, among whom men mingle, and who soon learn to imitate them.

While the unnatural customs and habits of civilized life do not appear so fatal to the health and life of those who acquire them gradually, or are born and bred in them, yet they are destructive to that "peace of mind which passeth understanding"—that happy harmonious condition which ever follows a well regulated life.

Mankind must for ever continue inharmonious and miserable while he chooses to live in violation of the laws of Nature; and until he is willing to cast away from him those chains of custom.

and fashion which keep him in such unnatural bondage, it will be impossible for those pure and holy spirit intelligences to obtain access to him. The calm and happy condition of those beings, who live only to love, makes them unable to approach an atmosphere impregnated with selfishness and vanity and discord; and they cannot reach the inner nature of mankind while they remain in so unnatural a condition. Let no man or woman therefore complain that they do not belong to the favoured few who see, hear, and learn, the high and holy truths concerning spirit-life. Let them not call into question the sanity, honesty, or intelligence of those who are in a condition to see a spirit, or so influenced by spirits as to act, speak, draw, paint, or write, in manner that to a candid mind permits no question as to the cause.

If therefore the unnatural conditions of mankind are the chief causes of estrangement between them and spirits, the facilities for communication must be smaller or greater in proportion as those conditions become less or more favourable; and, the more simple and natural their habits, the purer and more susceptible their conditions become.

Spirits very much desire to be better understood, that the ignorance prevalent among mankind concerning their nature and condition should be removed. The undying love they have for humanity prompts them to labour for the diffusion of such knowledge as shall be the means (under the influence of those laws which are ever working for the success of efforts to do good) for their elevation.

Before mankind can appreciate such teaching as the spirits most desire to impart, they have much to unlearn, and probably much to suffer. They will have prejudices, interest, and the force of habit; all as dear to them as an eye or a hand, which if to retain would endanger the life of the whole body, must be cut off and cast away—so must it be with all these clogs and ties of earth.

To be able thoroughly to apprehend the nature and condition of spirits, a man must be brought into a similar condition of harmony, purity and love to that in which they exist. Man's condition cannot be the same in degree, but they must live on the same natural plane of being before they can be brought into sympathetic union with spirits.

First, there must be harmony of body and mind, the effect of a natural diet, perfect cleanliness, abstinence from excess in all things, and above all, never to allow the calm serenity of the mind to be disturbed by any occurrence in life. Second, purity of thought and desire:—let no thought or desire of your heart obtain a moment's lodgement there if it will not bear the scrutiny of God. Let that pure fountain, your spirit-forces, send forth through your material organism such thoughts as shall be in perfect harmony with your highest conceptions of truth, goodness and purity. Third, as God is love, as spirits know no other feeling

towards mankind, and each other, but love ; be determined to know nothing among men but love. Whatever you may hear, see or do, let it be tried by this test, and if there be found anything but the pure gold—love to God and love to mankind, regard it as unworthy of a moment's consideration.

Spirits who are able to communicate with mankind are in a condition of life much superior to them ; they ever enjoy harmony of body and mind, purity of thought and desire ; and love is their native atmosphere. Let mankind therefore be fully assured that whatever be the nature of their intercourse with spirits, its influences must be purifying and elevating.

There is, however, very much in the earlier stages of spirit communion very hard to be understood and reconciled with this view of spirit nature. Nevertheless, as man progresses to higher conditions of mediumship all becomes clear to him—the mists and clouds which obscured his vision then, he now sees were the result of his own ignorance—his own inharmonious and unnatural condition of mind.

Every medium has his own peculiar difficulties to contend with, according to his past experiences, and the character of the mediumship of which he is capable. It is a pity that wise and intelligent men should continue to write about the influences of evil spirits, mischievous spirits, or even undeveloped spirits ; for these have no existence except in their own inharmonious conditions of body and mind. Such spirits as carry with them into the spirit-world any of earth's selfishness, hatred or malignity, are utterly incapable of influencing mankind for good ; and the laws of spirit intercourse are such as to put it out of their power to influence them for evil.

When the nature and laws of spirit-life and spirit communion become better known and apprehended such notions will pass away.

We now ask, is it possible for mankind when they have arrived at a certain condition of purity, harmony and love, to enter into such material and familiar intercourse with spirits, which, according to the character of the mediumship, shall enable them to converse on ordinary matters of every day life ? Can a medium so fully realize the presence of a spirit friend, and exchange question and answer with him on subjects of mutual interest ? Should a communicating spirit influence a medium for purposes of healing, or the diffusion of useful knowledge ; is it possible for each to feel the like natural familiarity as exists between two men on earth, who may occupy the like position in relation one to the other. We answer most positively, yes. Spirits, and men, may be brought into more perfect and familiar union with spirits when the conditions are proper, than can ever exist between man and man. Friendship may exist between them of a more pure and lasting character than was possible when both were in earth-life. Teacher

and pupil, and mutual labourers in the cause of truth, love, and usefulness for the elevation of humanity, may hold intercourse one with the other, while the one is in the earth-body and the other in the spirit-body.

When the communicating spirit is in a condition of natural affinity with the medium, the bond of union is not only familiar and natural, but also perpetual; and the intercourse is as natural as that of earth, only that the intercourse of earth-life cannot be as pure.

Natural affinity is the purest and holiest bond of union in Nature, being the only law of conjugal union ordained by God; all other unions between the sexes are of the earth earthy—they reach no deeper in their natures than the external, and are as transient as their earth-life.

The only perpetual unions of men and women are those which are the result of natural affinity; this is God's matrimonial law, and the only pure and holy marriage recognized in spirit-life: such marriages are in accordance with Nature, and cannot result in anything but happiness.

When spirit intercourse is the result of such union between a spirit and a medium, the intercourse is natural, pure, familiar, loving, and perpetual.

Affinital love is the highest form of love; and its results are the perfecting of their nature; it is purely reciprocal, and produces that perfect harmony of two natures which makes them one, although the one is in spirit-life and the other in earth-life. Their union is so complete and natural that they experience all the joys of conjugal life, and the vital essence of existence, which is spirit-love, is ever flowing between them. This pure electric current can flow in no other direction, and find no other congenial resting place; here each feel all the pure joys of the purest of unions—they delight in each other with all the ardour of the spring tide of natural love.

A mediumship of this character is in reality a union of earth and heaven of the most natural kind possible; and while the intercourse is natural it leads to a development of the highest order, and wisdom is its offspring. Now it is under such circumstances that the naturalness of spirit-life is discernible; the medium in earth-life realizes the continual presence of the spirit medium, for one is a medium for the spirit-world as much as the other is for the earth-world.

I am very well aware that the truth of this statement will be questioned even by some Spiritualists, but to those who have advanced beyond the first stages of spirit intercourse, especially those whose intercourse is the result of natural affinity, it will appear possible, and to some it will be an established fact.

Faith is a faculty of the mind totally ignored by some Spiritualists; but to those who are developed to a condition of natural

clairvoyance, faith is the eye of the spirit of man, and with this natural yet clearer power of vision he sees distinctly the perfect union of both worlds—he sees all earth-nature as the primate or approximate only, while he beholds in spirit existence the primate of all things earthly.

The faith of the Spiritualist is not a faith opposed to reason, but based upon knowledge; his faith is the result of his own internal development, and of the same character as that which Jesus had when he healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, and caused the lame to walk—it is a faith like unto that which he said would remove mountains of obstacles out of the way of human progress.

The faith he himself felt when he said, "I could pray to my Father and he would presently send me twelve legions of angels to help me"—the faith of Jesus—was the natural outgrowth of this pure spiritual nature; and so it is with every advanced spirit medium and in perfect accordance with Nature and reason. The Bible says, "without faith it is impossible to please God;" spirits say, without faith it is impossible for mankind to realize the naturalness of spirit existence.

Faith is not a superstitious belief in the opinions of men which have no foundation in truth; this instinct of the soul can only be brought into action when presented with facts. The action of the mind which is commonly called faith is assent, or intellectual belief, and as different from the nature of faith as that condition of the mind which is expressed in these words, "I suppose it is true, because I cannot prove the falsity of it," is from that which says, "I know that such a thing is true, because it is in accordance with Nature and reason.

God is the author of Nature, and he gives mankind reason as their unerring guide in all things. Such a condition of mind realizes the presence and intercourse of spirits, and without this action of the mind it is impossible for spirits to maintain that natural and familiar intercourse with mankind, which is essential to a high condition of development. Reason is God's appointed pathway to Faith, and it can be reached this way only; if this is not its basis it is not faith; for this noble faculty of the mind is unable to realize what is not truth—it is that unerring power of the soul which cannot see, touch or handle what does not exist.

When mankind use their reason; beautiful and perfect Nature, (material and spiritual) supplies them with infallible truth as an object of faith; and thus realizing it, they see, touch, and handle spirits, and enjoy all the delights of familiar intercourse with them.

In such a condition of advancement spirit nature is as clearly seen and understood as material nature, and reason has here the same work to do, being only occupied in another sphere of action.

Reason has now conducted mankind from matter to spirit;

faith takes hold of spirit truth, and interweaves its philosophy and its wisdom with mortal life; and Reason continues her business in a higher state of being.

When mankind live in this exalted condition of life, the trees, plants and flowers, the animals and birds, of this material world have a new charm for their eyes, a new melody for their ears; for they now see the harmony which exists between them and the spirit-world—they now see this lower earth as only part of one great whole.

Reason connects in harmonious relations both worlds; Faith sees their beauties, hears their delightful melodies, and enters with the simple confidence of a child into the full enjoyment of their perfectly natural pleasures.

Reason is cautious, scrutinizing, patient, plodding; but Faith dances and sings with joy and hope, because she sees the highest aspirations of her spirit realized—the most charming and intellectual, as well as the most harmonizing of influences and associates, are realized by the action of faith.

Faith is the spirit's sight while it resides in earth-life; it does not question the reality of what it sees, it simply enjoys what spiritual Nature provides. It is the exercise of this faculty of the soul which brings man into the condition of a little child; and, with the like confidence and simplicity, receives with gratitude what a loving omnipotent Father gives.

Faith never questions the power of its Heavenly Father to fill the universe with wonders far greater than those it now beholds, or to adorn those wonders with surpassing beauty: and never entertains a doubt about His goodness in all He gives.

Faith, having been led to these spirit realms by the unerring hand of reason, can never fear; for it has not only been guided thither by the use of the highest light given to mankind for their guidance; but, that universal love which includes every other form of love, fills the soul in such a condition with that filial confidence in the supreme source of all good, which makes it feel the perfect love which casteth out all fear.

It must not be supposed that a human soul which has advanced to a condition of faith discards its reason. In the same way as a little child in earth-life reasons, so mankind, having become little children in spirit knowledge, reason about what they see, and hear.

Reason is a bright and ever shining light given for the guidance of mankind throughout eternity; and, like all other human faculties, is only in its first stages of development in earth-life.

Reason, therefore, is our guide in the investigation of this subject, the naturalness of spirit existence; and reason will most assuredly approve the statement that spirits live quite as naturally in their condition of being as it is possible for mankind to live on earth.

Reason must lead us to the conclusion that the tastes, desires, and instincts of spirits do not undergo a radical transformation immediately they leave the earth-body, but rather that abundant provision is made whereby the tastes, desires, and instincts of earth-life receive their most complete satisfaction in a purer state.

If it be true what spirits communicate, that "spirit-life is a continuation and a means of perfecting that in mankind which is imperfect in earth-life," it reasonably follows that those qualities in man which are essential to his identification and happiness must be retained.

To be able to conceive the possibility of spirits living together in a perfectly natural manner, it is not necessary that we should see them living, precisely in the same relation to each other—the same dress, occupations, and pleasures, as those with which they were identified in earth-life: Sufficient if they carry with them those leading characteristics which give to every human being his selfhood.

Such qualities of man's nature as make him unloveable or unhappy in earth-life cannot be carried with him into spirit-life, because they are the result of the relationships and influences of earth, and belong essentially to earth; these the grave closes over for ever—all that remains to the spirit of a wasted, selfish, or cruel earth-life are its effects. Such of the characteristics of mankind as are good exist for ever; love, purity, and wisdom, can never die; and those whose lives, when examined by the light of reason, are seen to have been regulated in accordance with these eternal principles, carry with them into spirit-life their natural characteristics; and every link in the chain of the narrative of their earth-life is delightful to reflect upon, and becomes a never failing source of happiness.

It is entirely consistent with nature that what God has created for the happiness of mankind on earth should be continued to them in spirit-life; if their natures are the same, except their being in a more elevated condition, so must their sources of happiness be the same, only in a more exalted form.

If self-love, sexual-love, conjugal-love, parental-love, filial-love, fraternal-love, and universal-love, are the basis of human life and happiness on earth, is it inconsistent with Nature that they should be the basis of life and happiness in heaven?

For the answer to this question we must look to those pure and loving beings who have realised the blessedness of the spirit-state, and, if what they tell us about spirit-nature is consistent with reason and earth-nature, we are the voluntary destroyers of our own happiness if we longer doubt.

If the revelations they are continually giving us of their own nature and manner of life are at all reliable (and we have no reason for thinking they are not), love in all the forms in which it manifested itself on earth is the basis of life and happiness in heaven.

Love must be the ruling principle of society in spirit-life, and, although it is capable of manifestation in higher forms than are possible to it in earth-life, yet there is every reason to believe that human life is a type of spirit-life—that the unfolding of man's powers on earth is only one step in his upward course.

Every stage of human progress is designed to become a new and more exalted condition of happiness; and when the laws of Nature are not infringed it is so: and step by step, as man ascends the ladder of life, his happiness seems more complete, for he realises within him a capacity to appreciate the joys each condition of human love afford him.

Such, our spirit-friends inform us, is the manner of the rise and progress of a spirit: when it opens its powers of vision for the first time, and beholds what seems a new creation and a new condition of life; its first thoughts are of self: in perfect consistency with the first thoughts of childhood in earth-life.

Self-love being the all-absorbing feeling of this first condition, it prompts the enquiries where am I? and what am I? On earth I was so and so; I did this and that; but all is now changed. I must have died, and yet I live, I feel my limbs have the power of motion, my mind the power of thought, and I see myself surrounded by all such things as suggest to me that I am in a condition of life perfectly natural, and wondrously beautiful.

Self-love, therefore, becomes the basis of all other loves, even in spirit-life; it prompts to action for self-preservation, it suggests the advantage of association with others, and, until the higher conditions of love are developed, the spirit, like a child in earth-life, is satisfied with itself.

It is no more possible for a spirit to remain in a condition of self-love than it is possible for a child always to remain in childhood; the law of progress is as much in operation in spirit-life as earth-life; and its next condition of love is soon reached.

The next condition of love common to mankind may be thought to be impossible with spirits, but this arises from human conceptions of spirit-life having been so inconsistent with Nature and reason: the spirit nature could not be perfect without it, any more than the human nature could.

Sexual love is a means appointed by God for the propagation of mankind in earth-life; and if it be the result of natural affinity it leads up to conjugal love; if not, it is complete in itself so far as external life is concerned, and parental love in the ordinary course of nature follows.

Now, in spirit-life, sexual love exists only as the natural outgrowth of affinital unions, and is an internal and everlasting source of mutual gratification; in earth-life it has an external manifestation, and parentage the designed result; while in spirit-life its result is harmony and wisdom.

The attachment of children for their parents is the result partly of self-love and partly of an undeveloped filial love. It is not

until the nature of mankind is fully developed that they realize to its full extent the purity and holiness of filial love.

In spirit-life filial love is most perfectly developed, and adorns spirit-nature as one of its most beautiful flowers. The mutual love of parents and children is an eternal bond of union and source of happiness. Parental love in spirit-life does not mean parental authority, but a deep, earnest, and unceasing devotion to the welfare of their offspring; and filial love is manifested in veneration and gratitude to their parents who were instrumental in giving them life.

Fraternal love is the social bond of spirit-life; self-interest, monopoly, and disregard to the happiness of others is an impossibility there, and the only social distinctions possible are those of natural characteristics and the various degrees of advancement in love and wisdom.

The normal condition of all spirits is universal love; this is the main-spring of every condition in spirit-life; individual life, domestic life, social life, and universal life, being all influenced and directed by universal love.

The highest condition attainable in earth-life is that of feeling the body and spirit in a condition of harmony with universal nature; and such is the effect of the change called death upon the human spirit, that however low in development it may have been in earth-life, it is consistent with the laws of spirit-nature that it should share, in as large a degree as it is capable of, this universal good.

The first condition enjoyed in spirit-life is one step in advance of that of earth-life, with this difference, that the spirit is now surrounded with natural and loving influences and associations only; and with these advantages over his former condition he is also possessed of a pure body, a clear mind, and unlimited facilities for the acquisition of knowledge.

When a spirit is able to communicate with its friends on earth, its intercourse, although in accordance with its own capacity and attainments, is under the influence of love.

Messages, expressive of malignity, or a desire for revenge for past wrongs, are unknown; but those in which can be identified a spirit of love to all humanity, and an earnest desire to do them good, are received every day.

In no case have spirits been found to seek the welfare of those near and dear to them, if by so doing they would permanently injure any other person. In their estimation material prosperity is of very trifling consequence compared with the progress and happiness of the spirit.

Therefore, our spirit friends are living on a more elevated plane of existence than ourselves; yet they live together in as natural a manner as we do on earth.

Whatever is in accordance with nature must be conducive to

happiness, and all this they have ; whatever is contrary to nature destroys happiness, and this they cannot have.

Now, the object of spirit intercourse with mortals is to establish closer relationship between them ; and their plans of operation, however inconsistent and inadequate for the accomplishment of this object they may appear in the eyes of man, are nevertheless the result of greater knowledge and higher wisdom, and carried on with more unceasing energy than is possible to mankind.

Now we must endeavour to show what these plans of operation are, at least a few of them.

The chief obstacle to the natural intercourse of spirits and men being the unnatural conditions in which the latter live, their first object to be gained is the removal of that ignorance of the nature of God and the nature and destiny of man, which is the main cause of these unnatural conditions.

The teachers of popular Christianity have ever been endeavouring to prove that its leading doctrines, although inconsistent with nature and reason, were nevertheless taught by Jesus and his apostles ; and their opposition to nature and human reason must be regarded as conclusive evidence of their divine origin.

If the sins and sufferings of humanity are the effects of the fall of the first human pair from the condition of purity and happiness in which they were created ; and if the only means appointed by God whereby man may regain that pure and happy state is faith in the substitutional sufferings of Jesus, the effects which have followed do not commend the system to the common sense of the most ordinary thinking man.

The more civilized mankind become where this form of Christianity prevails, the more unnatural are the laws, institutions, customs, habits, and mental and moral condition, of the people.

If God by his laws developes nature, and in his goodness gives men reason, is it not a violation of the one, and a contradiction to the conclusions of the other, to believe that he has appointed as the only means of human elevation the exercise of a firm and unshaken faith in the imputed righteousness of Jesus, and in the atonement effected by his substituted sufferings and death ?

Spirits answer these questions in the affirmative, and they say that although the perversion of the pure teaching of Jesus has been the cause (and is even now) of those unnatural institutions, and conditions of mankind, which obstruct spirit intercourse with them, yet the mission of Jesus answered all the purposes for which it was appointed.

Such unnatural doctrines as the fall of man, the anger of God, the existence of a personal devil, eternal punishment in hell, and the salvation of all who believe, and the eternal damnation of all who do not believe, are all human inventions.

As such doctrines were the natural outgrowth of undeveloped natures, incapable of apprehending the true nature of the teachings and mission of Jesus, so were they adapted to the general

conditions of mankind, and while they attached the greater importance to those external husks of man's invention, they retained within them that pure grain which we in these latter days gather for our spiritual nourishment.

Those who, in these days, prefer to live on the husks of truth, cannot enjoy that health and beauty of spirit which those enjoy who search by the light of reason and the infallible guidance of nature for the pure truth which, when found, gives them freedom and happiness.

Now, the doctrine of natural Christianity spirits endorse, and it is contained in those two leading principles taught by Jesus—the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. On these two principles hang the whole science and philosophy of natural Christianity.

The effects of spirit intercourse with mankind must be to scatter the husks and chaff which have collected around the natural truths which Jesus taught; and, as their conditions of body and mind become purer, the contrast between the unnatural inventions of men in a barbarous age, and the natural truth which is always consistent with nature and reason, will be apparent.

The only difference between Spiritualists and mankind generally is that the one, when in an advanced condition, hold natural and constant intercourse with spirits; while the other can only be communicated with by indirect means, and in such a manner as is adapted to his condition.

Advanced Spiritualists, therefore, are the only direct medium of familiar intercourse between earth and the spirit-world; and their position now in relation to their fellow men, to angels, and to God, is like that of Jesus was in his day.

If, therefore, the lives and teachings of such men are not apprehended by the majority of mankind, or they should be maliciously misrepresented by the clergy, there need not be any cause for surprise; for as Jesus was one by himself before the nation of the Jews, so are advanced Spiritualists one as a class before the whole world, and if, therefore, they maligned, persecuted, and crucified him, what less than this can be expected by those who, like him, live for humanity only?

In this age, instead of having only one Christ, we have them in every country, every city, every town, village, and almost every hamlet in the known world, and daily increasing.

Spiritualism is not, as is supposed by its opponents, a new religion, or a new form of any old system, but it is the natural outgrowth of man's consciousness of spirit existence; it is the unfolding of eternal truth, and a manifestation of the future of the human race, which can be demonstrated by science.

Spiritualism gives, to those who are in a condition to receive it, a full assurance of faith, hope, and knowledge; and, as they advance step by step on their upward spiral course, they proceed

from knowledge to love, from love again to faith, and from faith to intuition.

When these progressive conditions are realized, the naturalness of spirit-life is easily apprehended—knowledge of the laws of earth and spirit-nature takes the place of former ignorance and superstition.

Love removes all fear of the future, and gives in its place a peace, a hope—an anticipation of future destiny.

Faith sees God in all nature; it sees a world eminently adapted to the use and happiness of man; it sees a connection between the earth and heaven—between material and spiritual things.

Faith is the natural condition of mind produced by the combined action of reason, knowledge, and love. Reason leads up from knowledge of the laws of matter to a knowledge of the laws of spirit, and awakens an appreciation of the harmony which pervades universal nature, as well as love toward the great designer, love to every object he has created and given for the use and happiness of man.

Faith beholds goodness in all God's works, it gives an assurance of the reality of a future existence, and the intercourse between the inhabitants of both worlds; faith sees spirits walk the earth as men walk, and beholds them glide away through the air to their spirit-home of beauty and harmony.

But intuition does more than this: faith is the power of the spirit to see things spiritismal; intuition touches, handles them, and realizes their adaptation to man. Faith is continually falling back upon reason for support, but intuition never doubts. Love produces desire and hope, and faith is the transitional state between love and intuition.

Intuition may be considered a matured condition of spiritual development; when once man has gained this elevated position, he sees before him unlimited degrees of progress, and sources of happiness—he familiarly converses with spirits as man with man, and learns the wisdom of the spheres.

Intuition is the gratification of the desire of faith and the realization of that spirit blessedness which in a condition of faith is only hoped for; intuition brings your spirit affinity to your side, and in pure and loving embrace enables spirit and mortal to enjoy a union and an intercourse more holy, more elevated, more pure, and more blissful, than is possible to material life only.

Affinital love, when one is in spirit-life and the other has advanced to a state of intuition in earth-life, finds as full and complete a means of reciprocation as if death had never parted them.

The union of two spirits by affinital love is the only marriage of nature, and consequently the only union which can be perfect and eternal. When such a union takes place in earth-life, if one should pass into the next state, the sympathy existing between them is a means whereby the development of the one left in earth-life is carried on; and as their sympathy is a power in the hands

of the elevated spirit, it is used with love and wisdom, and leads us from one condition of progress to another. The one in earth-life becomes a most susceptible medium of spirit communion for earth; and the one in spirit-life, while enjoying all the bliss of natural intercourse with its other self in the material state, is also a medium for the use of advanced spirits in sending their messages of love and wisdom to earth.

Therefore, when the earth-medium reaches the intuitional condition of advancement, the separation which death caused is seen to be only temporary, and rather an advantage than otherwise, for now the union is seen to be of such a nature that it can never again terminate.

Such unions are marriages in accordance to the law of God, and result in the greatest happiness to the individuals themselves, and are the means appointed by Him for the regeneration of the world, and the perfection and harmony of all his children.

Marriages in heaven are all affinital, and therefore natural; marriages on earth are very few of them affinital, and therefore unnatural. And as the union of the sexes is the cause of population in earth-life, and the union mostly unnatural, the influence upon the population of which it is the cause must also be unnatural.

The regeneration of the human race is more dependent upon a proper regard being paid to the law of affinity in contracting marriage than is generally believed. A clergyman, writing to a daily newspaper a short time ago, condemned the doctrine of affinities as one evidence that Spiritualism, which teaches it, must be the invention of the devil.

The Church and the State enact and enforce the modern laws of marriage without any regard to the laws of God concerning it; and when the greater law causes the violation of the lesser, the State sits in judgment and condemns and punishes the violator.

The Church assumes for itself, in the matter of marriage, the dignity and prerogative of God; it unites in the holy bonds of wedlock those whose natures are not in any way adapted to each other; and then says, "what God hath joined together let no man put asunder." Clergymen call this ceremony of the church God's law of marriage.

What God joins together it is impossible for man to put asunder; what God has not joined together by his law of affinity it is impossible for either Church or State permanently and harmoniously to unite.

Affinital union, according to the philosophy of the spirits, is the effect of that pre-existent condition of unity in which man's spirit forces lived previous to their assuming the human form. By them it is affirmed that the pre-existence of the spirits of mankind is known to be a positive fact by such spirits as have advanced to the higher spheres of knowledge. It is also stated by them that the spirit entity, which takes the form of man and woman, or

male and female infant, is one; and this unity of the vital forces of life, taking the material state in the form of opposite sexes, produces the affinity which exists between them. The spirit forces are a something which spirits say they cannot see, but of the existence of which they have abundant evidence; they cannot see God, yet they know he exists; so it is with the spirits of mankind, whether in earth or spirit-life.

Although it is not possible for any except very advanced spirits to see man in his pre-existent state, yet the evidence of reason, its consistency with spirit nature, and the testimony of those bright intelligences who have been gathering knowledge and wisdom in the spirit-world for thousands of years, make it a certainty to spirits of ordinary advancement.

Spirits reason thus—God is a Spirit whom we cannot see, yet we love him. Man is the offspring of God, and must therefore resemble his parent; his material origin and composition we are able to trace, and as the laws which affect and control the material existence of man are subject to the will power of highly developed spirits, it follows that in his material form man is not the child of God.

The relationship of man to God, they therefore conclude, is spiritual: the spirit-body in which the spirit-forces exist is only matter in a more refined form, and is no more the vital essence, than the material organism of man is identical with his spirit forces.

They inform us that a knowledge of spirit-nature affords still more conclusive evidence of the pre-existence of man than the deductions of reason, and by spirit-nature they mean what is called earth-nature spiritualized—they mean the material substances of earth and its kindred worlds sublimated or etherialized, and made into solid spiritualized matter on which the feet of angels may tread. They mean that beautiful spirit-world, where is provided for the happiness of those who live there, all that is wonderful, useful, and beautiful in nature, animate and inanimate, in like manner as it is provided on earth for man in his material state.

This is what is meant when spirits speak of spirit-nature; and they say that the laws and conditions of nature in this exalted state plainly indicate the eternity of man's existence. The higher the conditions to which the spirit man rises the farther is he able to see over the plane of his former existence.

Pre-existence is as plainly written on spirit-nature as future existence is written on earth-nature; but as it is only when man rises to certain conditions of development that he is able thus to read earth-nature. So it is in spirit-life: the law of progress exists in the one, in like manner as it exists in the other.

Now, the eternal law of affinity, the pre-existence of man, and the everlasting progresses of development, which he realizes in spirit-life, are subjects upon which spirits only can speak experimentally and with certainty. And, as it is impossible for us

mortals to apprehend the naturalness of spirit-life without a knowledge of these essential laws of their existence being explained, we must therefore let the spirits speak for themselves.

And that they may have an opportunity of saying what they know about these, and other laws and conditions of their life, we shall introduce a few of them; and, after they have spoken, we can form our own opinion as to the consistency of their statements with nature and reason.

CHAPTER II.

The first to speak is a Baptist minister, at least such he says he was when in the earth-body.

"My name is of no consequence,* but if you like you can call me the Reverend Wilson. I am a spirit living in what we call the sphere of knowledge, and, as the Americans say, my continual desire is expressed in the words—"I want to know you know;" and when I feel I want to know any one thing in particular my thoughts immediately go in the direction of what I want to apprehend. In this condition of life I have no difficulty in obtaining the precise knowledge I want. For instance, I was not long in spirit-life before I wanted to know how it was with one of my most sincere and devout members who had died in the faith, and had left on earth a conscientious and God-fearing widow, who never thought of marrying again because of her love for her husband and her sorrow for his loss. For when I saw this same good man, about whose piety I had not the slightest doubt, in the society of a female whom I had known some years before, and who I also knew to be a very good woman, the two were evidently living as man and wife—so I wanted to know how it was.

Being their minister I began to feel somewhat indignant at such things being allowed in heaven; and my first impulse was to remind each of them that the wife of that man was living on earth without marrying again, in the hope of being again united in heaven." The first reply to my remarks was as follows:—

"My dear minister," said Mr. Jones, "you have only just opened your eyes in this new world, and have yet to learn its laws, and the manner of its inhabitants."

MYSELF—"I suppose, Mr. Jones, that what would be considered disreputable and immoral on earth must be much more so in heaven; and I tell you this, I, for one disapprove of what I have seen between you and Miss Moore."

"My dear Mr. Wilson, will you please withhold your condemnations until you have been appointed a judge in this new state

* The names given in the following conversation have no significance, and are merely introduced to obviate confusion.

of existence, or at least until you have learnt the laws of the community in which those you condemn live."

"Well, I suppose there is no law, either divine or human, heaven or earth, which does not condemn unfaithfulness in the most sacred contract of marriage."

"Certainly, Mr. Wilson, you are quite right when you say there is no law in earth-life of human origin relating to the marriage contract, whether of Church or State, but would condemn this lady and myself as living in immoral relation to each other."

"Then, Mr. Jones and Miss Moore, I want to know, if the laws of both God and man condemn you, how you can be so wicked as to go on living as you do in a world so pure and holy."

"You want to know, Mr. Wilson, do you? Well now let me ask you a question or two. Look at this lady and myself and say if you think we look like criminals—the guilty are always unhappy, are they not?"

"I must confess, Mr. Jones, that neither this lady nor yourself look unhappy, and it is this which puzzles me. But now tell me, Miss Moore, do you think that I, who have been a minister of Christ for fifty years and have died in the faith—that do not know right from wrong?"

"My dear and much esteemed minister, this gentleman whom you now see by my side is my husband."

"What! your husband! I know better."

"My husband, Mr. Wilson, by the most sacred of all unions and if you will have patience while I speak I may be able to answer your question as to whether I think you can have lived a minister of Christ for fifty years in earth-life and not know right from wrong in this matter of marriage. The accusations my dear sir, have hitherto been all on your side; and I now reluctantly charge you with ignorance on this important question. I do not feel pained at being called an immoral woman by you—"

"Excuse me, Miss Moore, hear me out—"

"Mr. Wilson, I do not expect a spirit, who was only yesterday emancipated from earth, to apprehend the perfect laws of love and liberty enjoyed in heaven."

"Love and liberty in heaven, Miss Moore! these are strange words to my ears, in this relation at least: will you explain?"

"If you will kindly not interrupt me, Mr. Wilson, I tell you I will explain. My life on earth was spent in single blessedness, and when I was translated to this happy world I was ignorant of the laws of my own nature, and the condition of life into which I had entered. I was conducted to the school of knowledge, and afterwards to that of experience; and having received the lesson therein taught I was taken to a home of affinities, and from what I learnt there I gathered that the impulses and desires of my own nature, guided by reason, love, and wisdom, were the natural

instincts of my spirit, and given me by God to be gratified, not restrained.

From what I then saw I discovered that all mankind had an existence previous to their birth into earth-life; that, by the wondrous operations of God's laws, man and woman were one entity in that pre-existent state; and, by a process under the working of the same wondrous laws, separation took place on their advent to earth-life."

"The same directing and controlling power appoints one part to the male, the other to the female body; this one spirit-force thus becomes two separate existences, and each lives in the human body apparently complete for a time. This separation is brought about by the operation of the natural law of expulsion; and as the two separate parts of the pre-existent entity are still held together by that wondrous law of natural affinity, each separate part finds its fellow, either in earth-life or spirit-life."

"Therefore, Mr. Wilson, when I felt the law of affinity operating within me, by my strong impulses towards Mr. Jones, and he in like manner felt as strongly attached to me, I knew this to be the language of nature, and our affinital union was the result."

"Have you done, Miss Moore? for I promised not to interrupt you."

"Yes, Mr. Wilson, you are now at liberty to speak."

"Well, Miss Moore, not very many years ago I united Miss Vilberforce and Mr. Jones in the holy bonds of matrimony in my chapel, with the understanding that they were to be man and wife for ever; and when I conducted the funeral ceremony over Miss Moore I committed her body to the dust, and commended her virgin spirit to Christ, to live pure and holy with him for ever. What do I now see? A violation of the most sacred bond, and a slighting of virgin purity. If you call this heaven, have the kindness to direct me to a place where the ordinary laws of morality and of civilized society are observed. The theory advanced by Miss Moore about pre-existence, in justification of her conduct, I never heard of before, and do not believe a word of it."

"My dear Mr. Wilson, your saying you have not heard of pre-existence must be a mistake, for I heard you preach about the re-existence of Jesus."

"The pre-existence of the Son of God is surely a very different thing to the theory you have been advancing; the doctrine of his pre-existence is most plainly taught in God's holy word; but nowhere in that word do I find the pre-existence of mankind generally even implied; and the law of affinity, which you have based upon it, is, you see, without scripture authority."

"Mr. Wilson, I certainly did not refer to scripture as having taught it, because I know it does not. I spoke of the schools of knowledge, of experience, and affinities, and stated that it was here I learnt of the pre-existence of man and the pure and holy law of affinity."

"What do you mean by the school of knowledge? the word of God says nothing about it, and that is my only guide."

"If you are really willing to become a learner, Mr. Wilson (which I suppose is very hard for you after having been a teacher fifty years), the school of knowledge is the place to which you should go. Permit me, Mr. Wilson, to take the liberty of informing you that, although my spiritual teacher in earth-life, you yourself have much to learn of spirit nature, and spirit laws, before you can apprehend the simplest truths concerning them."

"Miss Moore, it is indeed very difficult for me to understand you. After being for fifty years a faithful minister of the gospel and a critical and industrious student of the word of God, and after having died with a sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection at the last day, to be told by you that I must begin as a little child to learn the simplest truths of spirit-life!"

"Difficult and strange as it may seem to you, Mr. Wilson you will find, nevertheless, that it is true."

"Then do you seriously mean to tell me, Miss Moore, that I came to heaven to sit at the feet of a child like you, to be taught that all the spiritual knowledge of a lifetime goes for nothing? Must I cast the infallible word of God behind my back, and adopt such notions as those you have been advancing in justification of a manner of life which that holy word condemns? Where am I and what am I? This lady is like the one I knew on earth, somewhat superior, it is true, but still a body. This place in which you appear to live cannot be heaven, for its appearance in no way resembles the descriptions given of it in God's word. These trees, these animals, these flowers, these mountains, these valleys, streams, and rivers, all speak too much of earth for this to be heaven. Would that I were back whence I came—is there no God, no Christ, no heaven for me? Have I missed my way and got in the by-path which leads to the infernal regions?"

"Oh God! hear the prayer of thy humble servant, and lead him in the right way; if he has strayed send a messenger of heaven and conduct him to thyself; show him the pearly gates of the new Jerusalem, and admit him among that happy throng who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. Have mercy upon these thy professed children, and if they have wandered from thee, and partaken of that forbidden fruit of knowledge which leads to sin and misery, let them apply again to that fountain opened for sin and uncleanness."

"Well, Mr. Wilson, I sincerely hope you feel all the better for the utterance of that prayer; it seemed like old times again to Miss Moore and myself. But, you see, your prayer is not answered; no messenger, such as that you prayed for, comes—the only apparent effect of your prayer is upon yourself. You ask is there no God, no Christ, no heaven for you. If you will keep yourself calm, and consent to listen to reason, I will conduct you where you will find all you desire. Your prayer has been offered to

God who does not exist; you have placed your hopes on a salvation which is unnatural, and consequently impossible; but the messenger you need is ready and able to conduct you into the city of God—and is that very wicked individual for whose restoration you have so kindly, earnestly, yet ignorantly prayed."

"My dear Mr. Jones, I feel very sad and unhappy, and if you can conduct me where I may be more peaceful I shall be thankful to you," was the response with which the first conversation ended.

"Thus was my first introduction to spirit-life, and how different a reception it was to what I expected. I hoped to be met on the threshold of death by a company of the redeemed, and to be borne in triumph to the gates of that beautiful city about which I had so often read and preached. Instead of which I am met by two only, and those the humblest of my flock; and they living (to all appearance) in adultery.

I was now willing to be conducted by my humble friends—seeing no other way open for me; and, as self-love is the first law of life, I arose to depart with them, still looking upon them with suspicion. During our journey the following conversation occurred:—

"Now, Mr. Jones, you promised to take me to a place where I should be able to obtain all I desire."

"If you keep yourself calm and are really willing to learn. The place to which we are conducting you is one inhabited by those who will teach you to know God; will shew you the Christ the Saviour of all mankind; where all is peace, love, wisdom, and happiness."

"Will you tell me how it is, Mr. Jones, that I have preached the gospel to so many who have died in the faith, and, out of all that number, you and Miss Moore are the only two who come to welcome your old minister to the realms of glory?"

"If you have ceased to consider us immoral persons and unworthy messengers I may tell you all about it."

"How can you seriously expect, Mr. Jones, that I should believe such things as Miss Moore advances? How can I believe in the pre-existence of all men? why that would make them all Gods! And how can I believe that the sacred ties of marriage are violated with the sanction of God? God is the governor of heaven as well as earth, and what is purity and holiness in the one must in his eyes be so in the other—and wickedness must be wickedness in his sight, whether it be enacted in heaven, earth, or hell."

"You are still speaking as the teacher, Mr. Wilson, and not the learner; and, as we have now arrived at the city, instead of again answering your queries I shall introduce you to those who will have ample opportunity of answering them for me. This noble spirit coming towards us is Mr. Jennings: do you not recognize him?"

"Oh! Mr. Wilson, how very delighted I am to meet you—welcome to our happy home. These spirits who accompany me are most of them known to you, and are equally glad to embrace you and give you a joyful reception. These, our dear friends Mr. Jones and Miss Moore, were deputed by a majority of this community to conduct you hither; a home is prepared for you, allow us to escort you to it."

"I was then conducted to what Mr. Jennings called my home. It was an ordinary mansion in a very beautiful city, but neither the city, the mansion, nor the people who dwelt there, accorded with my expectations. Their reception of me was hearty, generous, loving, and as natural as if I had been removing to another church or another country on earth."

"Good and kind as they all were, beautiful as was the city, spacious and elegant as was the mansion they called my *home*, I was nevertheless disappointed, discontented, miserable. My friends seemed to feel the greatest sympathy and love for me. Mr. Jennings said the mansion had been prepared expressly for my use, and I was to consider it my own—every article it contained had been placed there by friends, and were all most freely and generously given. I asked to speak to Mr. Jennings alone."

"Certainly, the library will be perhaps the most private apartment. This room, Mr. Wilson, has been stored with such literature, and adorned with such pictures and other works of art, as were thought to be in accordance with your taste."

"These are all very choice and beautiful, and I feel overpowered with your kindness, but I do not feel happy; and it is because of this I have sought a private audience with you, knowing you to be a wise and discreet (as well as a good) man. Now, Mr. Jennings, I want to ask you a few very serious questions. Will you answer me candidly—in what relation do Miss Moore and Mr. Jones live to each other?"

"As man and wife."

"Can mankind generally claim to have had an existence previous to their earth-life?"

"From what we are able to learn we have every reason to believe such to be the case."

"I have another question to ask you, Mr. Jennings—is this what you call heaven?"

"Mr. Wilson, your last question is the most difficult to answer of them all, because of your ideas of what heaven should be, being inconsistent with reason and spirit-nature."

"Is not the word of God a perfect and infallible guide, and is not human reason an enemy to revealed truth?"

"These are errors, my dear friend, into which many otherwise good men fall in earth-life."

"If the Bible is not an infallible guide to heaven, where in the whole universe of God shall we look for one?"

"Mr. Wilson, the kingdom of heaven is within you."

"Why, this is taken from the Bible."

"The words are, but not the kingdom of heaven."

"Well, this is sophistry, which seems to me to have a savour more of earth than heaven. Is reason and a knowledge of nature to take the place of God's infallible word? I cannot, I dare not, believe it."

"During the time this conversation was going on in the library, the happy company in the reception hall were delighting each other with music, song, and conversation, while a few had betaken themselves to the garden."

"The merry groups assembled in the saloon were none the less happy at the return of Mr. Jennings, and their old minister with his austere and miserable countenance; his sadness cast no cloud upon the happy hearts gathered there, for they had all acquired that knowledge which made them independent and free. And, instead of his unhappy influence being felt by them, the influence of their cheerful and beautiful faces, and their charming and melodious voices, acted most powerfully upon him."

"Mr. Wilson, said Mr. Jennings, shall I conduct you through the apartments of your home and show you the garden and museum?"

"Allow me to accompany you, Mr. Wilson, said a lady whom I had not noticed particularly, but whom I now recognized, when she spoke, as Mrs. James, a very useful and generous member of my church, and whose table was ever spread with the luxuries of the season for all who visited her."

"I shall be most happy to place Mr. Wilson under your care, and, with his permission, I will remain here with these friends."

"It will indeed give me very great pleasure to have the company of so charming a lady: and it will delight me very much said Mrs. James."

"The pair at once proceeded to one of the most lovely gardens it is possible to conceive, each part of which was arranged in the most beautiful and artistic manner. It was adorned with statues, fountains, grottoes, covered walks, and enchanting arbours. In one of these they took a seat, while from an opening could be seen an extensive landscape, beautifully varied with hill and dale, river and mountain, wood and grove. The perfume, and lovely colours and form of the flowers which surrounded them, and the sweet harmony of the song birds, completed a most enchanting scene."

"Do you not feel happy here, Mr. Wilson?" said the lady (who was the first to speak).. "I should judge from your silence and your appearance that you are not."

"Indeed, Mrs. James, I am ashamed to admit it, but I am most completely miserable."

"May I ask the cause of your state of mind?" I might be of use in helping you to a better condition."

"The fact is, Mrs. James, most charming as is your society, enchanting as is the scene which surrounds us, magnificent as is

that home which has been presented to me, beautiful, interesting, and happy as appear the company gathered there, still I have neither eyes nor heart to appreciate any of them."

"I can neither give you eyes to see with, nor create a heart with which to love; God alone gives the internal spirit forces; and the development of the external organization to a condition of universal love is produced by the action of your own will. If your present condition of misery is the result of ignorance or misdirection, your only means of improvement is within yourself."

"Now, Mrs. James, to be candid, I must plainly confess that I do not understand you. You talk as atheistically as did Miss Moore on my first arrival in spirit-life; and, by the way, will you explain to me on what ground you justify their manner of association?"

"You mean the marriage relation in which they live?"

"I call it gross immorality."

"You, Mr. Wilson, have carried hither with you into spirit-life the knowledge, opinions, and impressions of earth; and, as the earth-life is to a great extent ordered by man in an undeveloped state, its knowledge, opinions, and impressions, are opposed to reason and nature."

"There you are again, Mrs. James, talking in opposition to God's word."

"Not quite so fast, Mr. Wilson; will you tell me what part of the Bible you consider to be the word of God?"

"Certainly, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it."

"Then, if I understand you rightly, the reason why you are so unhappy here is because this home does not correspond with the ideas of heaven which you have gathered from what you call God's word."

"Exactly, Mrs. James."

"Well, then does it not occur to your reflections that God made *this* world, about which you are so disposed to complain because it does not resemble what you have conceived to be a literal description of heaven in what you believe to be an infallible record. And, because the heaven you have found does not correspond with the description, you will still hold to the infallibility of the book containing the description, and disbelieve the infallible word of God written in nature."

"Mrs. James, you set me anxiously thinking—your arguments are becoming too strong for me; and when uttered by one so good, so pure, so lovely, I begin to feel myself almost overpowered. This is indeed a delightful place—how beautiful everything is; what delicious perfumes, what a magnificent landscape! May I ask you a question, Mrs. James?"

"Certainly."

"Mr. James died long before you, and, as the union of man and wife is the most sacred contract into which they can

enter, and consequently eternal, how is it I find you here alone?"

"That question I shall be most happy to answer; but, on second thought, I will ask Mr. James to answer it himself, and when an opportunity occurs I shall be most happy to introduce you to him."

"Now, Mrs. James, I knew you to be a very good and pious woman on earth; yet there is something about you, and these people among whom you live, which I cannot reconcile with my ideas of what the redeemed and the glorified should be in heaven."

"Excuse my merriment, Mr. Wilson, but it is of course quite natural that you should be taken by surprise at what you see here; it is the case with all when they first arrive, and while some are disagreeably surprised (like yourself), others are so delighted to find spirit-life so natural and so beautiful that (like myself now) they sing, rejoice, and are thankful and happy, from the first moment they arrive here."

"Really, Mrs. James, you are very happy, I had almost said charming; and I am beginning to think if I could only have your society, (if such a thing were proper), I should be happier than I am at present."

"What, to have me live with you alone in this splendid mansion? And you give up your search for God, and Christ, and your heaven with pearly gates and golden streets, and the four and twenty elders, &c., &c.? Mr. Wilson, think a bit, and see if you have not got into one of Bunyan's by-paths."

"If I have made such a mistake, Mrs. James, certainly it is a very agreeable error; but how about Mr. James, I have not seen him yet, and I want to know"

"You want to know, what? Come now, Mr. Wilson, is that quite proper?"

"Really, Mrs. James, you are so happy, and I was going to say so beautiful, that I could not help it."

"Well, now, you want to know whether I believe in the pre-existence of man."

"Yes, Mrs. James, the pre-existence of man; have you any proof whereby you can convince me of its truth?"

"Proof I have, Mr. Wilson, in abundance, but whether it will convince you is quite another thing. You are so hard to be convinced of the truth of anything which you cannot find in the Bible."

"If the proofs you have to give are sufficient to convince you, Mrs. James, I do not think they would oppose the leading doctrines of the Bible."

"What, Mr. Wilson! you remember you said every word of it."

"Well now, really, Mrs. James, you are too severe upon me. I think if I could only have the opportunity of weighing your proofs I might, like yourself, be convinced; but how about Mr. James?"

"Now, Mr. Wilson, you remember me in earth-life, a wrinkled

toothless old woman : you remember my death, like your own, was the result of natural decay."

"Oh yes, I remember it all ; that is why I did not at first recognize you."

"You see me now as I was on my first arrival here, with the bloom of youth upon my cheeks, the health, the happiness, and the energy of youth ; and yet when I looked for the husband of my young days he was not to be found. I was met by humble friends, who conducted me to a home where I found other friends, and was afterwards taken to another beautiful place—and there, to my surprise and horror, I saw him I had known in earth-life as my husband—he looked noble, and intelligent, and wise, and happy—and accompanied by a lady who was most beautiful to look upon, and three of the sweetest children I ever saw. You will imagine, Mr. Wilson, that I felt jealous—but no such thing. He did not slight me as I expected he would, but no sooner recognized me than he hurried to my side, embraced and kissed me, and introduced me to her he called his affinital wife. Then she kindly addressed me and looked as though she loved me, and introduced me to her children as Mrs. James in earth-life ; and oh ! how I kissed and loved them, and was invited to share their home ; but I preferred to remain with my friends. Now, Mr. Wilson, they and I are very dear friends, nothing more ; we often meet, and we love each other truly ?"

"Mrs. James, I am beginning to feel a deep interest in your story ; may I ask, were the three children of whom you spoke the offspring of your husband and this lady while he was your husband in earth-life ?"

"Mr. Wilson, you must understand I love Mr. James, although not sexually or conjugally—and am now in a condition of being in which I have acquired such a knowledge of the laws of God and the nature and destiny of man that it is impossible for me now to say that Mr. James did any wrong in earth-life. You know he was a man who lived a free and natural life, and died early, leaving me in easy circumstances ; and it was thought by you and all my religious friends that God had taken away my dissolute husband that I might be better able to serve him, and help the cause of Christ more liberally. I have every reason to believe that these three sweet children are, what is called in earth-life, the offspring of an adulterous connection."

"That is what I wanted to come at, Mrs. James, and you say you love him, and her, and these children—you call her beautiful, him noble, and the children sweet little things ! Mrs. James, you astonish me more and more, you speak as though adultery was no sin against God."

"Mr. Wilson, I must speak in accordance with my knowledge : you are aware that for the wickedness of the life my husband lived on earth he should have been (according to the doctrine you preached) suffering torments, in company with his partner in

sin, and their offspring."

"It would not be polite of me to say I do not believe this story, but really, Mrs. James, the theories you advance quite contradict the word of God."

"Not theories, Mr. Wilson, 'I speak that I do know and testify to that I have seen.'"

"Scripture again, Mrs. James; at one moment you cast the Bible behind your back, and the next quote it in support of your theories."

"Mr. Wilson. I have no object to gain, but to convince you of the truth; but while you persist in speaking of the Bible as the infallible word of God by which you must test all phenomena, all laws, and all developments in Nature, you will feel justified in accusing me of advancing theories contrary to the word of God, when I state positive facts."

"Mrs. James. I do not say that what you state is untrue, but I am unable to comprehend you."

"When you came into this bower with me, Mr. Wilson, you were in a very unhappy state of mind, and I offered to do my best to help you to a better condition; I hope I have succeeded to some extent."

"I thank you Mrs. James for your good intentions, you were always a noble and a generous soul; and while I am in your society I feel comparatively happy—so long as you do not talk contrary to the word of God."

"Now, Mr. Wilson, I have no objection to give my promise not again to talk contrary to the word of God, until you act contrary to it—do you agree?"

"Your challenge is accepted, Mrs. James, most cheerfully. When I violate the word of God, by thought, word, or action, then you have free liberty again to talk contrary to its sacred teachings."

"I am about to pay Mr. and Mrs. James a visit, should you like to accompany me, Mr. Wilson?"

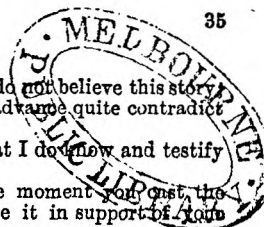
"I think I should, Mrs. James, not so much because I desire to see them, as because I dislike to be separated from you."

"It is very pleasant to have your society, Mr. Wilson, exceedingly agreeable to me, although you are so austere; it reminds me of those pleasant hours we spent together on earth; when you used to call upon the rich and generous widow and sip your glass of wine at my table. You remember those times, Mr. Wilson, don't you? I have not forgotten them, if you have; they were happy times to me, and I hope they were to you."

"The past is gone, Mrs. James, for ever; the frailties, follies, and errors of earth are all atoned for by the blood of Christ."

"Atoned for by the blood of Christ—are they, Mr. Wilson?"

"We must not enter into the discussion of that doctrine, Mrs. James, or you will violate your pledge, I know. When do you go to see Mr. James and his new partner?"



"Do you want to leave this place, Mr. Wilson ; I was thinking how pleasantly the time was passing, how much it reminded me of the happiest period of my earth-life."

"Indeed, Mrs. James, and may I ask what period of your earth-life was the happiest !"

"I have already hinted at it, Mr. Wilson, and will some time tell you more fully why it was so happy. If you have a desire to quit this place for a change we will enter the reception room, salute our friends, and then proceed on our way to the residence of Mr. James."

"If it is your desire to do so I am quite ready."

Here entered Mr. Jennings. "Well, Mr. Wilson, you are looking quite happy already, the influence of congenial society, beautiful nature, and a determination to cast away sorrow and disappointment, are wonderful restoratives."

"We are about," said Mrs. James, "to pay a short visit to our mutual friend, Mr. James, and we just say adieu, dear friends, for the present. Now, Mr. Wilson, as the residence of our friend Mr. James is only a short distance away, we will walk leisurely and notice the buildings and gardens as we pass along. This is a beautiful place, is it not ? That splendid mansion you see a little to the right is the home of Mr. Jennings, and that to the left of it is the abode of Mr. James, where we are now going. See, he is standing at the entrance gate, as though he was about to come out ; he recognises me."

"Welcome, Harriet, how happy you look."

"This is our old friend Mr. Wilson, lately arrived from earth."

"Who ? our old minister ? you may well be happy. Welcome, Mr. Wilson, to this world of peace, love, and freedom ; welcome to my residence, make this your home, we shall be delighted with such an old friend for a guest. This way, Mr. Wilson, we will pass through the garden and enter by the side door, and will take Mrs. James and the children by surprise. This garden is cared for by myself, with the assistance of an old friend of earth, whom you will recognise when you see him. This is what we call the side entrance ; to the left are the children's apartments ; and beyond them those occupied by my friend and his wife. To the right are the rooms devoted to the use of our visitors who may desire to stay with us ; and straight on in front are those for Mrs. James and myself ; and if you will step forward I will introduce you to the lady of the house, for I think she has perceived us coming. Here she is."

"My dear Harriet, how happy I am to see you, and who is this gentleman ?"

"A mutual friend, Maggie," said Mr. James, "lately from earth, Mr. Wilson, formerly minister of the church of which Mrs. J. was a member."

"Mr. Wilson, it gives me great pleasure to meet you here, but, if I mistake not, I have seen you before somewhere. Yes, I have

heard of you before now, Mr. Wilson," continued Maggie, "and most heartily welcome you to our abode."

"I thank you, Mrs. James, and think—"

"Come in this way, this is my own private room; be seated my dear Harriet, and make yourself at home, Mr. Wilson."

"Well, I was going to remark, Mrs. James, that I thought you were not entirely unknown to me; I think I have seen you before. If I am not mistaken, there was a certain popular actress who much resembled you."

"I think, Mr. Wilson, if I rightly recollect, on a particular occasion, that same popular actress observed a certain gentleman, with a very demure countenance, sitting alone in a private box of the theatre in which she was taking a benefit. And being rather struck with his clerical appearance (although partially disguised) she, that is myself, enquired of a friend of mine who he could be, and remarked how kind it was of him to patronize me. My friend told me that the gentleman in the box referred to was not present out of generosity to me. This excited my curiosity, and I saw in my friend's manner what led me to suppose the stranger's visit had something to do with him, and that the object of it was an unfriendly one, and this I afterwards discovered to be the case. I will not proceed further, if my story is wearisome or disagreeable."

"Continue, by all means," said Harriet, "I think Mr. Wilson does not object, and I am deeply interested."

"With Mr. Wilson's permission I will, but not without."

"Proceed, then, if you please, my good lady."

"Well, I finished my part in a very discreditable manner, because my attention was so much directed to that private box in which sat this disguised dissenting minister; and feeling myself specially observed by him, my curiosity increased, and I hurried to my friend in the wings, who was waiting for the finish of the act before he would tell me who this gentleman was and what he wanted. As soon as an opportunity occurred for quiet talk, a conversation, such as I will repeat to you, Mr. Wilson, ensued, my friend commencing."

"Maggie, I want you to hear something about that gentleman in the side box. I have never disguised the fact that I am a married man. My intimacy with you has created suspicion in the neighbourhood where I live. Now, Maggie, you have no doubt about the sincerity of my love, and I have no doubt about you. I want to prepare you for what is very likely to occur, for in your condition I should not like you to be unnecessarily excited. That person, you have observed, is here for the purpose of watching and discovering our relationship."

"My dear Charles, if I say I wish they would find it out, you will not think it is because I do not love you? I have often thought it will be better, I am quite sure it would be happier, if you knew the worst. See what a state of anxiety you are in to-

night, from what you imagine to be the object of that man's visit here."

"Imagine, Maggie, if you knew all that I got acquainted with before I left home a few days ago, you would call it something more than imagination. Here is a man, who calls himself a minister of Christ, has come up to London as a spy upon my actions; the pious humbug is nothing more than a common detective—a contemptible hypocrite."

"Charles, this is why I wish things had come to the worst; it could but be a matter of divorce. Will you be calm and listen to reason, my love? May I ask you a question, Charles: Do you love your legal wife as well as you love your Maggie?"

"Once I thought I did, but now I know I do not, and never can."

"Then my proposition will be useless."

"What is it!"

"I was about to propose one of two alternatives, for I cannot bear to see you suffer, as you do now, from apprehension of the future, and I fear your doing something desperate; could you not arrange a separation without the exposure of the divorce court?"

"Maggie; a private separation could not be arranged, as, in a weak mood, I transferred all my property to her, and I am the offending party. Then, a divorce court disclosure would break my poor mother's heart; but you had another proposal."

"I fear now, from the answer you gave to my question, that you will not entertain it; but had we not better leave here, as the theatre will soon be closed, and I will tell you what it is at my lodgings."

"Maggie, I know our movements will be watched to-night; you stay here, and I will send Tom, if he is not too drunk, for a cab for you. I shall drive myself to my hotel; send the call boy to the stage door in ten minutes, and tell him to start Tom for my hotel on foot. You drive to your lodgings, and I will be there at ten to-morrow morning; good night, be careful no harm befalls you."

"Gone; oh, how I deeply felt the love which bound us together had not it's origin on earth, and that its destiny was another state of existence. What is life without love? What is death, if love continue after it?"

"The next morning, at ten o'clock, he was at my lodgings—I do not weary you Mr. Wilson."

"Oh no, go on, Mrs. James, my interest increases."

"My dear Charles," I said, "how ill you look this morning, I hope nothing unpleasant happened last night."

"Nothing serious, I could not sleep, and that contemptible detective has taken up his quarters at the hotel at the opposite side of the street, near to the one in which I am staying."

"Never mind him, my dear, you want to know what is my other proposal; it is this—that our intimacy cease."

"Maggie ; and in your condition ! am I a base libertine ? have I no love for you, or do you ask me to destroy myself ? No, Maggie, you are bound to me by the ties of nature ; I cannot forsake you."

"Charles, I feel it must be, for your sake, for I cannot help fearing some dreadful thing will happen. Our child, when it comes into this world of love and sorrow, may, like the other two, after staying with us a few short months, take flight to a more genial sphere."

"Am I capable of such cruelty, do you think ? Could I leave the only being I love in this world, at a time when she most needs my protection and help ? Maggie, it is impossible, I cannot do it, and I never will."

"Charles, for our safety, and for your peace, my advice is that you return home to-day, and make yourself as happy as you can ; but visit me no more until I write and ask you to do so."

"Maggie, you seem to desire me to leave you ; I am unable to apprehend your motive ; our love is the same as ever, and yet you say, 'leave me, forget me, love me no more, for your own safety and peace of mind.' Nothing but love could prompt such self-sacrifice. You ask me to cease to love you, Maggie—can I put out the light of the sun ? Can I empty the ocean of its water ? Can I command the power of the tempest ? Then I cannot forsake you."

"I know, my dear Charles, you cannot cease to love me, therefore I did not ask you ; I only ask you to return to your home, and remain with her whom the church, the State, and civilized society call your wife, and seek no more this forbidden happiness."

"Is not this asking me to cease to love you ? Can I love and not seek the object of my affections ? Can I long to fold her in my arms and yet live as though no such ardour burned within me ? To attempt this would be futile, for the fire in my bosom, when turned inward on itself, would burn up the vitality of this frail body, and your Charles would be no more."

"Love, my husband, is a heaven-born principle, and it lives independent of time, space, or locality. You cannot cease to love your wife, any more than she can cease to love her husband ; but this holy principle within the heart can live and beat responsive to its other self, though space, and time, and even death divide these mortal bodies of ours."

"Maggie, that we may love each other, and yet be absent, I do not deny, but I fear your fancy exceeds the bounds of reason and common sense. I do not object to return home, and for your sake I will try to live a quiet and sober life. But you have no idea what I shall have to encounter when I return ; for, you may depend, that viper who has tracked my footsteps here will carry, as in conscience bound, all the information he has been enabled to gather ; and they will set at Tom to worm all they can out of him when he is tipsy, for I know they could get nothing from him

when sober. And then, I fear, in the midst of it all, I shall be unable to keep my promise to you to let the drink alone. Maggie, if I could always live with you I should be a sober man."

"Charles, whatever may happen, keep away from the drink; do not taste a drop of it; you know what you already suffer from it, and you must not forget your pledge to me—never to touch the horrible stuff again."

"I feel, Maggie, that my powers of body and mind are sadly impaired; I am but the shadow of the man I was five years ago, and had I taken your advice earlier this need not have been. But it is the quiet glass at home with that godly minister, and my pious wife, which always breaks down my resolution—"

"Well, now, Miss Vincent, or Mrs. James, or whatever you call yourself, I think you have proceeded quite far enough; I now know who you are—I know, also, who you mean when you speak in such an insinuating manner about that *godly minister*; and I denounce you all, for you are all alike, and seek to justify immoral living, and my righteous soul can bear it no longer. Let us depart, Harriet, I mean Mrs. Harriet James, this is no place for me; take my arm and let us return. Are you not ready, Harriet; Where am I; where is God; where is Christ; and can this be Heaven?"

"I am quite ready, Mr. Wilson, if you desire me to quit this house with you."

"If you have no objection, Harriet, and we will depart at once."

"Before you so abruptly leave my home, Mr. Wilson, may the master of the house ask you one question? Is the lady you so affectionately invite to accompany you your affianced wife? I think I can call to mind some rumours that were once afloat, reflecting on the character of a certain rich widow and a certain dissenting minister."

"Come, Harriet, let us depart; my dear friends, the blood of Jesus Christ has atoned for all sin."

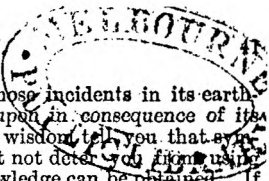
[*Exit Wilson and Harriet.*]

CHAPTER III.

"If you have no objection, Maggie, we will walk in the garden awhile, now Mr. Wilson and our friend have gone"

"Yes, dear, I think the children are there with Tom; how very unhappy poor Mr. Wilson must feel. I would not have said what I did if I had yielded to my feelings of sympathy for him."

"No, Maggie, I know your loving heart would prefer to transform men into angels by some miraculous means, rather than be made the instrument for conducting them through that painful although necessary process of reproducing the past. You dislike



presenting to the undeveloped mind those incidents in its earth-life which are unpleasant to reflect upon in consequence of its ignorance. But your reason and your wisdom tell you that sympathy with Mr. Wilson's feelings must not deter you from using the only means whereby spiritual knowledge can be obtained. If you do your duty to our mutual friend, you will not spare him by representing the incidents of his life, in a less hideous form than his own imagination gives them. He thinks them so bad that nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ can atone for them; but he also imagines that they are all thus atoned for, and in consequence of his ignorance he is in that unhappy condition of mind which can only be removed by a reproduction of the past. When this is done, and he is able to see bygone events in the light of reason, assisted by a better knowledge of spirit nature, truth will begin to dawn upon his mind. It rests with you, Maggie, to discharge this trying duty, but, when it is done, you will be rewarded by his love."

"I do not shrink from my duty, Charles, but I feel for the poor man in his sufferings—here are our dear children; what is it, Edith?"

"Oh, mamma, I have seen such a funny man with Aunt Harriet, and he did look so cross—"

"My child, you must not say he was cross, call him unhappy, my dear; he has only just arrived from earth-life, and does not yet know what a happy world this is."

"Is not earth a happy world, mamma dear?"

"Yes, my child, the world is very beautiful; God has made it so, but mankind make themselves unhappy because they do not understand the goodness of God. Where are your brother and sister?"

"They have gone with Tom and Mary to the wood."

"And has not my Edith gone with them?"

"I did go a little way, but I came back, because I wanted to speak to you, mother dear."

"And what could my darling child want to say to her mother which could cause her to forego the pleasure of an excursion to Tom's bower in the wood?"

"Well, mother, did you not say that gentleman with Aunt Harriet was unhappy?"

"Yes, my child, why do you ask?"

"Because he said something I could not understand. Auntie kissed me and Charley and Carry, and spoke to Tom and Mary about the wood and the bower, but the gentleman stood straight up and only just said a word to Mary, and then he turned to Aunt Harriet and spoke of Tom as a drunken coachman who had helped Mr. James in his sinful practices, and broke his neck by a fall from the carriage seat while drunk. And then he said we were the children of adultery; and then he took Auntie by the arm and walked quickly away."

"So this has brought my darling Edith back, has it?"

"Yes, mamma; I want to know what it is to be drunken, and how Tom broke his neck, and if there is anything bad in being the children of adultery, and why that gentleman is so different to my dear papa or Tom?"

"I must leave you with your father, my child, he will answer all your questions; I must return to the house."

"Come then, papa dear, let us sit in this arbour while you tell me what it means."

"Sit on my knee, my dear child, and I will explain what the gentleman meant: Now, my dear child, you love Tom, do you not?"

"Yes, papa; but I think that gentleman does not; and I think he does not love dear Charles nor Carry."

"Well, then, if he does not love he cannot be happy. Now, you understand that all people live on earth before they come here."

"You have often told me so papa, but I want to know how they live there, and why they are always so unhappy when they first come away from earth. Do they like earth better than our beautiful spirit-land, and feel unhappy because they have left it?"

"Not exactly that, my child, for all are not unhappy when they first arrive here. It is now twelve years since your mamma came here, and you were only three years old, and cannot remember how happy she was, even when she first arrived; neither do you remember your father's arrival here nor your own."

"But, papa, I remember Aunt Harriet, and she was very unhappy for a long time, and I was so sorry for her, I loved her so much; and Tom, he was unhappy, and Mary was a little."

"Yes, these were all, more or less, sad and mournful, but they have all become happy, have they not?"

"Oh yes, papa, I never see any of them look sorrowful now."

"And so it will be with Mr. Wilson."

"Is that his name, dear papa? and is he the same Mr. Wilson I have heard you, mamma, and Aunt Harriet talk about so often?"

"Yes, my child, the same."

"And will he preach to us, papa?"

"In one sense he will, my child, when he thinks we need it."

"And shall we have a chapel here, and a Bible, like those I have heard you and Aunt Harriet talk about?"

"I think not, Edith, dear."

"I am glad to hear that, papa, for I do not think I should like to have to go to chapel and hear Mr. Wilson preach. I love to go to our Theoresonium, where mamma speaks so beautifully, and Mr. Jennings and yourself look so grand, and Tom and Mary talk so amusingly, and all the ladies and gentlemen look so beautiful and sing so sweetly. I do love to go there, papa, but I am sure I should not like to see Mr. Wilson preaching."

"Is this all my Edith wants to know now?"

"No, dear papa, I want to know what Mr. Wilson meant when he called my Tom a drunken coachman, and if it is something bad to be the children of adultery."

"The first wish you have expressed, my darling, I can gratify, but the second you are scarcely old enough to understand yet, though, when you are a few years older, you shall know all about it. Be content with this at present, my dear, that what Mr. Wilson said you, and your brother and sister were, is nothing bad."

"I am so glad to hear you say so, papa, for I thought, from the way in which he said it, it must be very bad."

"Well, now about Tom; he used to manage your father's horses, and drive his carriage where he wanted to go. He was very kind to both your father and your mother; but, like many in earth-life, he was not happy, because he had not learnt what you have learnt—how good God is, and how much he loves all mankind."

"Could you not teach him, dear papa, as you teach me?"

"My dear child, your father knew no better than Tom then. Tom was very unhappy in consequence of this ignorance."

"And were you unhappy, also, dear papa?"

"Very, my child, and all in earth-life must be more or less unhappy who are ignorant of the nature of God. But we are talking about Tom now. Well, being melancholy and down-hearted, he did what the majority of mankind do in earth-life—he took something to make him feel happier; but in the end it made him more miserable, because it was a sensation of pleasure produced by unnatural means."

"And was it because he was very unhappy in earth-life that Mr. Wilson called him a drunken coachman?"

"No, my child, but because of the condition he was often found in, which resulted from the use of that drink he took to make him feel happier."

"Then was it a bad condition? I should have thought if that drink made Tom feel happier it must be a good condition."

"I have already said, my child, that it was an unnatural remedy for a condition of mind which all must suffer who are ignorant of the nature of God and their own bodies. The only remedy for ignorance is knowledge; and when men feel sad and depressed, instead of seeking to know the cause and cure of this feeling, they take to stimulation, and that is the first stage of drunkenness."

"Then stimulation is bad, papa, I am sure, if men take it instead of knowledge, which I know is good, for you have often told me so. But Mr. Wilson did not call what Tom suffered from stimulation."

"No, my child, he called it drunkenness, and he called him a drunkard. The elated feeling which is caused by the use of intoxicating drinks is only the first sensation the drinker discovers, and to keep up this elation he continues to drink until the powers of the body are exhausted, and the sense of pleasure ceases to be

felt, and then follows oblivion and helplessness. Tom was often in this condition; and that is what Mr. Wilson meant when he called him the drunken coachman."

"But, papa, was not Tom very much to be pitied? and did not Mr. Wilson take any stimulation?"

"Yes, my child, Tom should have been loved and taught better; and Mr. Wilson did take a little of that kind of drink which causes stimulation. It was when in this helpless condition which I have described to you, Edith, as Tom was driving your Aunt Harriet's carriage from Mr. Wilson's house, that he fell from his seat and hurt himself so bad that he died."

"Poor Tom, and did he get the drink at Mr. Wilson's? Then it was not kind of him to call my Tom a drunken coachman."

"Here they are, Edith, all returning from the wood. Well, Charley, have you seen Tom's bower?"

"Yes, papa, and I have seen such a beautiful animal: what was it called Carry?"

"I think Tom called it an antelope."

"It came and licked Tom's hand and mine, and then it ran away so swiftly: and I saw such beautiful birds."

"Now, you children, go in home with Mary, I want to talk with Tom a little while."

"So you have been amusing those children as usual, have you, Tom?"

"Well, master, if you say I have been enjoying myself in the children's society you would be nearer the mark, for that boy's company is really interesting, he grows so bright and clever."

"You lost one of your companions on the way, did you not?"

"Dear Miss Edith has told you who we met on the way, I suppose; poor little thing, she did not understand what he meant, but she could see I did, and she could hear he spoke very unkindly. I couldn't explain to her, and you know she has now got to the age when she wants to understand what she hears."

"So you sent her to her father that he might explain to her what you did not like to do; and so, Tom, I have explained all she is able to understand, and promised her the rest when she is a little older."

"Well, I wondered, master, if she would tell you all he said."

"Oh yes, Tom, she wanted to know if it was anything bad to be the children of adultery."

"Well, well, that was what he called those dear, sweet, beautiful children!"

"But, Tom, he is very unhappy, he had just paid us a visit before he saw you on the road."

"Well, he called me by my right name, for I was a coachman, and you know I was a drunkard, but it was very cruel of him to say what he did to those innocent children."

"But you know, Tom, they are the children of a father who was not the legal husband of their mother at the time of their

birth, but was bound in the sacred ties of wedlock to another woman."

"Why, master, what are you talking about? Isn't that all explained now we've come on this side, hav'nt you and Mrs. James as was on earth come to understand how it all was, and doesn't she love those dear children more than if they was her own? And if Mrs. James as is was her own sister she could'nt love her more. I say, master, is the old man coming here to do his preaching; and is he going to take Mrs. James as was to wife, as he should have done on earth if all's true as I've heard."

"Well, Tom, you have asked a number of questions in one sentence, and if you desire an answer to each one we had better take a seat here. Now, Tom, when we both lived on earth together I was your master and you my servant, and you were all I could desire a servant to be. Your faults, like your master's, were of a kind which exposed you to the condemnation of persons such as Mr. Wilson and his adherents. But since we have passed into this new condition of being, the distinction of master and servant no longer divides us; you are equally devoted to the interest and happiness of him you call master as when you were his servant on earth, but what you did there for wages you do here for love. So far as I am concerned, Tom, you are not my servant, and I am not your master."

"Well, master, I should rather call you so, if you have no objection, but I don't want to leave you, and I hope you are not thinking of leaving me because the Reverend Mr. Wilson has come to these parts."

"I have no objection to you calling me master if it is more pleasant to you, Tom, but I have a very strong objection to your feeling yourself my servant: you do not apprehend the object of my remarks. I have no antipathy to poor unhappy Mr. Wilson, and such a thought as removing from here, and leaving you behind me, never entered my mind. So long as it is your desire to remain in my house, Tom, we share it on equal footing. So far as Mr. Wilson is concerned we all have a duty to discharge to him, because he is a brother in a condition of ignorance of the true nature of God, his own destiny, and the laws of spirit existence. Now, Tom, you have your own part to perform, and I hope you will do it lovingly."

"Well, master, I will try, but he has no love for me more than he has for my dear master's children; but he did speak kind to my Mary, and that is something, but you know she used to go to his preaching and was pious like."

"It is just as possible for Mr. Wilson to become a loving and a happy man as it was for Mrs. James, of earth-life, to become a happy woman. You remember what she suffered when she first arrived in spirit-land; you remember how, step by step, she climbed the mountain of knowledge, and how, when she gained the summit, she poured down a flood of gratitude upon all who

had helped and encouraged her in its steep and rugged ascent. And you do not forget your own experience here, my true and faithful Tom."

"Oh, master, my heart is so full when I remember all I suffered and all your goodness in taking poor drunken Tom by the hand—my heart is too full for words; and when I thought you were going to leave me I felt as if I must know the worst at once."

"Well now, Tom, you wanted to know what I thought about Mr. Wilson's future course. It is not likely he will seek to establish a church here. Mr. Wilson has to ascend the mountain of knowledge, the same rugged path all the rest of us have travelled, that is, by the reproduction of his past life; that he may see in the light of spirit knowledge what, if reflected upon now, makes him unhappy, and causes him to appeal to an atoning Saviour who cannot save him. He must be brought to apprehend his own nature and destiny, and be raised to a condition of harmony with God's creation; and when he has acquired a knowledge of God as He is, Mr. Wilson will no longer be dissatisfied with the Heaven He has provided for him. Now, Tom, we are about to perform a drama-rational in the Theoresonium, in which you will be required to take a part; and I want you to go to my wife for instructions, you will find her in the house—I am going out."

Mr. James then went forth alone, and aspirations, such as the following words convey, rose from his spirit as he walked, till he found himself at the garden gate of the residence of Mrs. Harriet James, where Mr. Wilson was abiding for the time:—

"Once more alone. I feel, oh God, much as I love those blessed gifts of thine, my wife, my children, my dear and loving mother and father; much as I value the love of friends, and am able to return that love, and deeply as I delight in that life and those labours of love which bring light and peace to such as suffer from darkness and ignorance of Thee—much, oh God, as these loves delight my spirit, there is no love, no joy, no bliss, compared with that of loving Thee. Though I do not see Thee, yet all nature tells me my loving Father lives, speaking to me the language of love. Whose voice do I hear when wife, children, and friends, utter their tender loving accents, but the voice of my Father speaking lovingly to his child! And beauteous nature in her harmonious songs awakens within me that immortal sense of unity and identity of being which Thou gavest me before my material existence commenced. My God, I thank Thee for this material body; I thank Thee for that individuality which in earth-life I realised; I thank Thee for that other individuality which I was enabled to live in the female form; and I thank Thee for that law of affinital love which, in uniting these two individualities, again restored to me that identity which I enjoyed before my material advent. I thank Thee, thou Parent of all, and giver of all good, for her who is. my other self, for this identity in unity and harmony. I

thank Thee for all the forms and effects of love—my children, my parents, my friends, all nature, and Thyself in all.”

We will now follow Mrs. Harriet James and her reverend companion after they parted with the children and Tom.

“Mrs. James, will you tell me if you call this heaven? It appears to me to be a community of infidels, adulterers, drunkards, and the like; is it heaven, or is it hell; or is it the Roman Catholics’ purgatory? If it is heaven, I cannot reconcile it with God’s word, nor can I if it be hell—but it may be purgatory, for that is not in the Bible.”

“Mr. Wilson, I will call your attention to a passage in your so-called *infallible Word of God*; it is this—the kingdom of heaven is within you. If the whole book is infallible these words are infallible.”

“If heaven is a place, Mrs. James, how can it be within you in the sense in which you mean? The kingdom of heaven is undoubtedly within all who by faith have laid hold on eternal life. All who are in Christ Jesus, by the election of grace, have it.”

“Then, Mr. Wilson, all who have the kingdom of heaven within them should love God, should love all mankind, and be happy themselves.”

“Yes, and if their feet are set firmly on the rock Christ Jesus, they are all as you say they should be.

“Mr. Wilson, I have learnt, since it has been my happiness to dwell in spirit-land, that it is far better to reason about facts than to cavil about doctrines. You know that when in earth-life I fully believed all these Bible doctrines; yet they neither made me happy, nor did the belief of them preserve me from cruelty, guilt, or degradation. You know full well the crimes of which I accused myself upon my death-bed, and how helpless and miserable my future appeared to me, and how I dreaded to have to appear before my Judge with all my guilt upon my head. When I confessed to you my sins and misery you spoke then as you do now. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, you said, and you positively affirmed that statement to be the message of God through his minister to his elect children. You reasoned me into the conviction that by my conversion, by my faith in the infallibility of God’s word, and my resting upon the atoning sacrifice of Christ for salvation, and by my love of the brethren, I had given evidence that I was one of God’s elect! We have now reached the side entrance to your garden; if you have no objection, Mr. Wilson, we will enter and take seats in the arbour where we were before going to visit Mrs. Maggie James.”

“Just as you please, Mrs. James.”

“Here we shall be free from interruption, and I want you to listen to me awhile. Now, Mr. Wilson, you, in all love, administered to me such consolation as you thought to be in accordance with the word of God; and I have no doubt you expected that

when my spirit quitted my guilty body I should be received in triumph by a company of the redeemed. You believed that I should be borne to the presence of God, and there I should meet Christ, and he, pointing to his wounds, would plead my justification and eternal salvation, which he himself had purchased for me. This is what you expected and firmly believed. Now, what were the facts concerning my reception and condition when I first beheld the light in spirit-life? I will tell you, Mr. Wilson:—The first persons I recognized, when consciousness was restored to me, were my old servants of earth—Mary and her husband, Tom, the drunken coachman, who broke his neck through falling off my carriage, while driving me home from your house when he was drunk with the beer he had given to him there. These were the angels who came to meet me, and I assure you it was more consolation to my terror-stricken spirit to see the love and gentleness which their words and actions expressed to me than all the high-flown doctrines you had preached to me during my life, or on the occasion of my death. They lovingly told me not to be in terror of God, for he loved me; they told me I need not be afraid of meeting my husband that had been, for he loved me too, and Miss Vincent, for she loved me too, and the children, for they also loved me. Oh! Mr. Wilson, this was consolation to my guilty, wounded conscience. These were facts, not theories, nor doctrines; and these went straight to my sorrowing heart—my sins against God were those I had committed against myself, against society, against those dear ones who had sent me word they loved me. You may imagine to some extent what were my feelings when, led by my faithful conductors to the home of those who, of all others on the world, I had most dreaded to meet, I found them receive me with open arms. To meet him again towards whom my jealous rage had led me on to the committal of such dreadful crimes—I say to meet him again whose language and actions towards me spoke nothing but gentleness, forgiveness, and love, was more overpowering than all the rest. When pressed with grief and sorrow whose hand was most lovingly placed upon my brow, who spoke sweet words of consolation, hope, and future peace, but her whose name I had despised, whose reputation I had maligned, whose heart I had done all I could to break. If their children had been taught to hate and scorn me I could not have complained; but, instead of that, they spoke to me sweetly, as Mrs. James of earth-life, and had been taught to love me. Those dear children knew nothing of my crime, shame, and degradation; they only understood that I was unhappy, and were ever engaged in acts of love towards me. It is true, Mr. Wilson, that I was unable to understand it all, just as you are unable to understand much that you see; but there was this difference between me and you—when I arrived here my reason for not apprehending what I experienced was that everything appeared so much better than I expected, while with you all is disappointment."

"Now, Mrs. James, I have listened to you while you have said a great deal, and must confess that I cannot see these things exactly as you see them; I still think that this is only a resting place on the way to the new Jerusalem—a sort of intermediate place between heaven and hell. All the wicked, who are not of the elect, must go away into outer darkness, and the righteous into life eternal, on the great day of judgment."

"Then you think, Mr. Wilson, this is not our final condition, but, instead of progressing and developing, we shall be suddenly changed on a day appointed, and all the redeemed be conducted to a place of eternal happiness, and all the lost to eternal misery; and you think, moreover, that man's first condition of existence is his earth-life."

"Exactly, Mrs. James, those are my opinions, and I am borne out in them by the word of God; but I must say that I am unable to understand your feelings towards your husband and Miss Vincent, and their illegitimate children, unless it be the result of their forgiveness of you. But what is the value of man's forgiveness? Against God, and him only, have you sinned; and, unless you are justified by faith in the atonement, you must be lost as eternally as they are."

"You told me I was one of the elect, did you not, Mr. Wilson."

"Yes, I now tell you that the just shall live by faith; and if you forsake the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, and hew out for yourself a cistern which will hold no water, you must be brought back through suffering and sorrow. That great day will not come until all the redeemed children of God are gathered into one fold under one shepherd."

"Shall we now go inside the house, Mr. Wilson, for it seems as though I shall not be able at present to convince you of the superiority of reason over revelation, or facts over doctrines."

"Who is that entering the garden by the side gate, Mrs. James, it looks like Mr. James?"

"So it is: well, Mr. James, has anything unusual occurred that we have the pleasure of your company so soon again?"

"Nothing; I have business with Mr. Jennings and a few other of our dramatic friends."

"Are we to have another drama-rational in the Theoresonium?"

"I think the arrangements are nearly complete for the representation, Harriet; do you think you will be able to induce Mr. Wilson to attend?"

"Oh I have no doubt he will do so, Mr. James."

"What is it, Mrs. James, of which you are speaking?"

"If it is like what I have seen before it is exceedingly interesting; it is a representation of real life on earth, reproducing leading events and their connection with life as it is in spirit-land. It illustrates nature as it is, and exhibits the influence of spirits upon the actions of men; it is instructive to those who have never known earth-life, and affords to those who are as yet

unacquainted with the laws of spirit-nature an excellent opportunity for the study of those which connect the spirit-world with the destinies of humanity. You do not object to go with me, Mr. Wilson, do you?"

"Certainly not, Mrs. James, I shall be most happy."

"We had better follow Mr. James into the house: Mr. Wilson, I do declare you have not yet explored the treasures and beauties of your own home; shall we turn into the library?"

"Wherever you please, Mrs. James."

"Come, then, this is the door; you will have no intruders here. On this side is arranged, as you may see, all the different classes of literature relating to man's material existence, and I think there is no class of material or earth-life literature wanting; if there should be, point it out, and if you desire it you shall have it. On this side is classified all the different orders of literature relating to man in his spirit-state, and of this I can speak more positively as to its completeness, for its arrangement has been in the hands of one in whom I have the greatest confidence. Here I am sure you will be often found, for you know how to appreciate the pleasures of literature: this door leads into the picture gallery, and that into the museum."

"Really, Mrs. James, how complete everything is! And this library, its stores are inexhaustible; I feel as if I could spend an eternity here."

"The library, Mr. Wilson, contains, theories, doctrines, and opinions. Now, if we proceed to the Gallery of Art, we shall see thought, fancy, and nature, illustrated."

"This is a magnificent exhibition, Mrs. James."

"You admire it, Mr. Wilson. If we take a seat here we can examine all that comes within the range of our vision."

"Why, that is Paradise, and Adam and Eve in a state of innocence."

"Yes; and if your eye can take in the complete set, you will observe they follow each other in their subjects, and illustrate one theory of the creation and the development of man."

"Let me see. There is number one—this I take to be man in a state of perfection and innocence."

"Yes, perfection in one sense. His physical body is developed to perfect manhood, and he is mated."

"But what is number two?"

"That is a Curiosity."

"Oh yes, curiosity. I have always said that was the first step to sin. And what do you call number three?"

"Number three is Desire; and number four is what the artist calls the Fall."

"That the Fall?—why?"

"That illustrates the artist's ideas of the true interpretation of the Bible allegory of the fall of man. Number five is After the Fall; six, the Effects; and so on, as far as the eye can reach,

the same subject is illustrated ; and as the world becomes populated, the development (the degradation some call it) is shadowed forth towards higher and higher conditions of civilization."

"But, Mrs. James, although these pictures may be truthful, do you not consider them indecent?"

"To the pure in thought all things are pure, Mr. Wilson ; nothing natural can be rightly called indecent."

"But look at number two, and three, and four, and tell me if you think they are fit for children to behold?"

"Well, Mr. Wilson, if you do not admire those pictures, let us turn to the other side. Here you will see another theory illustrated. Number one in this class is the representative of a creature, male and female, which, when it attained a certain condition of organic development, became capable of spiritual illumination. Number two represents their changed condition. Here they are seen to bear the image of man—a very low type, it is true, but most unmistakeably man. In the male is dignity, manhood ; in the female is love, true womanhood. In number three is seen a very faint outline of an additional body surrounding the material one ; that is the mind or permanent body—what in spirit-life becomes the spirit-body. The mind, you observe, does not exist in number two, but becomes developed more and more as an effect of those spirit-forces which God gives, and which caused the change you see. When you look from number one to two, there you mark the animal—here, you perceive, the like animal illuminated ; and in number three you have illustrated the effects produced by the action of spirit upon matter, and its creation of the human mind. For books explanatory of the various theories of creation, of development of natural law and human perfection, I must refer you to your library, where they are classified in the same order as the pictures. You will find every theory complete, and in the picture gallery fully illustrated as you see this ; for it is followed on and on, as man rises to higher conditions. Unless you desire it otherwise, Mr. Wilson, we will let this glance at the contents of this department suffice for the present, and proceed to the museum."

"The theory of creation taught by this second class of paintings somewhat resembles that in the 'Vestiges of Creation,' and is equally opposed to God's word, Mrs. James."

"Yet not opposed to nature and reason, Mr. Wilson."

"Well, I must read the books containing the theories which these paintings are intended to illustrate, and examine them more closely on some future occasion. We will adjourn to the Museum."

"In that department, Mr. Wilson, are deposited the facts of nature ; in the library are to be found the theories ; in the picture gallery, theories illustrated ; but here we are come to deal with facts, both those relating to material and spirit nature. Here are collections from all classes of inanimate substances : first, those of

earth, and next the like substances in a more refined state, as they are found in the spirit-world. Then comes animated nature, in every form of its existence; and, like as with the animal substances, there is its companion spirit-collection; and from all kinds of insects, reptiles, birds, and other creatures, we follow on until we reach the order of animal which, in structure, approaches nearest to man. When you have opportunity to examine closely this class, you will discover what, at a superficial glance, you cannot see—that each specimen is a degree nearer to the structure of man, until you arrive at this one, which so closely resembles man that, if not seen by the side of this which was spiritually illuminated, you would no doubt call it man. The difference between the two is very apparent; and now, from this specimen, we have continued on through this extensive department specimens of every order, form, and condition of human life, preserved and grouped for the purpose of teaching the history, nature, and destiny of humanity.”

“Shall we take a seat here, Mrs. James? This is not only a beautiful, but a very wonderful collection. I feel, indeed, overpowered; and am I to consider all this mine? I really do not understand where I am.”

“I will tell you where you are, Mr. Wilson. This is the school of facts, in the sphere of knowledge.”

“The school of facts in the sphere of knowledge! And must I consider myself a learner here? Really, Mrs. James, I think I should not object to become a scholar again in such a school as this, and with such a schoolfellow as you.”

“The lessons to be obtained here, Mr. Wilson, are better and more quickly learnt in company with one a little in advance of ourselves in knowledge.”

“Yes, Mrs. James; but it is not that alone. I feel a pleasure in being in your society; there is a charm about you which makes me feel a happiness here which I should not feel in your absence.”

“There is a charm in this house for me, Mr. Wilson. These works of art and collections of nature are an inexhaustible store for me.”

“For you, Mrs. James! Could I prevail upon you to make your home here, then?”

“Mr. Wilson, could I prevail upon you to feel at home here?”

“Really, Mrs. James, I feel so happy that it does not seem like home. I do, indeed, feel very happy.”

“Yes, Mr. Wilson, this is a happy place, and a happy condition to be in.”

“Mrs. James, when I look upon your lovely countenance, it seems illuminated with the light of heaven.”

“It becomes bright and happy with love, and love is heaven.”

“Love, Mrs. James, did you speak of love?”

“Yes, Mr. Wilson, and I feel its happy influence making me more pure, more holy. None can be happy without love; and



those who love cannot be otherwise than happy.

"Is it love, then, which is making me feel more happy? If it is, Mrs. James, teach me how to love more. What is love; where is love; and how shall I learn to love?"

"Love, my dear Mr. Wilson, is that holy principle which pervades the universe, and gives light, life, warmth, beauty, and harmony to all nature. Love is God. All may love. The smallest insect in this museum, when animated with life, loved, and, in its own little way, was happy. Man loves, but he is unhappy; because, being a son of God, and endowed with reason and a spirit-nature, the wants of that nature are not satisfied with the natural life he lives. His power to love is bestowed solely upon such objects as perish; while the power itself is immortal. Man loves his material self; he loves his material surroundings; he loves to think that those same material surroundings will be perpetuated in his future existence, and finds it hard to learn that all these things must fade and die; and that the elements of his own creation are always within him. That which he does not see in the immortal love within him, has an affinity for the same principle existing in all Nature; and this diversity which stirs internally makes man unhappy while in a material or undeveloped condition. Love is universal; and when man's external nature is brought into harmonious relation with it, his own internal love responds to Nature's love, and he is happy."

"Oh, Mrs. James, could I but learn this lesson; this would be heaven to me."

"It is a lesson all must learn, sooner or later, my dear Mr. Wilson; for all who have breathed the breath of life must eventually enjoy the heaven of love."

"I fear I shall be a very dull scholar in this sphere of knowledge, if the first lessons are to be taken in the school of love."

"At first you will, no doubt, Mr. Wilson; your love in earth-life has been directed in a manner which has developed your noble intellect, but has dammed up the channel through which the natural feelings of your loving heart should have flowed. You loved your Bible; you loved theological studies; you loved your church and people, and the glorious work in which you have spent your earth-life; but you had no wife to love—your capacity for the enjoyment of conjugal happiness is yet undeveloped. You know nothing of the enobling principle of parental love; you are ignorant of the extensive pleasures of fraternal love; for the doctrines you have believed in exclude all from the blessings of fraternal intercourse with the good and the pure who do not possess like faith with your very small sect. And that love which is universal in its existence and influence is alike unknown to you, Mr. Wilson."

"My dear Mrs. James, I feel the truth of your remarks; and this conviction is the more painful to bear, because I see eternity before me; earth-life behind me, and the opportunities for the

development of my nature, lost for ever."

"Not lost for ever, Edward; that great Being who gives spiritual and material life to man has made provision for all his wants to be satisfied. It is impossible for that Infinite Being not to have foreseen the fact, that man may live his whole earth-life without his nature being developed to a condition of harmony with himself, and with those laws by which man's life is governed. Infinite Wisdom, Infinite Power, and Infinite Love have provided for every contingency."

"Your words, Harriet, seem to convey to my mind hope; yet their wisdom is hidden in mystery, and my hope is like that of the blind man who thinks he may see some time."

"The darkest hour of the night, my dear Edward, is that before the daybreak."

"Oh, Harriet, can I for a moment indulge the hope that the infinite wisdom and love of God has provided you as an angel of light to conduct me up this dark, this steep, this rugged ascent?"

"Edward, God has called me here first, that I may prepare a place for you; and such is His wisdom, and such is His love for you, that He has given me the power and disposition to become your guide, your instructor, your constant friend and companion."

"Harriet, do you love me?"

"Edward, there is a fountain in this heart which pours forth a stream of the purest love; and the object of the creation of that fountain, and the power to keep it incessantly flowing to all eternity, is that it may flow into another heart, and that heart respond; so that, in mutual, reciprocal love, perfect happiness may be enjoyed by each. And those two hearts, Edward, are ours."

"Harriet, are we young again? Do I once more feel the warm blood circulate through my body? Whence this vigor, this light, this holy joy? Oh, Harriet! God has indeed sent you as a messenger of peace, hope, and love. I feel now the ecstasy of a redeemed, a transformed spirit. Here is a frame perfect in all its parts, with all the sensations, desires, and capacities of true manhood; and there is a being given me by God, with all the beauty, grace, and elegance of womanhood. Within this heart I feel a new life, a new hope, a new love. Is this the gift of Thy wisdom, power, and love, oh God—am I thus blessed with happiness; and may I hope that joy like this will be eternal?"

"Edward, this is the effect of the first burst of the sunlight of heaven on your earth-darkened spirit. Now that you have once beheld the light, you can no more grovel in darkness than the earth can be dark and cold when its sun sheds the glorious light and warmth of day upon it. You need not hope that this condition of joy may be eternal, for that would be contrary to nature and reason? This is only the first blush of the morning of spiritual day. The day of spirit-life is eternity, and as at its rising it diffuses light, warmth, and life through all the powers of sensation within you, so as the day advances you must, in like manner,

advance with it. As the light of the sun of the earth is a more beautiful vision when he first scatters the clouds and darkness which have obscured the loveliness of nature during the night, so it is with you; all nature seems to sing the morning song of gladness and praise to the Giver of All Good. Now, Edward, as the combined action of certain material laws enables the eyes of those existing in material life to photograph Nature upon their retina, when natural or artificial light is produced, so it is in spirit-life. The capacity to behold spirit-nature is possessed by all, and when the light of reason and the warmth of love open the spirit's perceptions, a glorious prospect presents itself to view. The human eye is constructed for the purpose of beholding the objects in material nature when light is reflected upon them; but it cannot see the light itself. The spirit is the light of man, and his spirit perceives material objects by its connection with the human eye; therefore material nature becomes visible to the spirit through the medium of this delicately-constructed material agent. When you have acquired a knowledge of the laws which connect spirit and matter, you will then readily apprehend the whole subject; but what I want you to understand at present is this—that spirit-nature was just as beautiful before your spirit's perceptions were opened as it is now. Also, that your power to perceive its loveliness was within you, and that the only difference between your former misery and your present happiness is, that you have admitted into your heart the light of reason, and have permitted your spirit-nature to be warmed into life by the influence of love. Edward, you are no longer a mere visitor to my house, but its master. It has been a labor of love on my part to make such preparations for your reception and development here as I, with others who love you, thought best adapted to your nature. My love is not the love of friendship merely, but that never-dying affinital love of which I have spoken to you before, and the power and immortal nature of which is the result of pre-existence. These are subjects which I am aware you do not as yet apprehend, and I shall decline entering into the discussion of them with you at present, although you have forfeited your right to silence me when I reason contrary to the Bible. Now, the representation in the Theoresonium will, among other matters, illustrate these two subjects, I expect; and after that is over, we will talk about them again. Shall we ascend to the observatory, Edward?"

"As I have not seen it, Harriet, my angel, I shall be most happy."

"Through the Library into the entrance-hall, and up this spacious staircase, and here we are. This gives you a view of the whole city and the surrounding country to a great distance."

"What is that magnificent structure I see in front of us, where the people are entering in such numbers?"

"That is the Theoresonium, and that building to the right of

it is the Temple of Love, and that to the left is the Hall of Concord ; and that at the back, with the large dome, is the Temple of the Council of Causes."

"I suppose I shall come to understand their uses sometime, but at present I am at a loss to know what they are needed for."

"Occasionally, Edward, we have visits from spirits who exist in higher spheres, and we meet them to obtain knowledge in these buildings, and here, with their love and wisdom expressed in exalted language, they tell us of other spheres, other laws, and point the way to these higher stages of progression. The object people have who are going to the Theoresonium is to see a spectacular representation of one phase of earth-life."

"That is what we have been invited to attend, is it not?"

"Yes, Edward ; and if you are ready we will proceed at once to the building. I expect all our friends are gone there, as many of them have to take some part in the performance."

"With what different feeling I begin to look upon the place now. Instead of dissatisfaction with everything, and miserable disappointment, I feel a longing desire to know and understand whatever comes before me. As we pass along I feel more cheerful and happy, and look with different eyes upon those buildings, these beautiful groves, and these people as we follow them. Here are those dear children coming this way."

"Oh, Aunt, we were looking to find you. We are going to the Theoresonium, and Mamma said you would like to go too."

"Yes, my darling Edith, that is the object we have in view."

"Is Mr. Wilson going with you?—are you, Mr. Wilson?"

"Yes, my dear children, I wish to. Do you not desire to see the ill-natured old parson there?—do you think he will try to make you unhappy? No, my children ; he might have done so when he saw you last, but he hopes you will forgive him, and let him try to love you."

"Oh, I am so glad to hear you say so ; for papa told me to love you, and I felt as though I could not, because you seemed as if you did not want to be loved ; but now I know, if you want to love us, you will let us love you."

"My dear children, God has taught me better now. Let me embrace each of you. This is Edith, this Carry, and this my little Charley. And are you all going, Charley?"

"Oh yes ! papa, mamma, and Tom, and Mary have gone already."

"See the people are coming from all parts of the city, Edward."

"This is an immense entrance, Harriet."

"It is only in proportion to the vast size of the building, and the great numbers of people who gather here."

"What a mass of people, and how happy they all look. What splendid arrangements for the comfort and convenience of visitors."

"Yes, every home has its own private box, and that is large enough to accommodate twice the number of each household. In many of them you will see children who have never experienced earth-life, and in others you will see new arrivals, like yourself, Edward, who have not yet had any experience in spirit-life. This is our box. Will the children stay with us—will you, Edith?"

"Oh, yes! Aunt, mamma, papa, Tom, and Mary are engaged in the performance, and we are to stay with you, if you will let us."

"Really, how light and beautiful the place is. That is not scenery I see in front, is it, Harriet?"

"Not exactly scenery, but a real landscape."

"Then the performance will take the appearance of real life."

"Yes, Edward, real earth-life will be represented on the right division, and real spirit-life on the left. If you look on the left compartment, you will see every appliance for the representation of scenes in spirit-life; and on the right is a like arrangement for the presentation of all those appearances necessary to the realization of such things as belong exclusively to earth-life. The division right down the centre, as far as the eye can reach, is to represent the two separate states of existence. Both parts will, on certain occasions, be in action at the same time; but, generally, each side of life is represented alternately. You will see, as the performance proceeds, how possible it is to represent life on both sides the grave perfectly, with such laws, powers, and appliances as belong to spirit-life. See, the Council of Spirits are assembling on the left; they are in the Hall of Concord. The President rises to speak. Listen!"

ALBETO, the President: "Brothers and sisters in the cause of human elevation, our object for assembling on the present occasion is to organize a means of direct and constant communication with mankind on earth. The same universal love which inspires one, inspires the hearts of all of us; and whatever may be the capacity in which we may labor in this holy work, each is equally important, equally honorable. Our arrangements are complete, and all that remains to be done before our delegates depart to their destinations is, that each one who is about to take an active part in this special undertaking should now express their individual sentiments to the whole council here assembled, that unity and concord may exist in our deliberations and actions. I call upon my brother from the sphere of Causes, Bonele, to speak first."

BONELE: "My department of work in this mission to earth is to accompany those who are more immediately connected by affinity and earth relationship to the selected earth-medium; and to be also brother in council with Ceneric, our dear friend from the sphere of knowledge, who is on the same plane of existence as those friends who are to come in immediate contact with the earth-medium."

CENERIC : "My brother who has just sat down has not made known to us his plans of operation. I suppose he prefers to let circumstances reveal them as business progresses, and as reports are conveyed to you by the messengers who will be constantly passing from here to earth and earth to here. Those plans which are the result of the wisdom of higher spheres than ours, will be better apprehended by us as they develope themselves. The visit which he has lately paid to earth, in company with our brother Albeto, has given him an opportunity of seeing how those glorious truths which are much better apprehended in the sphere to which he belongs than they are here, may be brought within the reach of humanity. He has, no doubt, seen the misery mankind endures in consequence of their ignorance of those truths, and has therefore made such a selection of agencies, material and spiritual, as shall enable him to insure a certain amount of success. My labors will be to afford such help and counsel as I am able to those who, by their affinity, will in some measure influence the life of the medium ; and, as I receive higher knowledge from my brother Bonelo, impart it to them while they endeavor to make it appear in such form as can be apprehended by the medium."

DONO and DONINA : "We are the parents of him whom our noble friends here have selected to be their earth-medium. We feel the importance of the work in which he and we are about to be engaged. Our maternal and paternal love for our child will make it doubly interesting to us. We are aware that our adaptation to this special duty is the result of our parental relationship, and for success we are mainly dependant on the wisdom of that counsel which will be given to those spirits from the sphere of Causes who are aiding us, and who use as their medium of communication with us our loving and advanced brother, Ceneric. We have no doubt we shall be able to send such reports by our messengers as will satisfy you that progress is being made."

ELOT : "As one of the three messengers honored with the commission of matters of such importance, I can only say it is a work in which I shall take great pleasure."

FETONG : "And I can also say that I shall engage heartily in such a task."

GLEROW : "For myself, I feel that the labors of our department are not so insignificant as may at first appear. We are not merely mechanical bearers of despatches, but active, intelligent agents ; and as we arrive at each terminus of our journey, it will become our study clearly to report the events and the substance of the result of the deliberations at either end. To do this with success, we must thoroughly apprehend the whole matter, so far as we are able ; and our knowledge must keep pace with the unfoldment of the plans of our brothers from the sphere of Causes. I feel much the importance of this department of the work. I feel that, in mastering the detailed reports from either end of our destination,

my own knowledge of the laws of Nature and the causes which so much influence the destiny of the human race must be very much increased. I have, therefore, in common with my brother messengers, a strong personal reason for loving the work in which we are about to engage."

ALBETO: "Our brother Glerow is as deeply interested in this great work as any of us, and from higher motives than those he has named. His love of suffering humanity is no wise inferior to that of ours, and he loves the work for the good it is destined to effect, more than for the good he is likely to gain personally from the faithful discharge of his duties. He spoke truly when he magnified the importance of the messengers' work. It will be necessary to master the leading principles of our councils at either end, to grasp the plans of operations as they develop themselves, and to note the details of events as they occur in the earth-life of all connected with our operations; and also to fully apprehend the causes and effects of all circumstances as reported to you. You would not at first perceive how much a knowledge of man's pre-existence influences his modes of thought, his habits of life, and his ideas of his future destiny. Nor, until our plans develop themselves, can you fully appreciate the importance of the law of affinity becoming known and apprehended by mankind. My dear brother from the sphere of Causes, Bonelo, will direct you as concerns these higher branches of knowledge; and the love of God, filling all your hearts, will fit you for that department of labor in which you are engaged. This concludes our deliberations for the present. We now say adieu to our brethren who are ready to depart to earth. When a messenger arrives from earth, the Council of Spirits will again assemble in this hall. Farewell."

Harriet: "Now, see the spirits are all dispersing. The company of delegates are off to earth, and the rest of the council to their homes. Now, we must look on the earth-side. See! that resembles a library, and there is a man sitting there, evidently in study. Look at the sheets of paper as they lie about, written upon."

Wilson: "I should take that to be a minister's study, with the minister preparing his sermon for Sunday."

Harriet: "See two spirits enter unseen by him. They are commencing to speak. Listen!"

Dono: "After arriving again on earth, what so natural, my dear Donina, as that we should seek first the society of our beloved child. And here he is, wasting the powers of his mind and body in a fruitless endeavor to lead his people nearer to God, by preparing a sermon which directs their minds to a shadow—a fancy."

Donina: "We must not feel impatient with our dear boy; we have done our best to educate him in that very theology which he is now engaged in imparting to others. We thought we were doing our duty to him by training him for a profession, the pur-

suit of which would exercise the most ennobling influence upon his own character, as well as effect the largest amount of good to his fellow-men, and secure a happy eternity."

Dono : "In our ignorance, we thought so. I would now rather see him engaged in the calling of a chimney sweep, if I could hope for some good arising from his labors ; so that, when he arrived at our condition of existence, he would have the satisfaction of knowing that he had not lived a wasted life on earth. But now, instead of removing that away which hinders the progress of the light and the happiness and purity of his fellow-creatures, he is casting mire, dust, and soot in their way. He is endeavoring to polish the outside of humanity, while the internal nature is left undeveloped."

Donina : "As it is impossible for us to undo the past, wisdom suggests that we should endeavor so to use the impressional power that our parental affinity gives us, that he may be impelled to such action as shall either develope his own inner nature, or operate indirectly upon some of his hearers."

Dono : "To impress him personally will be exceedingly difficult, as the peculiar theology he has imbibed beclouds his whole being. His intellect is developed to an unnatural extent, while what remains of his emotional capacity is misdirected. He has no wife or children to love, so he loves his work, his people, his Bible ; and he thinks because his aspirations are directed to God, manifested in Jesus Christ, that he loves the Great Parent of the human race. You see, my love, his mind reflects nothing to our view which, if by spirit-action we make more active, can produce immediate good to himself and others : his religious belief being unnatural, his moral and spiritual condition have become unnatural."

Donina : "I think you will agree with me that it would be better to consult with our brother spirits before proceeding to impress him at all ; and as to-morrow will be Friday, and the night is far spent, we can all attend his preaching, and take such action as they advise."

Dono : "We will leave him, then, for the present."

Donina : "Before doing so, I must impress upon his lips a mother's kiss."

Weston (Donina's son) : "I am thankful to feel myself once more prepared for the duties of the Lord's Day. My sermons are now complete, and if I can only feel in the same calm, holy frame of mind as that just come upon me, I shall preach in the Spirit, and my people will be blessed, and Christ glorified. I will now leave the fruit of my labors, and retire to my peaceful couch."

Harriet (to Wilson) : "Now the minister has gone to bed. We shall shortly see the sun rise over the mountains. Observe ! his light is already illuminating the sky. Now he peeps over the horizon, and begins to shed his glorious radiance upon the earth. Look now, my dear children, what a beautiful sight it is ! People

on earth see this lovely sight continually. What glorious colors spread over the face of the whole heavens."

Charley : "How the birds sing, Aunty. See how they fly about."

Edith : "This is morning on earth, I suppose."

Harriet : "Yes, my dear children ; this is what they call their Sabbath morning, and it is supposed to represent the middle of summer. You must understand they have day and night, and summer and winter. Now you see the sun has risen above the mountain tops, and you can observe the whole landscape—the houses and churches of a town in the foreground, and nearer still remark the interior of a chapel. As the morning advances we shall find the people leaving their homes and making their way to the churches for worship."

Carry : "What is Sabbath?"

Harriet : "Sabbath on earth, my child, is the seventh day, on which those who labor hard for six days may rest and be happy."

Edith : "But are they not happy every day?"

Harriet : "Some of the people who live on earth think they are happy, others hope to be happy, and a few are happy in reality, as we are in the spirit-land. Do you see that man walking away among the trees, admiring beautiful nature in the early morning? He enjoys hours of the purest happiness possible in earth-life, while the majority of mankind are slumbering in their beds. See, he seems to be pouring forth the gratitude and aspirations of his heart to God. Listen!"

Mr. Thomas, sen. (one of the deacons of Mr. Weston's church) : "Oh ! thou God of the Universe, and God and Father of Humanity, the Giver of all the bounty and loveliness I see around me—this earth, that glorious sun, the teeming world of life which this morning shouts and sings praises to Thee—here, O God, I also offer my thanks. I love Thee, O my Father, for my life on earth, and for the desire and hope Thou hast given within me which speak of another life beyond this—more pure, more happy. These, indeed, are causes for my gratitude and praise."

Harriet : "See ! our spirit friends are there. They surround him, but he cannot see them."

Mr. Thomas, sen. : "My heart is filled with joy and gladness, and, like Nature, this calm and lovely morning, I sing my song of praise to Thee, and I feel a sweet foretaste of that bliss I hope to realize in the future life."

Harriet : "My dear children, it is such men as that one who are really happy in earth-life. The influence of his morning's meditations and aspirations develops his inner nature, brings him into a condition of harmony with Nature's laws, and makes him susceptible of spirit-improvement ; and this causes that joy for which he just now thanked his God. See ! the people are beginning to move from their homes—some to church, for what they call worship ; others, you may observe, are making their way for the fields and woods, the rivers and the sea beach ; others remain

at home—they are too poor, or too exhausted with the toils of the week to seek any other change. Those who go to the churches hope to be happy in the next life, because they are religious people and worship God ; while they condemn all the world, who are not like themselves, as wicked persons, who, unless they change and think as ‘religious’ folk think, and regularly attend church, must all eternally perish ! Now, the people yonder, who are going in great crowds, as you see, to spend their Sabbath in freedom according to their inclination, although condemned by their religious friends and neighbours, are nevertheless healthier and happier than they who condemn them. But the numberless poor creatures who are left about their wretched homes and haunts, with filthy bodies, unwholesome air to breathe, bad food, and dark, ignorant minds, are most miserable of all. These are the victims of the unnatural institutions of earth—the victims of the monopoly and selfishness of the powerful classes. What is called crime, as well as disease, originate here, and from them spread through the whole community.”

Wilson : “ See ! they are about to commence the service in that chapel with the side off.”

Harriet : “ Yes ; that represents Mr. Weston’s church. He is now entering from the vestry—he ascends the pulpit, utters a short prayer, and now the congregation sing—

Oh God, our help in ages past,
Our hope in years to come;
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home !

Now he reads from the Bible. ‘ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,’ &c., &c. ; and then the second lesson from the New Testament, ‘ God so loved the world, that He sent His only begotten Son,’ &c., &c. Now comes the sermon.”

Weston : “ That part of the word of God I have selected as the text this morning, reads as follows :—“ Ye are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. It is not necessary, my brethren, that I should enter into an elaborate explanation of the meaning of these words. Suffice it to say, that those who are the subjects of electing grace have power to believe ; and, on the contrary, those who are not the subjects of the Divine grace—for whom Christ did *not* die—they cannot believe. Saving faith, my dear brethren, is only possible to the people of God. I may tell you, as I have often told you from this pulpit, that the labors of those who think all the world may be saved are very well in their way ; God turns them to very good account. These workers are the sowers who sow beside all waters, but the seed of the kingdom which they scatter broadcast over the world can only germinate and grow when it falls on the good ground, which is in the hearts of His own children, the subjects of the electing grace of God. In this text we have presented to our minds—first, the salvation of God’s people ; secondly, how

that salvation is secured to them ; and, thirdly, the condition of mind necessary for its realization. What is salvation, my brethren ? It is the free gift of God—a present sense of forgiveness of all sin, which is the witness of the Holy Spirit of God within the hearts of the redeemed, crying Abba Father—a consciousness of justification through a knowledge of the sacrificial death and substituted sufferings of Christ, and a hope blooming with immortality beyond the grave. This hope is the anchor of the soul, which has a firm grip of the infallible rock of God's word ; and, though the billows of temptation may rise and seem as threatening to overwhelm you, and the tempest of the devil's rage shall roar against your frail bark, with your anchor firmly fixed there, my brother and my sister, you are safe for time and for eternity. This is the salvation of the Christian, and secured to him by the sacrificial death of God Himself. The security of the Christian, as my text says, is not dependant upon any act of his own ; he can neither accept it nor reject it by an act of his own—it is by the exercise of the sovereign will of God that his salvation is made sure. 'By grace are ye saved.' This electing grace of God is infallible in its operation. All the redeemed will in due time be brought into the fold. The influence of the Holy Spirit of God will not cease to strive with those who are the heirs of salvation ; although on this holy day there may be some of them mingling with the giddy throng who have gone to serve their master, the devil, in the woods and fields, on the rivers and the sea beach. It may even be that, of the children of God, some may be found in the by-lanes and alleys wallowing in filth, drunkenness, and debauchery, apparently without hope and without God in the world. It matters not wherever they be, the All-powerful Spirit of God will give them no peace until He has brought them out of the mire of their present misery and degradation, and placed them, clothed and in their right mind, at the feet of Jesus. God will carry on to its completion His own work ; with the works and the children of the devil He has nothing to do, nor have we. The potter forms the clay into vessels of honor, and vessels of dishonor ; sufficient be it for us that it is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes—sufficient that we know that our salvation is secured to us by the eternal decrees of Him who speaks and it is done. We come now to notice, in conclusion, my brethren, the condition of mind necessary to the full realization of all the privileges of this salvation, which is the gift of the Divine grace, through faith. Now, it is by the exercise of faith that the child of God is enabled to enjoy all the blessings of salvation purchased for him. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. A soul can never be lost through a want of faith ; but if its faith is weak, it will be lean, feeble, and miserable. Now, as faith is the result of prayer, the study of God's word, and attendance upon all the means of grace, it will be seen how important is the due observance of the Lord's day.—how important to the healthy con-

dition of the believer's soul is a strict discharge of every Christian duty. Prayer moves the arm which moves the world! 'Lord, increase our faith,' is a prayer recommended by God's word; and when engaged in the study of that word, the proper objects of faith are no longer a matter of doubt—faith in the truth of God's word—faith in the lost condition of every child of Adam—faith in the electing grace of God, the atoning death of Christ, the future glory of all the redeemed, and the eternal damnation of all who are not within the fold of Christ. These, my brethren, are some of the main objects of faith. There is one more I should like specially to name, and that is faith in the ordinances of the church. Amen."

Harriet: "Observe, after the concluding hymn, they leave the chapel in the possession of our dear friends the spirits who have been present during the service. Donina was by the side of her son to try the effect of her presence upon his preaching, and our dear friend Bonelo was near Mr. Thomas, the deacon; and Dono was by a lady, in a pew near the pulpit, who is the wife of a son of Mr. Thomas. I expect they are about to hold a council in the chapel now the congregation have dispersed. See! Bonelo is President."

Bonelo: "Spirit-associates, delegates to earth, we are now in the midst of our employment, and it rests with me to direct the action and appoint the situation of each of you. It remains for you to be vigilant in your duties, and report to this council all occurrences which come under your notice. You, Donina, will take charge of your son, and follow the minister wherever he may go, until called away, and will report to any messages we may send to you. You, Elot, should at once proceed to Mr. Thomas, sen., deacon of the church, to pay strict attention to all that occurs affecting him personally, and return to report when sent for, but not till then, unless something extraordinary occurs. Fetong, you must go to the house of Mrs. Thomas, jun., the wife of the deacon's son, and note all that takes place there which in any way concerns her; and unless anything unusual happens do not leave. I will send for your report. You, Glerow, will proceed in search of Mr. Thomas, jun. You have already received certain information which will guide you, and, when you have found him, mark his associates, the character of their intercourse, and his habits and places of resort; and after gathering all you can, we shall be glad of your report. Farewell! Ceneric will remain with me, and you, my dear friend, Dono, will join us in council, and act as messenger between us and those who have departed. Now that our friends are each appointed to their duties, I shall be glad to hear any remarks you may either of you desire to make."

Dono: "Since I have tasted the joys of spirit-existence, and my eyes have been opened to behold the happiness of those who love this life of knowledge and liberty, I have sorrowed to see-

the ignorance, error, and suffering which prevail among mankind. Errors; such as preached by my own son to those assembled in this building, appear to me now to be shutting out the light of Nature, ignoring the use of reason, and obstructing human progress. I am pained and grieved when I see my own flesh and blood thus wasting his life, when it might be otherwise usefully employed; and then, forsooth, flattering himself, and being flattered by others, that he is a minister of God—a reverend, a divine!—something superior to an ordinary mortal. I could endure seeing him engaged in the most menial occupation, the servant of servants; I would even prefer to see him profligate, a spendthrift, an outcast, if, by being such, his mind could be brought more in harmony with Nature. If I could see his instincts properly developed, if I could see him what God has given him capacity to become—wise, noble, dignified, manly—let the world call him what they would, I should be satisfied. Instead of harmonizing the various qualities of his body and mind, he is priding himself in the excessive development of his intellect. He loves to be praised for his intellectual powers and attainments, and entirely neglects the development of his animal and emotional instincts; and is consequently unhappy. He treats his body—that noble organism, with its world of sensation and instincts—as though it was not the creation of a wise and loving God, designed to become the medium through which his immortal spirit-forces must act upon the material world; but strives to annihilate every natural impulse of his being. While such doctrines as these are preached to the church and the world—while man is taught what Nature contradicts—while the holiest impulses of man's heart are called the temptations of the devil to sin, I see no prospect of human elevation."

Ceneric: "My dear friend, Dono, has much yet to learn—much that I think the circumstances connected with the present mission will help to teach him. God has not left man in so hopeless a condition as my friend seems to imagine."

Bonelo: "Dono will now proceed to Donina, Elot, and Fetong, and meet us in the chapel-yard at midnight. We had better leave this chapel now, as evening service is going to commence. The open air is more congenial to us; there we may converse with each other, and with Nature. Our brother Dono has not yet learnt those causes which are ever in operation, bringing about the progress and elevation of mankind; he does not know that what appears to him so hopelessly dark in the present and future condition of humanity has—underneath all the accumulation of ignorance, error, and misery which he sees—a germ which he does not see, placed there by the hand of God. At present, his knowledge of causes is very limited; the law of progression, though apparently slow, is nevertheless ever carrying man on to better conditions. Man's ignorance of his pre-existence, and, consequently of that law of development which first caused separa-

tion of his original identity, and the no less wonderful law which gives individualities to the separate parts of the former identity, causes him to mistake his real nature and destiny. Mankind are equally ignorant of that wondrous law of affinity which again unites two individualities, restores the former identity of being which man enjoyed in his pre-existent state, and restores it in a new form."

Ceneric : " My dear Bonelo, I do not wonder at the ignorance of man on these grand subjects. I can but imperfectly understand them myself. You call them wondrous, and they are so indeed. I should like to know what was the nature of man's pre-existence, and whether the law of affinity which unites the male and female individualities exists eternally ; or whether, in some future conditions of being, the two again merge into one ? "

Bonelo : " The fact of man's pre-existence is indisputable. The nature of that existence can only be apprehended in the higher spheres of spirit-life ; and, so far as I have been enabled to see, the individuality of male and female is perpetuated, but what may be their destiny in higher conditions of being I am not able to say. The love that exists between those whom the law of affinity unites makes them one in thought and desire, one in hope and aspiration, and one in destiny. The destiny of man's earth-life is this affinital union of two separate parts ; perfect happiness, while separate, is impossible ; and yet, through his ignorance of these laws, such unions are very rare in earth-life. Spirit-life being a more natural condition, each finds the proper mate. "

Harriet : " How beautiful is that moonlight scene ! How lovely is earth, when looked upon with eyes enlightened with spirit-knowledge ! What exalted subjects those are which they are now discussing ! See ! the spirit Dono approaches them. "

Dono : " Elot reports a letter has been received by Mr. Thomas, from the secretary of the church, calling a deacons' meeting for the consideration of important business ; it seems to produce on the good deacon's mind an unpleasant foreboding. Donina reports the receipt of a letter from Mrs. Thomas, jun., requesting an immediate interview with the minister. He proceeded to her house immediately after he had finished his evening service. Fetong reports a conversation between Mrs. Thomas and her female domestic servant, the purport of which was, that the servant's husband, who is in the same service with his wife, has stated, while in drink, that he does not drive his master to Winterford at all when he is away for a week. Also, that instead of being occupied in managing the affairs of his widowed aunt, he is keeping the company of some actress in London. Believing this rumor, she seeks counsel of her minister, feeling the while in her own heart a desire for an opportunity to be revenged. There is jealousy, murder, and hatred in her heart. Mr. Weston is already aware of the profligate habits of Mr. Thomas, jun., and, from personal motives, his counsel is not such as a Christian

minister should give. I regret to have to say such things of my son, but I must report truly; it is evident from what was seen between him and Mrs. Thomas, jun. that he has stronger motives for serving her in this matter than those merely which his relation of minister would supply. He is willing to proceed at once to London for the purpose of learning the whereabouts of young Thomas, and he proposes to leave here early in the morning. Donina reports that her spirit-presence with Mr. Weston seems to have a strange influence over him. He grows excited and reckless; his intellectual control of his animal qualities seems to be weakened by her close contact with him; and she desires to know if some other spirit would not be more suitable for his benefit. She says that her influence over him acts in opposition to her desires, and she fears his future actions may be worse."

Bonelo: "Donina must remain with her son; the influence which her presence exercises over him is the effect of the affinity of their natures. It is quite natural, and what she fears, must take place; the influence of her parental affinity for him develops his animal nature, which has hitherto remained dormant. Natural affinity is ever more powerful than parental affinity, although the one may assist in the development of the other. His filial love responds to his mother's parental love, and his other natural instincts are precipitated into action by the influence of love. Mr. Weston's nature is at present in a condition of discord; and love, which is the only harmonizer, must develop all those discordant qualities into action, and thus, in the fire and tempest of his own heart, must they be consumed and destroyed, and more harmonious conditions will be the consequence. It is because Donina's presence with her son has this influence over him that she has been appointed his guardian. She must proceed with him to London. You will return to the house of Mrs. Thomas, and report to Donina what I have said. The time for Mr. Weston's departure has arrived. After he has gone, remain there a short time and bring Fetong's report. The day is now far advanced, and the business at the deacons' meeting must soon be brought to a close. Here comes Elot. Something particular must have happened."

Elot: "I accompanied Deacon Thomas to the meeting at the appointed house. The matters they had for discussion were very important. After opening the meeting with prayer, Deacon Bamford stated that certain rumors were in circulation reflecting disgrace upon the character of their pastor, and he thought it was their duty to take prompt action in relieving the church of anything which tended to destroy its usefulness and to bring discredit upon its members; and, if the rumors were unfounded, to protect their minister against evil report. Deacon Wormwood said: 'I rise, my Christian brethren, to discharge a most painful duty. From information received, my suspicions have been for some time aroused as to the conduct of our minister. I could

give names, if necessary ; but I would rather not. To satisfy myself about what I had heard, I felt it my duty, as a senior deacon of this church, to ascertain if there was any truth in the rumors I had heard floating about. Accordingly I sought an interview with one who was most likely to know ; and although I had every reason to think this witness would not willingly betray either of the parties, yet, by cross-questioning and concealing my object, I obtained all the information I wanted ; and this meeting is the result.' Then Deacon Thomas rose to speak. He said : ' Christian brethren, I think our first duty, as followers of Christ, is to show charity to all men, and more especially to those who may be under a charge so painful as that to which Brother Wormwood has referred, but not proved. If he would make direct charges, they might be combated, and, being seasoned with charity, be seen in a very different light to that he insinuates. Had my brother called a meeting of the deacons on his first hearing anything, and consulted with them whether the whole matter should not first be laid before our beloved pastor, he would not have appeared so much more like a detective policeman than a deacon of a Christian church !' Deacon Wilberforce then rose and said : ' I consider it the duty of the officers of our church to defend their minister against slander, and that we ought to put the the best construction upon such actions as appear to the world, and the minds of suspicious people, to have any wrong in them. A true Christian should not suspect another, for 'charity thinketh no evil.' If such charges as are now being made against our minister can be, to a certain extent, substantiated, what then is our duty ?—to hunt him down as if he were a criminal ? What would this church, and the church of Christ generally, gain by such conduct on our part ? We have a minister to whom we certainly pay a very moderate salary ; and if we may judge of his talents by the two sermons he preached on Sunday last, his equal is hardly to be found in our church, for clear perception of divine truth and eloquence of language.' Then Deacon Wormwood rose again and demanded that the matter be at once put to the vote—'whether these investigations should be carried further, or whether the church should act as though it countenanced such disgraceful conduct on the part of its minister and one of the leading female members, just because she happened to be wealthy and he an eloquent preacher ?' This was done, and Deacon Wild was the only one who voted with Wormwood against the minister, while there were three in his defence, including the Chairman. The result of the decision so enraged Deacon Wormwood, that he demanded from the Chairman the privilege of replying ; when the Chairman ruled that the matter was settled, and he could not be allowed to speak to it again. In a great fury, Wormwood then demanded that the vote of the meeting be taken whether he should not be allowed to speak again, as he had something very important to say. Deacon Thomas thereupon rose and moved,

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that Brother Wormwood be allowed to speak again. Deacon Thomas was evidently in a very excited state; and though he tried to control himself, yet he felt it very difficult, it being a matter which affected him personally. It was then carried, that Wormwood should speak again; whereupon he commenced by saying—"Mr. Chairman, I consider I have been most unjustly used at this meeting. The decision arrived at is contrary to the rules of the church, and I appeal to the church as a whole; but before doing so, I shall state to this meeting my charges definitely, as I have been taunted with not being able to do so. And as it is necessary, previous to bringing anything of importance to the consideration of the whole church that it be first placed before a meeting of the deacons, I proceed to make the following charges. First, I accuse Mr. Weston, our minister, and Mrs. Thomas Jr. of adultery, and have evidence to that effect; and secondly, I object to Deacon Thomas taking part in this discussion at all, he being an interested party, as his profligate son goes away from his wife, and stays for a week or more together, under pretence of managing the affairs of a widowed aunt, with an actress in London. And it is a positive fact, that after our minister had finished his labours of the Sabbath day on which he preached those eloquent sermons to which brother Wilberforce has referred, he went to her house in the absence of her husband, and did not leave till the following morning; and then he departed for London, where he is now engaged gathering such information as might be of use as evidence in a Divorce Court."

"Wormwood had no sooner made this statement than Deacon Thomas was seen to fall from his chair; all means of restoration were used without effect, a doctor was called in, and, after examination, life was pronounced to be extinct."

Bonelo. "Then you did right to come immediately to us, Elot; the process of spirit birth needs no assistance from such as us; God has made all his works over which mankind has no control so perfect, that spirits can only look on with wonder and admiration. He will remain for awhile about the locality of his loves, his labours and his sorrows; and afterwards must be conducted to the spirit world, in the company of our first messenger."

Dono. "I have returned to report progress. On reaching the house of Mrs. Thomas, I found preparations were being made for Mr. Weston's journey to London, and while they were being completed Donina informed me that Weston sent a note to his house-keeper by Mrs. Thomas's servant woman, requesting her not to sit up for him as he was about to go a long journey and should be off before she rose in the morning, and would be away for a few days. There being no immediate need for Fetong to remain with Mrs. Thomas, he accompanied the servant to Mr. Weston's house, where she waited while the note was read, and on her being asked to sit down, conversation such as the following is reported by Fetong to have ensued.

Miss Wild, the housekeeper. "Well Sarah, this note says I am to send the master's railway rug, overcoat and some shirts, as he is going a long journey, and will be away before I am up. He had no need to send for his things to your Mrs. Thomas's, for I could have risen as early as either her or you, if need be; but I suppose he has his own reasons."

Sarah. "But I don't think Missus is going to bed at all; she says I can go to bed when I get back, which is very good of her; for, as she says, you know a woman can't do her work if she don't rest; but she says that, as our good minister has to leave by the two o'clock mail train, she will sit up herself and see him off, isn't it kind of her?"

Wild. "Oh yes, very kind; just as if I could not have sat up as well as her. Do you know, Sarah, I don't think it looks very right for master to be so much at Mrs. Thomas's house while her husband is away."

Sarah. "Law! Miss Wild, you ain't jealous, are you? My missus is one of the best women in the world; with one of the most flighty husbands I ever see, and God knows she does not deserve it."

Wild. "You said master was going by the mail train at two—then of course he goes London way. Do you know, between ourselves, what is taking him up there so suddenly? Here, Sarah, have a glass of wine, I'm sure you will have a heavy load to carry."

Sarah. "Thank you, Miss Wild, you are very good—you know I never touch nothing stronger than home-made wine, with just a little brandy drop't in for my spassums. You know, ever since my Bob came home so bad from Winterford with his master, I kept the drink out of his way as much as possible—thank you, I will have just half a glass more."

Wild. "You said that Mr. Weston was going to London."

Sarah. "Did I? well I made out as he is—really this wine is uncommon nice, do you make it yourself, Miss Wild?"

Wild. "Try another glass, Sarah."

Sarah. "Now you know, as I said, master's not so good as he should be, between you and me, Miss Wild. Missus is the best woman as can be; now don't let out a word of what I'm going to say. Master is in London, and instead of going alone by train, he takes my Bob and the carriage, shamming he is going off to Winterford, and there he is all along with some acting woman, and leaving my man to get as tipsy as ever he likes. Bob told me all about it that day when he came home so drunk."

Wild. "Then Mr Weston is going to fetch Mr. Thomas home. is he?"

Sarah. "Not exactly that; he's going to find out all about his harum-scarums, and get to know who this theatre woman is; between you and me, and don't whisper a word, you know, she says she'll go and get a divorce."

Wild, "Oh, how shocking, Sarah, what will the world say? Now, Sarah, Mr. Weston has been very much at Mrs. Thomas's house lately, has he not?"

Sarah. "Well, I believe he has, good man, he sympathises with her very much."

Wild. "*Very much*—now, Sarah, he stays there pretty late sometimes, does he not?"

Sarah. "I goes to bed earliesh myself, unless our Bob is expected home, which he was that night as he come back at twelve o'clock so very much on; and Mr. Weston was there that time, and he see Mr. Thomas, and they had some words, I know, for I heard a great noise in the sitting room, but I was in such a way about my Bob as I took no notice what 'twas all about."

Wild. "The parcels are all ready now, Sarah, you will have a good bundle to carry."

"Fetong stayed with Miss Wild until she retired to rest, and after Sarah had departed with her burden, Miss Wild soliloquized in this sort."

So my master was caught by the returning husband administering comfort and consolation to the deserted wife of a man who, to screen his own delinquences, goes into a towering rage with our dear minister. Is Mr. Weston really guilty? Mr. Wormwood says he is—oh dear, I don't know what to think. Mr. Wormwood's is not so desirable an offer as Mr. Weston's would be if I had only got it. But now I think, between the two I should prefer the deacon to the minister. I will go to bed, and think it over to-morrow."

"When Fetong returned to Mrs. Thomas's, Mr. Weston had left for London, accompanied by Donina,"

Bonelo. "We will now all hasten to the side of him who to-day has seen the last of earth-life with the eyes of mortality."

Harriet. "See, the spirits approach the home of Mr. Thomas. That is a view of the whole interior of the house; in the back parlour lie the remains of Deacon Thomas. The spirits enter at the open door, unseen by the grief-stricken widow, or the sympathizing and sorrowing friends."

Bonelo. "Spirit brothers, when looking upon that inanimate form, we behold, if we view it with the eyes of mortals, the effect of the saddest, most painful, most eventful occurrence of his life: We see the severance of the dearest, purest ties in life—we see, as if done by a hand the most cruel and most powerful, a being, beautifully and wonderfully formed, made silent and lifeless in a moment. If we regard death as mortals view it, we see no God who is the father of the human family; but a monster who has no pity, no compassion, no sympathy, no love; we see a being more demoniacal than the mythical devil of man's barbarous imagination. But, brother spirits, we cannot view it thus; we look at this lifeless body as a perfect chemical laboratory, complicated yet harmoniously constructed. We see in this form a

concentration of such powers as are delicately, yet so powerfully, adjusted, that no contrivance of man has ever approached it. We look upon it as having done the work for which it was created, we look with wonder and admiration, and with praise we raise our hearts to him who gave it. We do not desire to see it reanimated; that would be asking God to do over again a work already perfect; we could not desire it when we look upon this other work of His, our brother's new birth into a state of being wherein all towards which he aspired is realized. When we turn our eyes from the earth-body now motionless, dead, and fix them upon our brother's body, now becoming animated with life, immortal life; what are our feelings towards Him who first gave the life, then the material individual existence, and now has again restored that life to its own congenial sphere with a new-created body? A spirit with a material clothing constructed exactly like the mould in which it was cast: the earth-body, the mould, has now become useless; the casting is perfect and indestructible—the mould must perish; but our brother, who is now beginning to feel the inspiring influence of his native air, must live for ever. See, he is born into spirit-life, he feels how wonderful a thing it is to live, he looks upon that body of which he is the inhabitant, and wonders whence it came; presently he will know—his intuition will tell him, and when he rises higher in this condition of being he will then understand the uses of earth-life. See, he is about to speak.

Thomas. "Where am I, what are these sensations I feel thrilling through every vein and artery of this body? Whence comes this form and shape I see and feel; is it flesh and blood, or is it spirit? Who are these I see near me? Not mortal men, of this I am sure. Tell me if you are friends or messengers, and know the answer to my question, do I dream? Or do I live, and is that my body I see lying there, and can you say if I have left its limbs and brain for ever? Or must I, after tasting all this bliss of life, return again and live a life the highest joy of which, if lengthened out to three score years and ten, could not be worth an hour like this I now feel filling every fibre of this frame. Tell me, do I live, or do I dream?"

Bonelo. "Brother, God knows you live."

Thomas. "Live! then this is immortality, I feel its truth, I feel its glory; and He who gave me life is good—He also gave you life and immortality, and gives it to all. Oh thou parent of the human race, I feel the grandeur of my being, and worship Thee, thou source of all good. I leave in Thine hands the destinies of those I love on earth, the widow and the fatherless; I leave in thine hands the vengeance which in earth-life is thought due to the wrong-doer, and the reward to him who serveth Thee aright. I leave it all to Thee; teach me to know myself, my present condition of life, and Thine own nature. As my heart overflows with love, accept, O God, my loving praise and adoration."

Bonelo. "Brother, we are here as messengers of love to conduct you to the society of those who like yourself have entered on this new, this glorious life of immortality. Elot, you had better now proceed to spirit-land, and report all I have communicated to you, which will also include the introduction of this new-born brother to the Council of Spirits, adieu. Brother spirits, we had better leave this house of mourning, our brother Thomas may not be desirous to depart till after the funeral. Our destination is the chapel yard, where our brother spirit Glerow will seek us, should he return."

Glerow. "Brothers, I wondered on my first arrival here to find no one on guard; I come laden with momentous intelligence, without meeting the Council in the appointed place, to whom I wished to unburden myself. 'Tis true I have not waited long, and it seems to me that matters of some moment must have intervened to take so august a Council all away at once?"

Bonelo. "Speak not reprovingly my brother; mortals in the midst of life and happiness have no doubt been your associates, while we have been with those in the gloomy companionship of death, and all the attendant sorrow and hopelessness which mortals gather around that event which is really joyful. Now to our discourse; brother spirits, these cypress trees and weeping willows, are the walls and roof of our Hall of Council, and these tombstones are our seats; Glerow, the Assembly awaits your report."

CHAPTER IV.

Glerow. "Honored President and brothers, I sought and found the Royal George Hotel, on Holborn Hill, and discovered that a gentleman named Thomas was staying there, accompanied by a man servant, and having with him his own carriage. I waited, the gentleman being then away, and presently a visitor presented himself, on whose card was written The Reverend T. Mursell. Mr. Mursell requested an interview with Mr. Thomas, and was informed that he was expected in half an hour, whereupon Mursell said he would await his return. At the end of the time named Mr. Thomas made his appearance, and after expressing his surprise and pleasure at meeting an old college acquaintance, the following conversation occurred,"

Thomas. "I am very glad to see you, old boy; but I am curious to know how you got my address, and what has brought you here."

Mursell. "Well now Thomas, your curiosity shall be gratified; but before proceeding to that, as I have not met you these eight years, let me recall the remembrance of those jolly times we had at St. Job's. I feel, on seeing you, like living them over again. Allow me to congratulate you, old fellow, on out-sailing

that old bookworm Weston, and marrying the rich heiress. She preferred the gay young spark to the austere divine. But you are not looking so light-hearted as when we last met, eight years ago. Does not married life agree with you; or are you living faster than in your college days, "now that your means are so multiplied?"

Thomas. "Indeed, Mursell, I must confess I am not very well; you know it is not an easy matter to break off habits formed in our youth, especially when circumstances are favourable to their indulgence. You, I consider, are more happily situated than I am, much as you seem to envy me. You are a successful minister of a wealthy church, whose members appreciate your talents, and can pay you a good salary, for which you have the satisfaction of knowing that you work. Your profession is such as to make it imperative upon you to live a sober and a quiet life; you have then, in spite of yourself, a restraint put upon your actions, which makes you moral, pious, holy; and these excellent qualities must have been continually improving in you. Now, as to myself, I have had no such checks, and eight years of free living have certainly told rather seriously upon my constitution."

Mursell. "Come Thomas, you are the last I should have expected to turn moralist and philosopher. It is true my profession places me under restraints, and there are a thousand eyes upon my every-day life, but this I consider the most disagreeable part of my calling. Every impertinent young fellow and forward minx consider they have a right to ask whether such and such things are consistent in a Christian minister. You know Thomas the study of divinity is oppressive; and one is ever feeling a strong desire to let loose and run in the opposite direction—from the study of Paley one naturally flies to Byron. And so it is with these moral restraints upon our actions; and that is one reason why I would rather have the society of an old acquaintance like yourself, who knows London life and amusements, while here for a day or two; and thus feel freedom, if only for a short time."

Thomas. "I am really glad to see you, and for the present we will say as we used to do, 'let's drive dull care away.'"

Mursell. "By the bye, Thomas, I should like to go somewhere to-night; can you introduce me to any place or congenial society? I should like for once in a way to go to one of the most popular theatres, and, if it is in your line, I should have no objection to a peep behind the scenes, and if there should happen to be any charming young actress you may chance to be acquainted with, I don't know that I should at all mind being introduced."

Thomas. "O yes, certainly; the Reverend T. Mursell, Miss Stanley, the leading lady of the popular company—that would sound nicely, would it not?"

Mursell. "No, no, that it is not at all necessary. You recollect in our college days we called each other the Reverend So-and-so, in joke, because 'twas a jovial sort of thing to picture his

reverence as we sometimes were; but now, it is quite a different affair—call me Thompson, Brown, or what you like, you know, a friend of yours. By the way, talking of actresses, Thomas, I believe I heard that a very charming young lady, for whom my old college tutor was guardian, relation, trustee or something else—you remember her—rather smitten there, I think—you used to say she was the prettiest, cleverest, nicest and all that you know, and that if you had a thousand a year you would marry her."

Thomas. "I wonder if you mean —"

Mursell. "Oh you know well enough who I mean, Miss — ; well, no matter what her name was then, I suppose she is just as charming under her assumed name of Miss Vernon as that which belongs to her. Well, as I was saying, Thomas, I heard somewhere that she took to the stage, and is performing in one of the London theatres."

Thomas. "I believe you have been rightly informed, and if you are not afraid of being recognised I think I could gain you an introduction to her."

Mursell. "Not the least fear of my being remembered, my dear man; you know she saw very little of me when she visited the old bloke. Of course she will recollect you, she could not forget you. Perhaps, if the old chap had not been so strict with her, the power which brings opposite bodies together would have produced certain effects; for, if I used my observant faculties aright, she had a weakness in one of her eyes you-wards. But of course it came to nothing; and then the rich heiress appearing on the scene inclined you to the conclusion that a pretty face was all very well in its way, but would neither buy house, nor land, nor keep you as a gentleman at ease, driving your own four wheels. Is not that about the case, Thomas?"

Thomas. "Well, you have very nearly sketched the picture to the life; but not quite. Now, if I obtain an introduction for you, Mursell, you can keep your own counsel, and unless you betray yourself, you will be known only as my friend Brown. The time of departure draws near, so I will send round for the carriage, and we may as well proceed to the scene of action."

Glerow. "They were then driven in Mr. Thomas's carriage to Sadler's Wells Theatre. Bob the coachman was ordered to fetch them back at twelve. After settling Mr. Mursell comfortably in the dress circle, Mr. Thomas expressed a desire to be excused a few minutes while he went round to see if he could obtain an introduction for his friend. I accompanied him, and saw him enter a little private room, in which sat a lady prepared for her part of the performance in the drama about to commence. She immediately rose to greet him, and the following is what passed between them."

Miss Vernou. "Oh Walter, how glad I am you have just looked in before the performance commenced. I thought you late, and you know how much it cheers and helps me in my work to see

you, if only for few moments. Your love inspires me with an enthusiasm in the performance of my part, which I do not feel when you are away."

Thomas. "Mary, dear, I regret the time is very limited in which I can stay with you now, for, when I was preparing to meet you here, a friend called in, and I could not well get away, and moreover he desired to come to the theatre with me. And this is not all, for he has heard of you as a popular actress, and expressed a wish to be introduced to you. He is from the country, and I have promised to obtain him an introduction if possible, and have just left him in the dress circle for that purpose. Now you need not seem to know me as being any more than an ordinary acquaintance."

Vernon. "Do not hurry away, love, I shall not be called on for nearly half an hour, and not being in the afterpiece, you can introduce your friend to the 'popular actress' when she has done her work. Walter, when are you going back home? I wish I could see some way in which the present state of things could be altered. I feel myself in every sense your wife, and yet the law, and the customs of respectable society would, if our intimacy was known, brand you a criminal, and me an outcast; and yet I feel within me love as pure, and as holy, as any legal wife can feel for her husband. I must appear your mistress, be introduced to your friend as a casual acquaintance, and our dear offspring must be taunted with the stigma of illegitimacy. Oh Walter, there must be a state of existence beyond this, where all that is wrong will be righted; there must be a condition of life yet to be realized where it is no crime to love, and where love alone shall be the marriage bond."

Thomas. "Mary my darling, you are getting in your gloomy mood again, which is always the case when the time draws near for me to go away. I feel the separation as acutely as yourself, my love; but I feel it must be, so bow to circumstances. Most gladly, dearest one, would I stay with you always, but you know the reason why it cannot be. Could I have only known ten years ago what I know now; no influence of friends or parents, nor my love for the ease, luxuries, and distinctions which marriage with money brings—no, not all these inducements acting at one time would have drawn me from her to whom alone I can be truly married. Mary, I was ignorant and weak; and that is why I have spent the last seven years of my life in such a manner that, when I think of you, I am ashamed to look back upon. Had I but have known then, what I know now, that your love for me is mine of wealth inexhaustible, and more precious than all I have obtained by what my friends call a lucky marriage, I must have wedded my pure, my ever beautiful one. I could have labored for you and those dear offspring of our love with far more real pleasure than I now find in the advantages of my mistaken marriage. Toil would have given me health, love would have given

me happiness; and conjugal union would have filled the aching void I feel when I am away from you. The unsatisfied feeling which I have within me has been the cause of my intemperance, which I know has given you so much pain. We might both have been happy, Mary; we might have realised the purest joys of life; I might have been a healthy, happy husband, you a sorrowless and loving wife. Our children might have been now alive, for you would not have been labouring here as you are now; you could then have discharged all the duties of a mother to our little ones; and the home which sheltered us must have been of the happiest, had we but have been possessed of knowledge. But now, my angel, it is too late; and what is to be our future is shadowed in anxiety and gloom.

Vernon. "There, my turn on the stage has nearly arrived, you must go; after the piece I will see you and your friend, adieu."

Glerow. "Thomas now sought his friend Mursell, whom he had left in the dress circle, and they conversed as follows."

Mursell. "Well, Thomas, I was wondering what had become of you; is it all right?"

Thomas. "To tell you the truth, Mursell, when you once get behind the curtain, you find it difficult to leave."

Mursell. "That must turn much upon the way in which you are engaged there. If you can be brought into personal contact with these charming creatures, who, as they step upon the stage, fascinate the whole auditory, it is no matter of surprise that it should be difficult to tear yourself away."

Thomas. "Oh that depends very much upon circumstances; there is many a sad heart puts on a smiling countenance among those charming creatures, as you call them; and none know it so well as those who go behind the scenes."

Mursell. "Who is that just come upon the stage, she seems to be a favorite, by the reception she gets?"

Thomas. "Do you not remember ever seeing her before?"

Mursell. "That is not Miss ———, is it?"

Thomas. "Yes, that is Miss Vernon, and you do not recognize her?"

Mursell. "Not the least trace of her former self; and yet, now she begins to speak, I do feel reminded of her; what a graceful manner, how tender and impressive the tone of her voice. I should imagine Shakespere could not have desired a better exponent of his best female characters than Miss Vernon; really I do not wonder that she is a favorite. I say Thomas, do you know anything of her private life? If you could give me her address I should like to call upon her while in London, for old acquaintance sake."

Thomas. "I can give you her address, if you like; there it is, Alpha street, St. John's Wood. She may invite you to give her a call; I believe these actresses are very free and generous. This is the last scene; when the curtain falls we will just go round

and get you an introduction. There comes the finish, but we must give them time to get off their stage attire and clothe themselves as ordinary mortals."

Mursell. "For my part, I would rather see them as they are, half the novelty will be gone."

Thomas. "And perhaps half the beauty too; we must submit to the rules of the theatre if we wish to obtain favors, and this is one of them."

Mursell. "Except to a privileged few. I should imagine my friend Thomas must have had his interview with them before the performance, while in stage attire."

Thomas. "I think we may go now, they have had time to wash the paint off, and exchange their garments."

Glerow. "Thomas now conducted his friend to the same little apartment in which Thomas himself had so recently been, but no one was there; he then asked Mursell to wait while he enquired if the lady had gone home, and proceeded to another room, where Miss Vernon was expecting him. This dialogue then took place."

Thomas. "Come, Mary dear, Brown is in the room, follow me in a minute; you can be unwell and going away immediately; get a cab to convey you home, I must take Brown with me, come along please."

Thomas. "Well, Mursell, she will be here in a minute, just to say how do you do—not well, going away at once. Here she is—Miss Vernon, Mr. Brown."

Mursell. "I am most happy to have the privilege of an introduction to so eminent a lady, through the courtesy of my friend, and am exceedingly sorry to hear you are unwell."

Miss Vernon. "Only a slight cold, and the fatigues of my professional duties; am sorry I cannot stay with you, Mr. Brown; good evening, good evening, Mr. Thomas."

Mursell. "I say Thomas, she looks a dozen years older off the stage, and a dozen and a half more than when she used to come down to Leicester to see our old buffer."

Thomas. "The labors of the profession of an actress tell very severely upon the constitution; we had better be going, this room may be wanted by others. You will sup with me, Mursell, where is your hotel?"

Mursell. "The Green Cow, not more than ten minutes' walk from the George; drop me at the door as you pass. I would rather be excused supper, as I have some writing to do before I go to bed."

Thomas. "As you please, make it agreeable to yourself; there is the carriage, jump in; all right, Bob, stop at the Green Cow."

Glerow. "I thought from what I saw of Mr. Mursell that I had better follow him to his hotel and try to get to know, what Mr. Thomas had failed to discover, the motive he had in seeking Thomas. So when Mursell got out of the carriage, I accompanied him into the house, and on his entering the commercial room, a

gentleman, who proved to be Mr. Weston, accosted him as follows—well Mursell, what success?"

Mursell. "Very fair indeed. Let us go to our own room, this is not private; now, look here Weston, I have seen and heard enough to satisfy me of the fact."

Weston. "But have you seen anything that would be of use as evidence in the Divorce Court?"

Mursell. "I will tell you what I have seen and heard, and you can judge for yourself. First, my plan of attack was quite a success; he had not the slightest suspicion of my motive. He took me to the theatre where she was performing, and then left me in my seat while he went professedly to secure me an introduction to an old acquaintance, who was not to recognize me—the Revd. T. Mursell was his friend Brown from the country. Well he had been gone behind the scenes a full half hour, when he returned to tell me I could be introduced at the end of the play; and immediately after she came upon the stage. Now this is fact number one. Afterwards I wheedled her private address out of him—that is number two. And then he introduced me to her in a little private room, somewhere at the back of the stage, which was evidently hired from the adjoining café for his own use—as it was too far away from the stage to be a dressing room, and appeared to me to belong to the next building. Here he left me to go and find the lady; the meaning of which I well knew was to prompt her to blind me. He returned, she followed in a minute or two; he introduced her himself—fact number three."

Weston. "But is that all? Why I do not see one scrap of evidence that would prove Mr. Walter Thomas to be living in London in adulterous intercourse with Miss Vernon, an actress; not one particle."

Mursell. "Stop a bit, my friend Weston, do you expect to hunt down your prey the moment you sight them? First you learn their lair, then you watch their movements, and if you intend to catch them alive you must ascertain their weak points, use stratagem, and above all things exhibit no impatience, or you will alarm the objects of your pursuit, and frustrate your own purpose. We have sufficient to satisfy us of very undue intimacy for a married man; we have the private address of the lady; now what is to prevent us taking a room in the same house, supposing it should be a lodging house; or else in a convenient position to watch who enters?"

Weston. "Really, Mursell, things do look more favorable than at first sight appeared; we had better proceed to the neighborhood of the lady's residence the first thing in the morning; and as it is now very late I will say good night, for I want my rest very badly."

Glerow. "Weston then left the room, which was Mursell's sleeping apartment, and, after hearing the following soliloquy, I made my way to the Royal George."

Mursell. "What motive can Weston have for being so desirous to know that Mr. Walter Thomas is living in adultery with a London actress, and to obtain proof of the fact. To me it is of some importance to learn the truth of it, first for the satisfaction of my old friend Burns, her guardian, whose duty it is, until she is married, to know the manner of her life. It is true she has broken away from all restraint by taking to the profession of an actress; and no doubt he would have given her up as lost, had he not received that communication from Mrs. Thomas, whom he wishes to serve. And, moreover, I have not quite forgotten the scornful manner in which she rejected my suit, when in all honesty I made a proposal to her ten years ago. I know she preferred that scapegrace Thomas to me; and now that he has married wealth, and obtained all the luxury and distinction which money brings, he must needs take to his arms his former love, and she is willing to be all that a wife could be to him, without thinking of marriage. Yes, I have two very strong inducements for finding out the facts of the case; my personal reasons, and my desire to oblige my old tutor; let me see, I have his letter here:—

"My Dear Mursell,—Enclosed is a note from a lady whom for certain reasons I am anxious to serve, and at the same time discharge a second-hand parental duty to Miss Vernon, whose father appointed me her guardian, on his death bed. She, I grieve to say, strayed into the paths of sin and misery; yet it is still the duty of a parent to inform himself of the character and habits of his child, however abandoned she may be. Thinking you would be able and willing to assist me in this matter, and wishing you to be in full possession of all that concerns it, I have enclosed Mrs. Thomas's, or rather Mr. Weston's, letter to me. Yours truly, J. BURNS.

"And this is the enclosure—

"My dear Tutor,—I write this in my capacity of spiritual adviser and sincere friend of our esteemed sister in Christ, Mrs. Thomas, who, I regret to say, is in the deepest distress. She requested me to communicate with you because she is aware you stand in the capacity of parent to a lady who by her conduct is the cause of all her trouble. Miss Vernon, who is now an actress, and whose guardian you are, is suspected of living in an improper manner with the husband of Mrs. Thomas. She desires immediate action taken to ascertain the truth. I have every reason to believe you will render all assistance in your power, either by personal action or deputy, that so excellent a lady as Mrs. Thomas may be enabled to prove the truth or falsity of the rumour. By her desire I am going up to London, and if you will make the necessary arrangements for co-operation with me in my enquiries, you will oblige, yours truly, J. WESTON.—P.S. All expenses will be paid."

"In his capacity of minister and sincere friend! Information that would be considered sufficient proof in a Divorce Court!

Why Weston is an old lover of hers, she is wealthy—now I have the whole of it. This is your little scheme, Mr. Weston; you want a legal matrimonial separation, and then the course is clear for you to step into Mr. Thomas's place. I do not much like the business; still, as I am in it, and can serve Weston, as well as my friend Burns; and as I also feel a rather curious interest in following out the career of two persons who have fallen into crime, and whom I have known under better circumstances, I will carry it through. It may give me another lesson in the depravity of the human heart."

Glerow. "I left Mr. Mursell and proceeded to the Royal George hotel. Mr. Thomas was gone to bed; and the only persons I found up, (for it was nearly morning,) were the night porter and Bob the coachman, and the latter appeared to have set his mind to spend the remainder of the night in the stable loft, being much overcome with liquor. I approached him, and listened to his muttered ejaculations."

Bob. "Here I am, away from the old woman, getting drunk again. What would she say if she know'd we was in London, 'stead of Winterford. Me as screwed as a lord, and master a driving about with that theatre woman in missus's carriage. Mum's the word with Bob; master's good to me—this ain't bad liquor they gives us here—of course we've been to Winterford, looked after the farm, collected the rents, seen the lawyers, etcetera. I've seen none of 'em, but that aint my business, as master says; I know what to say if they gets wanting to know everything. S'pose missus been to Winterford and found it all out; s'pose master goes home to-morrow, and me on with the beer again—why my old woman, she'll kill me. I won't s'pose, taint pleasant; I'll have another drink—blow me if 'taint morning. what can a fellow like me do but get tight here? Nothing to work at, no old woman to talk to, can't read, nobody but these hosses—they's my company, but they don't get drunk like me. where was master's acting woman to-night? Drove that gent to the play; drove him back to the Green Cow; drove master here somethin's up, seems queer like. Going home, s'pose; no I won't s'pose; but he's allars so when he's going back home—I'll just get out in the air and try and get tight."

Glerow. "I waited at the Royal George until Mr. Thomas rose, and having ascertained it was his intention to visit Miss Vernon the first thing after breakfast, I started away to St. John's Wood. On my way I looked in at the Green Cow, and found Weston and Mursell at breakfast, engaged in conversation, as follows."

Weston. "I think the sooner we start for Alpha Street, St. John's Wood, the better. This telegram which I received from home this morning, announcing the death of Deacon Thomas, states that the funeral will take place on Friday, I must therefore return to-morrow. There is no time to lose; if you have finished breakfast, we will call a cab and be off."

Mursell. "You seem most uncommonly impatient Weston; you might be personally interested in the issue of this adventure—however, I'm ready."

Weston. "I do sympathise deeply with Mrs. Thomas, for she is one of the most generous, noble-minded women I have ever met with. But her husband is not only a drunkard, and most unthankful fellow, but, as we shall be able to prove before long, one who violates the sanctity of his marriage bond."

Mursell. "Poor fellow, I fear he is rather unhappy, and has sunk very much indeed. I suppose you are aware that this Miss Vernon, as she is called, is an old flame of his."

Weston. "Oh yes, I am aware of that, but a man must regulate his conduct according to circumstances; he is married now; and it outrages the customs of civilized society, and the laws of the State and of morality and religion, to act as he is now acting."

Mursell. "I do not mention it by way of justification; I think he well deserves all he may get. It must have been a great trouble to the old deacon and his wife."

Weston. "Well, the fact is they did not believe it. The old man's death seems sudden; I wonder whether he heard of my coming to London, and my object, and whether that has had anything to do with his death."

Cabman. "This is Alpha Street, gents, what number?"

Weston. "We will get out here, there's your money, you need not wait."

Mursell. "Fifty is the number; now when you come to the house I shall walk on, and wait up the street. It is only nine o'clock, her visitor will not be here before ten, or so. Ask if rooms can be obtained near, if there are none to be had at number fifty."

Weston. "Here it is.—[Knocks, and servant appears.] Can I see your master?"

Servant. "Missis is in, what name, Sir?"

Weston. "Will you tell your mistress I want to speak to her."

Servant. "Missis is at breakfast, will you please to step in?"

Mistress. "What, may I ask, is it you —?"

Weston. "I wish to engage lodgings, and thought you might have apartments, or could tell me, perhaps, of some in this neighbourhood."

Mistress. "This is my house, I do not let apartments; they might have some rooms over the way, but I do not know."

Weston. "Thank you, madam, I am very sorry to have troubled you, good morning."

Glerow. "After leaving, he joined Mursell, and they together called at the house opposite, and secured a front apartment. The conversation between them afterwards continued."

Mursell. "Are you quite sure the lady at Number Fifty was Miss Vernon?"

Weston. "Certain. Knew her the moment she spoke, although she is much altered from what she was when she visited the College."

Mursell. "Did you observe anything particular about her appearance?"

Weston. "I should be disposed to say that she will shortly become a mother."

Mursell. "Then you have not been mistaken in her, for I had formed the same opinion. Now Weston, I have often thought there is something wrong in the marriage laws of English society, which makes a divorce court necessary."

Weston. "Perhaps you think polygamy, as practised among the Mormons, if made legal in England, would be a prevention of such unfortunate cases as this one at present under our notice."

Mursell. "Without advocating polygamy or Mormonism, I must confess that much as we pride ourselves on the superiority of our marriage laws, and the morality of our social institutions, we do, nevertheless, suffer from evils of society which are not known amongst the followers of Joe Smith. Look, for instance, at this present case, and there are thousands like it. Here is a woman who through an improper intimacy is placed in an unfortunate condition; and the law, and the voice of civilized society, demand that he who is the cause of all shall abandon her. She is allowed, or may obtain, a pecuniary compensation, after passing through an exposure which few women will encounter, and that is all. In her case it may not be so bad as some, but it is from such cases as hers that prostitution, crime, drunkenness, and suicide, receive their victims. Look, there is a carriage opposite."

Weston. "That is Thomas, keep out of sight, she is at the door to meet him; there, he has kissed her in the passage. He little thinks who saw it."

Mursell. "We shall have little chance of seeing any more at present. She may go to rehearsal, and he may accompany her. If we could only contrive to reach the servant next door, we might be able to get at what you most desire to know, proof of acts of conduct which would be useful in a divorce court."

Weston. "You were speaking just now about the contrast between society in this enlightened Christian country and those heathen polygamists in America; and from your remarks it appeared to me you thought they had the advantage over us on the score of morality."

Mursell. "Do not misunderstand me; I am no apologist for either polygamy or that species of free love so common among certain classes of English society. But I do think that a great amount of the unfaithfulness and cruelty in the marriage state is owing to the majority of marriages being ill-assorted."

Weston. "Granted; but would you remedy the ills arising from an unfortunate marriage by adding, as in the case of our

friend over the way, another wife to the domestic circle ; and make such an arrangement legal ? In doing this you would subvert one of the fundamental doctrines of our Christian religion—that of being the husband of one wife."

Mursell. "I do not propose any remedy at all : but men occupying the position we do, where it is forced upon us to know much that is kept secret from all else, cannot help sometimes asking the question, whether some means of preventing the cause of these evils is not possible."

Weston. "To the Christian the means are clearly laid down in scripture. If they marry out of Christ, evil must come of it. But if a marriage takes place between those who are the Lord's people, (it matters nothing to what section of the Christian church one or the other may belong) such marriage is sacred in the sight of God, and is sanctified by him."

Mursell. "Now my dear fellow, this is all very fine in theory, and sounds very well from the pulpit, especially when the sermon is preached on the occasion of a marriage between two of your own church. I have said very similar words when a rich manufacturer, of fifty and upwards, has married a blooming maiden of twenty, both members of my flock. Take this case in your own church. Here is a young fellow educated for the ministry, the son of pious parents, and he himself, I suppose, a member of your congregation. He marries a lady ten or twelve years older than himself, and now, after six or seven years of united existence, she has learnt that her husband has for some long period been keeping up an intimacy with another lady nearer his own age, and with whom he had some slight acquaintance before his marriage. And this it seems is likely to end in the Divorce Court, and bring a scandal upon the Christian church."

Weston. "It is very sad, but I do not see how it is to be avoided. It was no business of mine to interfere with a marriage upon which they both seemed bent, and was encouraged by their friends. To be candid with you, Mursell, I had proposed to her myself, and I thought a much more suitable match would have been the result had she accepted me. You know he was a more dashing sort of young man, and women are weak in such matters. But she bitterly repents her mistake now it is too late. Whatever may have been his education or parentage, his conduct has proved him a man of this world. His falling into such gross sin shows he is not one of the Lord's people ; if he be one, he must be saved at last."

Mursell. "Then for all who are not within the fold of Christ there are no means of preventing the error and misery which attend ill-assorted marriages. Are we not the ministers of humanity as well as of the Christian Church—and is it not our duty to give counsel to the world ? Now, let us be candid with ourselves, and see if there be more real happiness in the marriage state among those we call the Lord's people than among the same number

of the children of the devil. And let us ask if there is not to be found as much faithfulness to the marriage vow, and proportionately to numbers, in the world, as there is in the Church.

Weston. "Did not our Lord distinctly teach the Jews that polygamy was contrary to the will of God; that he first created them male and female, and that divorce and a plurality of wives were allowed by Moses because of the hardness of their hearts, although never sanctioned by God."

Mursell. "It appears then, that under our Christian system, there is not any remedy for ill-assorted marriages except the Divorce Court. It is also impossible to prevent marriages from being ill-assorted while people enter into so important an engagement with motives the very reverse of those which, according to the laws of nature, must result in happiness."

Weston. My dear brother, as soon as you go beyond the fold of Christ, and begin to speculate on remedies for the evils which afflict the world at large, you immediately get into a fog. The whole world lieth in wickedness. The heart of man is like the troubled sea, ever casting up mire and dirt. You talk of nature as if you had forgotten that the whole of it, animate and inanimate, is under the curse of God. You seem to have entirely lost sight of the fact that the only garden of the Lord, the only green spot in this waste, howling wilderness, is the Christian Church; and that the only remedy for the effects of the fall is salvation through Christ."

Mursell. "Now, Weston, it is the greatest nonsense in the world to talk to me like that; theology belongs to the pulpit; we are now supposed to be talking common sense. Let us sink the pulpit, and reason as men."

Weston. "Are you a secularist?"

Mursell. "My dear fellow, it is not worth while to argue these points, but of this I am certain, that the majority of the most intelligent members of our churches are becoming more indifferent about dogmas, and are drifting as fast as their knowledge can carry them towards Unitarianism. I would rather, for the sake of argument, leave theology out of the question, and speak of man as a rational and intelligent creature; let us look at him physiologically, phrenologically, and psychologically; whether in or out of the church, mankind are governed by the same laws of life, their dispositions correspond with their phrenological development, and the same laws act upon one as upon another, when the circumstances and conditions are the same."

Weston. "I fear I shall not be able to follow you into these fields of speculation; but I will listen, proceed."

Mursell. "Are not all alike sustained by food and drink? If both the Christian and the man of the world regard the laws of health alike, they equally enjoy freedom from those desires which have to be endured by those who infringe these laws. The fact of a man being a Christian, and unquestionably one of the

elect of God, is no guarantee that he shall not be subject to the same physiological laws as the greatest reprobate who ever lived. That material organism, the human brain, is an infallible guide to the *possible* intellectual, emotional, moral, and animal condition of man, whether he belong to the family of the elect, or be a debased libertine, or an impious atheist. If mankind are possessed of certain combinations of brain development, they must be either internally or externally the characters for which such brain development capacitates them. That two individuals may be endowed with the like brain development is true, and is the result of a combination of like circumstances; but the reason why the one may be an atheist and the other a deacon of a Christian church, is the effect of circumstances, and of the influence of education. The Christian is internally what the atheist is externally; and the atheist is internally as capable of devout worship, high aspiration, and cheering hope of the future as the Christian, only they are differently directed. We see mankind are on an equal footing, physiologically and phrenologically; now we will go a step higher. In their psychological condition God has shown himself no respecter of persons. To arrive at the best thoughts on the science and philosophy of the human mind, soul, spirit, or whatever we may call it, I would not go back to Plato, or even to Jesus; I would rather take the most recent thoughts of the most advanced minds of to-day; I would bring my own reason to bear upon them, and then draw my own conclusions."

Weston. "My dear sir, it is impossible for me to follow you, since you have gone out of the region of Christian philosophy."

Mursell. "Bear with me a little, and hear me out. Depend upon it this is a subject which Christian ministers ought not to neglect examining. It is not the immortality of man, but his spiritual equality we are now discussing; the spirits of all mankind being alike imperishable, must be alike in the essence; the fact that one class is happy for ever, and the other suffers eternal torment, is indisputable proof that they each possess the like powers of endurance. In their nature, then, the spirits of all humanity are created equal; in the condition, or degree of their happiness, or misery, all differ. I think reason and common sense must lead every thinking man to the conclusion that in the sight of God all are equal."

Weston. "Well, Mursell, if you have done, I will just give you the conclusion of the whole matter. A philosophy like that introduced into our churches, would be destructive of the grandest doctrines of revealed religion. There comes the carriage; why Bob is so drunk he can hardly sit on his box. Let us see what time is it, half-past five. They are going for a drive, and then to the theatre. There they are."

Mursell. "She is a fine creature; I do not know Mrs. Thomas, but in my humble opinion this is just the woman for him, if she had but the *rhino*; there they go; poor Thomas!"

Weston. "What is the next move, Mursell?"

Mursell. First dinner; second, you proceed to Sadler's Wells Theatre, and plant yourself in an obscure place, yet where you can see as much of the stage as possible; and when you think Miss Vernon has done her part of the performance, take such action as circumstances may suggest; but be here before she returns home. I will place myself in communication with the servant at No. 50. through the servant of this house; no doubt a silver, or a golden key, will unlock the tongues of both; now to dinner."

Glerow. "When they had dined, Mr. Weston, attended by Donina, went to the theatre, and I resolved to remain with Mr. Mursell until Mr. Weston's return. The domestic of the house being found willing to co-operate in communicating with the girl at No. 50, the latter was induced to come over, and the following conversation took place between Mr. Mursell and herself."

Mursell. "Now my girl, your name is Ann Phillips, I believe. I want you to answer me a few questions about your mistress. There is a pound for you, and if you can give me all the information I want, at some future time you will get much more. How long have you lived with Miss Vernon?"

Ann. She aint no miss, sir; but like all these acting ladies, she is called Miss on the playbills; she aint no more Miss than my mother, as I knows from experience"

Mursell. "Now, what do you know from experience?"

Ann. "What do I know from experience! Havn't I lived in the house for two years, and done for her and him what a domestic, as they call me, has to do for her master and mistress. And wasn't Mrs. Mason, the nurse as my mother recommended, there only three months after I was first engaged; and didn't Mrs. Mason say to my mother, that she only went to respectable people. And when she found she had to nurse a Miss, where there was no master, she would have gone right away, and left the poor thing in all her trouble, if she could find it in her heart to leave the baby; but she couldn't. And didn't nurse up and tell her so; and didn't she cry, and say that it was the practice of the theatrical ladies to call themselves Miss. But she, poor thing, seemed in such trouble, I could not help but pity her; and, as I said to Mrs. Mason, perhaps her husband is a travelling gentleman, and only at home a week or two at a time, and then away for a month or two; and Mrs. Mason said if that was the case, it altered matters; and my mother said we had better stay at least a month and see, when I could give a month's warning if it wasn't so. But so it was exactly as my mother had said; the very next day master drove up to the door; and I says to Mrs. Mason, why there's the doctor, for I heard his carriage stop, and I haven't tidied up her room; you leave the baby in the cradle and run upstairs, while I answer the door. And who should it be but master, as is now; I didn't know him then; and he says how is your mistress? and I said, getting on as well as can be expected: and

he goes and pushes past me in such a manner as I thought was not like a gentleman. When I thought to keep him a long time at the door, he run by me, upstairs, and into missuses' room, before Mrs. Mason could get things straight ; and, as Mrs. Mason said, it quite ketched her breath away ; for he took no notice of her, but went straight up to the bed where the poor thing was a lying, and kissed her, and said, Maggie dear, I am so glad to find it over ; I got here as soon as I could after I received your letter, which had to go such a roundabout way. Then, as Mrs. Mason said, she was satisfied, and mother was satisfied ; and I must tell you plainly, sir, my missus is a respectable married woman ; and didn't he love that baby as any respectable man should love his babies. When the dear little thing died, only three months old, didn't they have a grand funeral, and Mrs. Mason was there, and didn't they seem to feel it, poor things ; and now Mrs. Mason is engaged again, and, as she says, her time can't be long."

Mursell. "Stop a moment, Ann ; your master was here to-day?"

Ann. "Yes, and has gone to the theatre with missus."

Mursell. "Your master, you say, is away for a month or two together ; and when he comes home, does he sleep in the house?"

Ann. "I can't say as he always does, but generally he does ; he did not last night, but he did the night before."

Mursell. "Now, Ann, if you have been servant in this house for two years, and your master sleeps at home, generally, when he is in town, you must have had occasion to go into the bedroom where they both slept."

Ann. "Many, many times. Wasn't it only yesterday morning I took one a cup of tea, and the other a cup of coffee, and didn't missus say as her cup of tea was beautiful, and she had to wake master up to drink his coffee."

Mursell. "Now, Ann Phillips, you may be required to prove in a public court that they are man and wife. You have given me all the information I require ; there is another half sovereign ; I would impress upon your mind the importance of keeping this all to yourself, and telling no one what has passed between us ; that will do, good evening."

Bonelo. "While Glerow concludes his account, you, Dono, had better go to Donina, and bring her report concerning Mr. Weston."

Glerow. "I did not stay longer with Mr. Mursell, but went out of his room at the same time as the girl Ann Phillips. Not finding Mr. Thomas at his hotel, I proceeded to the theatre, and discovered him about leaving there. He went to his hotel, and began to make arrangements for departure home on the morrow. He called upon Miss Vernon this morning, before leaving. They parted from each other with sorrow, and misgiving about the future. On arrival home, the coachman was not sober, and Mrs. Thomas received her husband in a manner which was evidently assumed ; while Mr. Thomas tried to seem at ease, but manifested

some suspicion as to what was the meaning of it. From what he had observed, he had every reason to believe he had been watched while in London, at least for the last few days; and the fact of seeing Mr. Weston in the theatre satisfied him that his wife had something to do with the surveillance under which he had been placed. Both seemed on their guard, and what passed between them was something like the following."

Mrs. Thomas. "I suppose, Walter, from your making no allusion to the melancholy event which has taken place, you did not receive my letter before your departure from Winterford?"

Mr. Thomas. "No, my love; what event?"

Mrs. Thomas. "The death of your poor father."

Mr. Thomas. "My father dead! When and how did that happen? He was in good health when I saw him last, a fortnight ago."

Mrs. Thomas. "He died the day before yesterday. The exact cause of his death I do not know, but it was sudden, and took place owing to some extraordinary circumstances in connection with the church causing him great excitement, and, as I understand, something of a very painful nature. You had better go at once to your mother, she wants to see you, and the particulars of your father's death may be learnt from her."

Glerow "Mr. Thomas appeared too much moved to reply, but directly left the house and sought his mother, whom he found in deep sorrow. He retired with her to the room in which lay, in its coffin, his father's remains. When brought face to face with death, his feelings got the better of him, and, falling upon his knees by the bed side, he gave vent to his emotion in prayer, as follows;—"My God, who giveth life and taketh it away, teach me to bow submission to thy will. Thou art the father of the fatherless and the friend of the widow; with resignation would we now acknowledge thine infinite wisdom, almighty power, and unfailing goodness in this most painful dispensation of thy providence. The past, present, and the future are all known to Thee, and although the loss of a husband, and father, may rend our hearts with grief, still, O God, we will not grieve as those who have no hope. As wisdom, goodness, and love are plainly written on all thou givest us in this life; so hope tells us they must be as plainly written on all Thou hast provided beyond the grave. Forgive the sins of thy humble servant; comfort the heart of my dear mother, and may we live as the departed one lived; and when the time of our death shall come, may we leave behind us a like evidence of acceptance with God; that a like hope of a joyful resurrection through Christ may comfort those we leave remaining. Oh, God, open Thou the eyes of our understanding, that the future life may no longer be a dark uncertainty to us, but a bright reality. Give us to feel that as Thou givest life, light, and happiness in this world, Thou wilt not withhold those cheering evidences of Thy presence in the next. Then death will no longer be that grim

monster he now appears, but an angel of hope, who opens the door to a better land. Let us feel that as Thou art the Father of all, Thou lovest thy children, and all Thou givest them in life or in death, in time and eternity, is good. Then will our sorrow at the departure of him we so much loved be exchanged into joy and thankfulness ; and our hope of a resurrection unto life where we may be again united in the bonds of conjugal, parental, and filial love, will enable us to realize the wisdom, and the goodness, of our Heavenly Father in this otherwise painful visitation.'

"Rising from their knees, mother and son fell into each other's arms, and spoke in succession as follows :—'Walter, that prayer was inspired by God to bring comfort and hope to my widowed heart. I shall soon follow him, and you, my son, may not have long to live. Oh, Walter, let your life be what you have now prayed it may be.' 'Mother, let us hope and trust in God.'"

Glerow. "After a few matters connected with the funeral were arranged, Mr. Thomas returned to his own house, and I came straightway here."

Bonelo. "Will Dono now favor us with Donina's report. Glerow may return to Fetong, and obtain his report of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas."

Dono. "Donina accompanied her son to London, and was with him when Glerow arrived at the Green Cow with Mr. Mursell. In Glerow's account must have been included the chief particulars of what occurred in London. She states that after leaving Mr. Mursell her son went to the theatre, and saw Mr. Thomas and Miss Vernon arrive there in a carriage ; that Mr. Weston noticed Miss Vernon on the stage, but did not see anything more of Mr. Thomas until the performance was concluded, when he observed him drive away without the lady, and she went home in a cab. Mr. Weston at once returned to the hired room, where Mr. Mursell had been interrogating Miss Vernon's servant during her mistress' absence. The information obtained was immediately communicated to Mr. Weston, and contained, according to his idea, all that was required to make the case complete. Mr. Weston and Mr. Mursell, after settling with the landlady for the use of her apartments, went away to their hotel. Arriving there, Mursell, after partaking of a little refreshment, went to bed ; but Mr. Weston sat down to write a full and complete statement of all he had been able to see and learn. Having finished this labour, and made all arrangements for departure by the early train in the morning, he retired to rest. In the morning, both Mursell and Weston left London together. On arrival there, Mr. Weston went to Mrs. Thomas's house, and gave into her hands the papers on which were written his description of what he had been able to gather in London ; when this dialogue ensued."

Mrs. Thomas. "Oh, you must come in, Mr. Weston ; I am so glad you have returned to-day."

Mr. Weston. "I must not stay now ; I want to be at home.

Besides, Mr. Thomas is very likely to return this morning, and I should not like him to find me here."

Mrs. Thomas. "But you must come inside for a minute or two, and have a glass of wine; I have something very particular to tell you."

Mr. Weston. "Well, I must not stay many minutes then."

Mrs. Thomas. "Did you find Sarah's statement correct?"

Mr. Weston. "The papers I gave you in the hall contain full particulars of what I have been able to find out."

Mrs. Thomas. "But I cannot stop to read them; tell me, is it true—is my husband such a monster as he is represented?"

Mr. Weston. "I am very reluctant to tell you; and think you had much better look through those papers, when you can do so quietly."

Mrs. Thomas. "Tell me, or I shall go mad; is my husband what they say he is?"

Mr. Weston. "My dear Mrs. Thomas, you must keep calm; our worst fears have been confirmed."

Mrs. Thomas. "What! then, it is true! Mr. Weston, you are my only counsellor and friend. But I am afraid you have things to learn about yourself and your church, that have been taking place during your absence, which, when you come to know them, may place a barrier between our intercourse, at least for a time. You had better go now; I will read this when alone, and write to you. Sarah is a messenger who may be trusted."

Dono. "Mr. Weston now went home, and receiving his letters from his housekeeper, retired to his study and closed the door; then selected one letter from the parcel, and read as follows:—

"My Dear Pastor,—It devolves upon me, as chairman of a deacons' meeting held yesterday, to inform you of its object. I shall therefore, in as few words as possible, discharge the painful duty. I regret to say that certain charges of a very scandalous nature were made against you. So bitter was the feeling expressed by some, and so violent was the opposition which was raised to affect you, that the excitement and mental anguish produced upon the mind of our dear brother Thomas, was more than his mortal frame could endure, and he fell from his chair dead. It was not considered that the charges were proved; and so what might have been the result of this inquiry had it not terminated so fatally, is impossible to say. At a subsequent meeting of the deacons, it was unanimously resolved that the matters which were brought forward at the last meeting be kept secret from all except yourself. Those brethren who had felt it their duty to make the charges, believing at the time they were facts, have now withdrawn them. Whether there be any truth in the accusations, your own conscience will be best able to answer. The past will be buried with our departed brother. If indiscretion on your part has given cause for the tongue of slander to speak, take the advice of a friend and Christian brother, and let your future actions be such as shall appear above suspicion. J. BAMFORD, Chairman."

Dono. "He laid down the letter and began to pace the room, soliloquising as follows :—'And has it come to this, that while I have been engaged in seeking proof of the delinquencies of others, my church people have been sitting in judgment upon my own character. Can I place my hand upon my heart, when no eye but that of God regards me, and say that I am innocent of the charges here hinted at? What is best for me to do under the circumstances? It is a relief to think that a rupture with my church is impossible for the present. In the mean time, I must (as Bamford says) be discreet. My intercourse must be conducted mainly by letter; she has in her possession facts sufficient to procure a divorce. When that is done I will marry her, and set my church and the slander of the world at defiance. What is this I feel within me? Do I love this woman? I did not intend to go into her house when I returned; I meant just to leave those papers and walk away, but I could not resist her. She offered me a glass of wine, and I took it. She had to tell me to go, before I felt any inclination to move. I know this is all wrong, but how can I help my feelings? I know she is the wife of another, and the fact of his unfaithfulness makes my sin no less. I would have married her, instead of him doing so, and all this evil could have been prevented. How useless it is to talk about what might have been. I must do my best to grapple with what is; but there is some mystery about this matter of marriage which I am unable to fathom. Why cannot I become indifferent to her? Why should it be, that when I struggle with myself in the endeavour to cease loving, I feel a volcano within my breast, pouring forth its burning lava of affection towards her. Why have I thus become the victim of my feelings, and am no longer able to resist temptation? Now that I see this love is reciprocated, it has become a raging passion within me, which absorbs my life; and to resist is useless. I would tear it out and cast it from me, but cannot; it enslaves me. My intellect, my spirit, my body, my will, are all carried along together and borne away in the irresistible torrent. Oh God, is there no forgiveness for my sin? Is there no power outside myself to save me from total wreck? I would not drift away from Thee on this fascinating stream, to find that I have at length made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Save me, oh God, save me.'"

Dono. "Here, Donina states, she strove all in her power to comfort and inspire him with hope; but the more the current of love was directed towards him the more dominant became that passion within, which he was striving and praying to overcome. She is deeply pained at seeing him suffer so intensely, and would be glad to be relieved from her charge, feeling that her influence over him has the reverse effect to what both he and she desire."

Bonelo. "The laws of spirit-influence over mortals are natural, but are not understood at present by the majority of spirits in

the sphere of knowledge, who are now learning, and will eventually apprehend those laws. The effect of a spirit's maternal love is to develop every other form of love in those with whom they are in parental affinity. Donina's love for her son excites in him that form of love which is natural to his present condition. The impulses of his nature are directed towards the natural object of his affections. If Donina was to withdraw from him, his strength of will and the force of circumstances would for a time check the course of nature ; and this would not answer our purpose. What he and Donina think to be sin, is the effect of the affinity of two natures, which affinity can never be destroyed. If it remains undeveloped, or kept under restraint in earth-life because circumstances are unfavourable, it must mature in spirit-life. Affinity of nature, when it exists between male and female, and develops into conjugal love, is the effect of pre-existence. The object of our mission to earth is to develop those natural conditions which will enable us to study and apply the laws of spirit influence over mortals. It is our desire to bring mankind into more natural relations one with another, that more harmonious mental conditions may be developed. As there does not at present exist any direct communication between spirits and mortals, and the only way of communicating is by impression, it must be made through those conditions in which men are found. When it becomes possible to impart direct teaching to mankind, they may then be taught to co-operate with us in producing such conditions of harmony with nature as shall place them in a position of elevation almost equal with yourselves. For the present, we must be content to learn those laws which develop mankind to such natural conditions as will lead to harmony. All discord works its own cure, and when the pure and loving influence of spirits is brought in contact with mortals, its natural effect is the development and maturation of such conditions of mind as at the time exist. Spirit impression cannot change the nature of man, but its influence may impel him on to the ripening of such conditions as are at present discordant. By the suffering which such experience brings, man learns wisdom, and becomes more harmonious."

Glerow. "I salute you, Bonelo, and brethren of this council. I hope I have not interrupted our beloved President in his address."

Bonelo. "Your visit is welcome, brother, and while we listen to your report, Dono will depart to Donina. Glerow, you can proceed."

Glerow. "Fetong reports Mr. Thomas's return to his own house, after the visit to his mother. He was deeply affected by the circumstances, and seems in a very weak state of health. Upon his departure to the mother's house, Mrs. Thomas hastened to her room, and, locking the door, pulled from a secret drawer the papers Mr. Weston had given her, she having had no oppor-

tunity to peruse them between the time of his departure and the arrival of her husband. And as she read a detailed report of all Mr. Weston had seen and heard concerning her husband and Miss Vernon, her rage and vexation seemed almost to get the mastery over her. She stamped the floor, threw the furniture about the room, and then, casting her eyes upon a portrait of her husband, she tore it from the wall, and spurned it with her foot. After having given vent to her passion, she grew a little more pacified, and examined the papers minutely. 'I read here,' she said, 'that she is very likely soon to be a mother; and this is not the first. Let me see, her address is 50 Alpha Street, St. John's Wood—that I must remember. Oh, how have I been duped—would to God I had married him whom I feel in my heart is my natural husband. It is now too late, too late. If I could only do as Mr. Weston advises—keep myself calm—I could then decide upon my course of action. Poor Mr. Weston I fear has got quite enough to do with his own affairs now, to render me much assistance. I will put away these evidences of my disturbance, and proceed more quietly about revenging my wrongs. Have I not taken him from comparative poverty and made him a gentleman? And for years he has been pretending affection for me, while all the time loving another woman, to whom he has been giving my money. Oh, if I had her here, I could strangle her. Be calm, be calm; if I can only be calm, I shall have opportunity for ample revenge. Here is her address; that is all right. Then, let me see, the divorce court. I do not like to think of that; all the world will then be able to read about my trouble and shame. Perhaps, Mr. Weston, poor thing, might not advise it now. I should go mad to see it all in the papers, as it would be. A gay, young Lothario is married to a lady much his senior; she is wealthy, he is poor; he is attracted by well-known charms, and falls in love with this beautiful actress, &c., &c.,—the old story. It would drive me wild to be thus published to the world, and have all laughing at me. At first a divorce seemed the most desirable, and the simplest means of revenging myself; but circumstances have changed, and I do not think it would be now. I will take a readier and a more effectual method of getting rid of him and punishing her. I know Mr. Baines, the chemist, will send me what I want; I will write to him at once.'"

Glerow. "I accompanied the servant who took Mrs. Thomas's note to the chemist. When he read it, he asked the servant if Mrs. Thomas was ill; and the woman replied that she thought her mistress was in great trouble. Mr. Baines said, 'give her that small packet, with my compliments, and tell her I hope she will soon be better.' After the servant had turned round to leave the shop, I heard the master, who served her, remark to his assistant, 'Not many rats will be hurt with that. It is sometimes best, James, and always safest, to sell magnesia for strychnine.' The servant quickly returned to her mistress, and gave her the packet.

Mrs. Thomas having closed the door, and turned the key, placed the packet in the same secret drawer in which were the papers. 'Now,' she said, I have within my power the means of redressing my wrongs. I will not poison him suddenly, but he can die inch by inch, and I shall not be suspected, for his drunken habits will account for his premature death. And as to her, the prostitute—for she knows he is a married man—she will end her days, and from the effects of child-birth; and in the great city of London, who will be the wiser. He, my loving husband, shall have wine, and brandy and bitters kept secure from others, the best suited for his especial use. She shall get some nice confectionery, sent her by a very dear friend. When they are both gone, I shall be satisfied, and not till then. But after that, what next? Would my fond Weston marry a murderess? Perhaps if he knew, he would not; but he never need know it any more than others, for my plan is perfect, and cannot be found out.' She now put a portion of the white powder in a decanter of wine and one of brandy, placing them safely by themselves. Her husband no sooner returned home than she offered him a glass of tonic wine, of which he was very glad. He appeared somewhat refreshed, and she felt she had now taken the first step in crime. There was little conversation between them, as she had her own motives for being especially on her guard, and he was dull and melancholy. Mr. Thomas is in continued grief on account of the death of his father; gloomy, because he is away from the woman he loves; and filled with suspicion and fear that there is something about to happen that he is not prepared for. He cannot understand Mrs. Thomas's manner towards him, and he therefore is restless and miserable."

Bonelo. "This is all you have to report now. It is a sad picture of man and woman who, had they known the laws of their being, might have been happy; and thousands are suffering in like manner, in a greater or less degree. These laws of affinity, which are the source of so much happiness to us in the spirit spheres, are the most prolific causes of man's suffering through his ignorance of them. Glerow, you must go and watch over Mr. Thomas, and when you have anything to report, leave him and return. Ceneric, my brother, you may already see how misery might have been prevented, had these people known the laws of their being, as we know them. Could these people, who are now plotting the destruction of each other's peace, have been able to apprehend the fact that previous to their earth-life they had an existence, the nature of which is shadowed forth by those eternal laws of affinity, then, instead of uniting in marriage for convenience or interest, they would have studied their own natures, and have entered into this relation when the impulses of each were reciprocal. The language of the heart cannot be misunderstood; the inner nature of man knows its own responsive voice, speaking in sweet harmony of love. Man's nature is at present in such discordant

conditions that the voice of love is seldom heard until every other desire of his material nature has had its say ; but when her gentle voice arises, its power is irresistible, it speaks to the other half of its nature, and the answer is given as that of a mother to her child. The vital forces of every individual being had their existence in the spirit-spheres, before their first incarnation. In that existence those forces of *will* and *love* were one entity. When, in accordance with the laws of God, this identity takes human form, and becomes lord of the material world, it assumes two individualities—male and female. These are some of the facts of his being of which man is ignorant ; therefore, he seeks happiness in the marriage state and does not find it, because his union is not one of affinity."

Ceneric. "My brother, your words fall gratefully like dew from the higher spheres. It delights me to hear you utter such glorious truths; but I do not see how mankind can be taught them. Suppose they could be taught that no pure marriage unions exist on earth except those of affinity, would not the effect of such knowledge be disastrous to society at large? It is a well-known fact to us, that very few marriages are natural, because not affinital."

Bonelo. "True; few earth unions are the result of love, and in man's present undeveloped state it cannot be otherwise, when such union occurs, it is the source of the purest happiness possible in earth-life, and sheds a heavenly influence on all connected. Such a marriage is in accordance with human laws, and a union of two natures in obedience to the laws of God. Harmony is the result of such unions, because no laws, human or infinite, are violated. When man is developed, human laws will be more in harmony with the laws of God; it will not then be necessary for him to violate the one while he obeys the other, But so long as man is ignorant of God's laws, he will be subject to all the misery which his own inharmonious laws are calculated to produce. The spirit of man is the offspring of God, and partakes of His nature ; it is therefore as impossible to restrain and direct this divine emanation with laws of human devising, as it is impossible by such laws to control the lightning, the tempest, or the volcano. Therefore, the spirit rises superior to human law, and in its struggles for that liberty, which is its native air, it brings the material nature into antagonism with man's unnatural laws ; the perfect laws of God are obeyed, while the imperfect laws of man are violated. You fear that the consequence of such knowledge being given to man would be ruinous to the order of human society ; that it would undermine the institution of marriage, which is the basis of civilized society. My dear brother, there is no cause for fear ; such is the nature of man that knowledge can only be received by him in such proportions as he is in a condition to use it for his good. A multitude of obstacles are in the way of man's reception of such knowledge at present. Were we enabled to hold direct communication with

the most advanced minds on earth now, they would reject such teaching, and regard it as the philosophy of the Devil. As man rises to better conditions, and becomes more harmonious, he is brought nearer to the sphere of knowledge; then he is capable of receiving our teaching, and not till then."

Dono. "I return to lay before you the progress of events in connection with Mr. Weston. After he had somewhat recovered himself, he sat down to write to Mrs. Thomas, and his communication read as follows:—

"I am sunk in the deepest misery. I can scarcely collect my thoughts to pen a word to you; but feeling the importance of letting you know something about the meeting at which Mr. Thomas was so suddenly called away from earth, I have enclosed a letter I received from the deacons, you will there see my precarious position. The cause of all this is, of course, better known to us than any one else. For the present let me implore you, for God's sake, to keep collected and act discreetly. I think there would be no danger in your giving me a call. You can be engaged in making arrangements for the funeral to-morrow, this would justify you. Come as early as possible, for I am miserable till I see you."

"This letter he sent by his housekeeper, with special injunction to give it to Mrs. Thomas personally. Miss Wild had no sooner left the house than a gentleman knocked at the door, and requested an interview with the Rev. Mr. Weston. He was conducted into the parlour by the servant, and she informed her master that a gentleman wished to speak to him. 'Say I am busy. Ask him to send his card.' The servant returned, and waited while the gentleman wrote his name on a slip of paper, which she carried to her master in his study."

Weston. "Mr. J. Melrose, who can he be; I have no knowledge of such a man. However, as he is in the house, I will go and see what he wants, although I would rather be alone just now. Good morning, Mr. Melrose, may I enquire your business with me."

Melrose. "I hope you will excuse me, sir, but I have been very desirous of speaking with you about my soul, ever since I heard you preach that sermon last Sunday morning."

Weston. "I am very glad to see you, but am not aware that I have met with you before."

Melrose. "I have been a frequent hearer of yours, but never felt impressed to the extent I did last Sunday morning. My life has not been what it should be; but from listening to that sermon I gained knowledge and comfort. I am now satisfied that salvation by works is not in accordance with scripture. You put it so clear on that occasion that I seemed to lay hold on eternal life at once. I shall never forget the words of your text as long as I live—'By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.' This is my hope and my salvation."

Weston. "My dear friend, it gives me great pleasure to hear your confession of faith, and also to learn that I, the Lord's servant, have been instrumental in His hands in leading you to himself. It will give me great pleasure to be allowed to mention your name to the church, that you may be waited upon by the deacons, with a view to membership, if you desire it."

Melrose. "I had not called with the intention of offering myself as a candidate for church fellowship at present, but rather with the object of asking you a few questions."

Weston. "Mention them, my friend, I shall feel it a pleasure and a duty to assist you all I can."

Melrose. "Well then, I want to know whether I understood you to say, on Sunday last, that the sufferings and death of Christ atoned for all the sins of those who believe in him? if you said also that the righteousness of his life was accepted by God as a substitution for ours, which is unrighteous?"

Weston. "What I said in my sermon I have no doubt amounted to the same thing. Your two questions bring before my notice the two fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion. The first is the atonement, and the other is the justification of the saints. The atonement is the salvation of God provided for his people. Justification is the salvation of God within them."

Melrose. "If, then, the death of Jesus is the means of salvation for the church, are there no means of salvation for the world? If the church is the Lord's people, could not God save them himself if he liked, and give Jesus as the salvation for the world?"

Weston. "These are difficulties which will be removed from your mind when the Holy Spirit has further enlightened you. I may state that the Divine character of Jesus—his equality with God—makes his atonement a voluntary one. Jesus is not merely an agent of God, but he is God himself. 'The word was with God, and the word was God;' again, 'The word became flesh, and dwelt among us.' This word was Christ."

Melrose. "Is there no salvation provided for the world then?"

Weston. "The infallible word of God is given for the guidance and instruction of his own children; what has the Father of the Saints to do with the children of the Devil? His word tells us that all his own will come to Him, and must be eternally saved."

Melrose. "Well, then, if I should happen not to be one of the elect, there is no more chance for me to be saved than for the rest of the world."

Weston. "The Great Creator of mankind is like the potter; He makes the clay into such vessels as in His infinite wisdom He sees best. The human *will* is His creation, and that *will* in His saints brings them to the Saviour; and in the children of the devil it leads them down to the pit of perdition. Now your will has brought you to the Saviour. If you had not been one of the Lord's chosen ones, you would never have had the slightest inclination to be saved."

Melrose. "Then you think I may rest satisfied there will not be any mistake at last."

Weston. "Most assuredly; none but the elect can come to Him."

"Here Mr. Melrose prepared to depart, feeling satisfied that he had a good hope, through grace, of a joyful resurrection beyond the grave."

Dono. "My dear friends, are there no means of counteracting such false teaching as this?"

Bonelo. "My dear brother Dono, the time will come when mankind will cast such theories as those to the moles and the bats. But at present there are no means of counteracting such erroneous teaching. Such dogmas as these taught by Mr. Weston are the natural productions of undeveloped minds, and are adapted to console and comfort minds in like conditions with those who invented them. They therefore give a sort of confidence in God that their own salvation is secure. This affords them hope in the midst of despondence and misery attendant on a life of discord; which I think you would not wish to take away from suffering humanity. The Calvinistic theory of salvation has in it much that is superior to any other invention of man. It gives peace and hope in earth-life, and a confident assurance of a happy hereafter—to such natures as can embrace it. We may consider it the concentration of the best thoughts of all the various creeds of modern Christendom. The growth of the mind in knowledge is alone capable of counteracting error and superstition; but if error and superstition are the stepping stones for humanity over the troubled waters of a discordant life, it is better they should have these supports than be in danger of being engulfed in despair. We must develop that growth and impart that knowledge. At present the channels of communication to the immortal spirit of man are dammed up; the accumulation of error, superstition, and fear are the causes which raise an almost impenetrable curtain of darkness between us and that bright immortal part of man we call his *spirit*. It is the removal of these obstructions which must command our first attention. How shall this be done, you ask. I will show you. The human mind is, as you see, the creation of the vital forces in man; it is created by the material experiences of every-day life. The food he eats, the clothes he wears, the air he breathes, the liquid he drinks, the thoughts he feels, the words he speaks, the company he keeps, and every voluntary act of his life, as well as the involuntary impressions which influence him—the happiness and misery he feels, his hope or his despair—these are all produced by the internal action of his spirit-forces—upon his material organization. The human mind changes its nature as the conditions of the material body improve. Man's mind is not a cause, but an effect. The spirit comes in contact with the material world through the medium of the material organization. By the laws of motion, equilibrium,

and affinity, it produces natural action of the chemical and mechanical structure of the human body. This mind, or rather spiritual body, is ever growing, ever advancing, as the spirit becomes more master of the body. This spirit-body of man, which is always visible to us, and in which we see reflected his thoughts and condition, is, you are aware, invisible to man himself. It is impossible for us to improve the nature of the spirit; and equally impossible to change the mind, except through the medium of the body. The spirit of man being the offspring of God, is pure, indestructible and eternal as its parent. But the material body gathers together the elements of which the mind is created, and when this process called *life* is complete, the spirit leaves the material body and lives, as with us, in this perfect spirit-body. That which to our vision is man's outer-nature, to man himself is his inner-nature; with his material eyes he beholds material things only. The mind, or spirit-body, is composed of material elements, but of as pure, perfect, and refined an order as could be produced from the human body by the process of human life. We see the mind is the *fac-simile* of the body. If we attempt to approach man, it is his spirit-body with which we come in contact. We can no more act upon his material body direct than he can act upon our spirit-bodies with his material body. Now, seeing that man is a spirit with a material destiny; and we find him in a discordant and unhappy condition, it is our duty to study those laws which exist, and which God has designed for his development. It is by a knowledge of those laws alone we can be instrumental in the elevation of humanity. The human mind can only be the reflex or reproduction of the human body, just as a casting, when perfect, can take no other shape than the mould. To be able to alter the condition of the mind, we must apprehend those laws which will enable us to succeed in obtaining an improvement in the condition of the human body. Now, my friends, what are the laws which first claim our attention? The human body is the plant or tree, and the human mind is the flower or fruit; as is the nature of the plant or tree, so is the flower or fruit. The power of growth in the plant represents the spirit-power in the human body. The flowers or fruit in a garden are beautiful, and delicious, or otherwise, just in proportion as the plants are industriously cultivated, and the laws of growth have had free circulation through every fibre of the plants. Cultivation may be neglected, the action of the laws of growth may be obstructed, and the beauty and usefulness of the garden is destroyed. Although the soil may become barren, the plants and trees deteriorate, yet the power of growth and development remains for ever the same. So it is with the spirit of man—the human body and mind. Man is the tree planted in the garden of the earth, therefore a knowledge of the laws of his growth and development must be acquired by us. The internal and external influences which act upon him, directing and restraining, produce a mind beautiful

as the loveliest flower which decks the earth or spheres. A mind which, like the polished mirror, shall reflect perfectly the past life, and ever afford intense delight for men and angels to behold. A mind ever growing more brilliant, so that on its surface the spirit of man may behold the faces of angels attending him, and they may also see reflected in the same mirror a life of love and usefulness which, like the delicious fruits of a well-cultivated garden, are ever beautiful to look upon, and delightful to the taste. But man is not found in this condition now. This garden and storehouse of earth is to him a waste wilderness, and he is a miserable wanderer from his Father's house. Our first duty, my friends, to these our brethren, is to convince them that their Father loves them; then that we, their brethren, love them; that they live in a beautiful garden, a well-stored home, capable of affording them the most exquisite pleasures heart could desire; this will be done by the removal of error, and imparting knowledge. Instead of superstition producing fear, we must implant love, faith, and intuition, instead of discord and despair, harmony and hope. Donina is discouraged because she sees the effect of her loving presence with her son impels him to actions which are natural to his present condition. The condition of the tree must produce such fruit as it is capable of doing. It is by the production of the outgrowth of his present state, his degree of progression will be improved. In plants and flowers we see first wildness and unloveliness, and afterwards come forth those fruits and blossoms of which the plants are capable—beauty and usefulness. Donina has not yet learnt that to be natural we must be pure; that all unnatural restraints are as much an infringement of nature's laws, as excessive and profligate indulgence. She has also to learn that the influence of her love upon her son sets in motion the irregularities and discordant conditions of his nature; and the laws of affinity and equilibrium precipitate such actions in his life as are regarded by her and himself as sinful and grossly immoral. When she has further knowledge, she will then apprehend the truths more clearly. Her son's experiences are as much a means of development to herself as to him. If we would learn the laws which connect spirits and mortals, we must closely observe the influence our presence exerts upon them. There does not exist any law whereby a more direct intercourse may be obtained than that of unconscious impression; and, it is by application, observation, and experiment that we shall be able to arrive at a knowledge of this law. By patience, perseverance, and love we shall be able to bring such as are favorably organized into those natural conditions which make them favorable subjects for our experiments. Communicate to Donina these ideas, and tell her not to regard anything natural as sinful or immoral. That which is a violation of the laws of man is caused by those laws not being in harmony with the laws of God. There are many habits mankind acquire against which no laws of man exist; yet

these habits demoralize their natures, and are sin against God's laws. But the natural use of the intellect and the functions of the body is obedience to the laws of God. Whatever is unnatural, whether in omission or commission, is infringement of law, and sin against God. Smoking and drinking intoxicating beverage, are unnatural. To neglect to take a daily bath is unnatural. To sleep more or less than five or six hours out of twenty-four is unnatural. Selfishness, cruelty, and hatred are unnatural. Excess, starvation, and a use of indigestible food are unnatural. Whatever deranges the health of the individual, or produces discord in the household or society, is unnatural and sin against God's laws. The reason why we now find mankind so inharmoonious and so miserable is because none of these laws of God can be broken with impunity. Each act of disobedience brings its own punishment. While man is ignorant he must suffer; we must give him knowledge, and our labors will be rewarded by seeing him harmonious and happy."

Glerow. "My brothers Bonelo and Ceneric, I bring tidings of progress. Mr. Thomas feels deeply the painful circumstances under which he now suffers. Soon after my return to him he left his house to visit his doctor, who told him his habits must be more quiet and temperate, or he would soon follow his father. This depressed him very much. From there he went again to see his mother. During his absence Mr. Weston's housekeeper came to bring a letter for Mrs. Thomas from her master. At the time Miss Wild called at the house, Mrs. Thomas was busily engaged in the kitchen, and sent word she could not be seen. Miss Wild said she must see Mrs. Thomas, having something special for herself. 'Well, Sarah, if I must go, I must,' she remarked; 'but I am not fit to be seen. You can put those cakes in the oven, and mind they do not burn. What can be the matter now I wonder. How is Miss Wild to-day?'"

Miss Wild. "I have a letter here for you, Mrs. Thomas, and was ordered to give it to you personally."

Mrs. Thomas. "You see I was assisting the servant in the kitchen, and did not wish to be seen. What with Mr. Thomas coming home very ill, and this sudden death, and the funeral to-morrow, I am nearly worried out of my life. Take a glass of wine, Miss Wild. Not that; I will fetch a sweeter kind that I know you will like. Mr. Thomas takes such very strong wine, I cannot stand it myself. I like my own home-made, and think you will say it is something that suits your taste. I will put this away, for Mr. Thomas is the only one who drinks it here."

Miss Wild. "What a sad event this sudden death is. I suppose you both feel it very much?"

Mrs. Thomas. "Yes, it is very sudden, and Mr. Thomas, as is very natural, feels much distressed. Are you to wait for an answer to this? if so I had better read it. Mr. Weston wants to see me about the arrangements for the funeral to-morrow. Just wait a moment and I will write a line. I must see him if possible."

"My dear Friend,—I will call upon you in half an hour, having occasion to go out. The enclosed letter I have not had time to read carefully, but can gather something of its meaning. I will, as you advise be tranquil and discreet. You must have courage and patience, and all will yet be well. Yours truly. HARRIET."

"Be so kind as to give that note to Mr. Weston, and I shall endeavour to look in upon him when I go out."

Miss. Wild. "Good evening, Mrs. Thomas. I suppose the funeral will be early in the day?"

Mrs. Thomas. "Oh yes, about twelve o'clock. Good evening. Thank goodness she is gone; an abominable prying creature; I wish Mr. Weston had sent anybody but her; she never knows her place. That letter could as well have been brought to me in the kitchen by Sarah, as for her come poking her nose about. To catch me in this plight, too, and when I was just engaged making those cakes. Surely Sarah won't taste them; I will hurry down. Sarah, are those cakes and puffs done?" "Yes, mum; I have taken them out ten minutes, or they would have been burnt to a cinder." "All right, Sarah, you take a small box up to my room, some paper and string to make a parcel, and I will carry these things myself. I don't think she has tasted them; if she has, what shall I do. I must get them sent away at once, for fear of accident. Here, Sarah, this sheet of paper is not large enough. Let me see, now the address. That will do, Sarah; you can go back to the kitchen, and if Mr. Thomas should return before me, tell him I am gone to the draper's. Now I must be quick. Perhaps I had better enclose a note, saying it is a present from a friend in the country. No, that is not the plan; I will send it as it is, writing might betray me, or excite suspicion; she will think he has ordered something nice, and sent it as a surprise, and her curiosity will lead her to taste of the contents; and, thinking they are his present, she is sure to eat them. I must take this box myself to the station, and I can go from there to Mr. Weston's. I think I shall do now, and get my revenge.' After leaving her parcel at the station, and paying the carriage, requesting that it be forwarded by the first train, she made all haste to the minister's house. Being in deep mourning, she kept a thick black veil over her face, also that she might not be known by the officials at the station. On arrival at Mr. Weston's, she was conducted into the library, as the minister was engaged with a gentleman in the parlour. Mrs. Thomas had not to wait long, as Mr. Weston soon dismissed his visitor, and went to her in the library."

Mr. Weston. "How kind of you to come so soon; please make make yourself quite easy, this is the most private room in my house."

Mrs. Thomas. "Is there any danger of intruders here? I should not like our conversation to be overheard."

Mr. Weston. "No one will enter this room without knocking. I must not lock the door, it would look strange."

Mrs. Thomas. "To tell you the truth; I do not like the inquisitive manner of your housekeeper; she seems to know more than she should."

Mr. Weston. "Take no notice of her; she may be suspicious, but cannot be aware of anything except through her brother, who is one of the deacons."

Mrs. Thomas. "Whether she knows what occurred at the deacons' meeting or not I cannot say, but from what she said to my Sarah, and the way she tried to sound her, I am sure she wants to find out everything."

Mr. Weston. "The more necessity for discretion. How does Mr. Thomas seem affected about the death of his father; is he any way different to what he is usually on his return—does he seem to suspect anything?"

Mrs. Thomas. "His father's death has deeply affected him. He does not betray any idea of having been watched, although he seems very much on his guard—very restless and uncomfortable in his mind. I am quite sure his constitution is ruined with drink and his dissipated habits."

Mr. Weston. "I suppose, after the funeral, he is sure to make some excuse for being away, and will most likely be off to London again."

Mrs. Thomas. "I don't know; his doctor may order him to keep in the house. I observe in your papers you state that she is likely very soon to be a mother again. Oh, Mr. Weston, it almost drives me mad to think what a dupe I have been; but I must control myself. Well, as I was saying, he may receive information to the effect that he has become a father, and then he might disregard his doctor's injunctions. If that should happen, he will be sure to go to *Winterford*, or rather London, and we shall have ample opportunity to discuss and arrange all those matters we have talked about before. I want to know more about what transpired at the meeting where Mr. Thomas was taken ill; what were the charges brought against you? What was said, and who said it."

Mr. Weston. "My dear Mrs. Thomas, I cannot tell you a word, except what is contained in the letter I enclosed to you. I expect to see my friends Bamford and Wilberforce to-morrow, and after that I may be able to satisfy you."

Mrs. Thomas. "The letter I have not had time to read yet, but will do so on my return."

Mr. Weston. "I am relieved at the thought that the melancholy death of Mr. Thomas has been the prevention of a course being adopted by my church which might have terminated fatally for my character and position. Oh, I tremble to think of the peril I have been in. But they have unanimously agreed to disregard the charges, and take no further notice of what they may hear about them. So, you see, I have had a very fortunate escape. I value my character and position as a minister of the

gospel too highly to feel indifferent to the danger I have been in. Yet I feel the comfort I have in your society; wrong as it is, it affords me an inward joy, which I value next to the pleasures of communion with the Holy Spirit. Your companionship has a fascinating influence over me, which I cannot resist; and I feel that if you were my wife, I should indeed be happy, as well as more useful in my calling. There seems something strange and incomprehensible about our experience; I loved you before you were married to Mr. Thomas, or at least thought I did, and yet, before I felt that irresistible passion for you, which has caused me to violate the laws of propriety and morality, you had become the wife of another. Could you have remained unmarried, and the strength of this force within me have so matured as to have precipitated me into speaking, as I have now done, there would have been a remedy for my troubled conscience—we could have been husband and wife. What now becomes a sin against God and society, and a scandal to religion, would then only have been youthful indiscretion. These two thoughts oppress my mind and make me miserable, for to love you as deeply as I do, I feel to be a sin against God which must be overcome. The acts of which I have been guilty towards you, I feel to be against the laws of civilized society, morality, and religion; and however great may be the sacrifice, they must be atoned for."

Mrs. Thomas. "You seem to lay the whole blame of this crime upon yourself; have I not been a participator in your guilt—have I not been the tempter? Charge it all upon me, and let this thought ease your conscience, that you could never have fallen from the high position of virtue, purity, and spirituality you occupied had I not tempted you. The love you feel you have for me is mutual; it was not long after my marriage that I discovered the error into which I had fallen. Had I removed away from here, the circumstances which constantly brought us together, and led to what makes you so unhappy now, could not have existed. The frequent and long absence of my husband has been the main cause of our offending. Your constant visits in your office of minister, were proper, and given with the purest motives, but these and my determination to turn them to account, in compensation for my mistaken marriage, were additional sources of wrong doing, I felt an aching void, a want of reciprocal love—a longing for a heart to beat responsive to mine. In you, as I regarded you with other eyes than those of my former state, I saw the perfection of noble manhood, and I felt that in your bosom beat the heart which pulsed to my own. What the result of this inward feeling was, you know as well as I. Now, let me ask you one question—after you have discovered the truth about my husband's conduct, do you not feel justified in whatever has passed between us?"

Mr. Weston. "My dear Mrs. Thomas, the fact is, I feel the more condemned on that account. Ought I not, as a minister of

the gospel, to set a better example? If the shepherd of the Lord's people is not pure in his life, what can we expect from the flock, or the outside world? What you say about circumstances, and the power of temptation, is not consoling to my thoughts. The acts are done, the die is cast, and as a Christian, the grace of God ought to have been sufficient for me as well as for Paul. My only hope and consolation is in the blood of Christ, that cleanseth from all sin."

Mrs. Thomas. "Really I had no idea of the time; indeed, I must go. I should like to say one word first—have hope; there may be an opportunity to compensate for the past."

Mr. Weston. "I fear the prospect of happiness is very remote. Good bye. The servant must see you home."

Mrs. Thomas. "No; well, yes. She can go part of the way. Good night."

"When Mrs. Thomas arrived at home she found her husband had returned, and had been in bed some time. Sarah at once expressed herself as being much concerned about her master, who, she said, was very ill indeed, and Bob had gone to the doctor's for some medicine, which was to be taken every hour."

Mrs. Thomas. "Sarah, you can go to bed when you like. What time did master come home?"

Sarah. "About half-past seven."

Mrs. Thomas. "Did he inquire for me?"

Sarah. "He was so sick and bad. I told him you was gone shopping."

Mrs. Thomas. "Did he go to his room soon after he came in?"

Sarah. "When he got over his sick bout, he went to bed. I have been to his door several times, and think he is asleep."

Mrs. Thomas. "Did he take anything?"

Sarah. "Only a glass of brandy and water. I wanted him to have some tea or supper, but he would not."

Mrs. Thomas. "That will do; I will sit up with your master. I want nothing more. Good night, Sarah. Night is now upon me, and I feel alone. My husband is no longer the partner of my life; another occupies my place in his heart: and he towards whom my affections have gone out is too pure, and noble in spirit, to reciprocate the love of one so base as I have become. I cannot see the end of the journey on which I have entered. The end—no it is too horrible to contemplate. I will not think of it. What can Mr. Weston mean. I know he loves me, as I do him, almost to madness; and yet, he seems so much to regret actions which are the effects of that love, and says they must be atoned for and repented of. Does he mean to imply that if Mr. Thomas and I were divorced, or he was dead—what did I say? dead! and by whose hands?—if I was once more free, he could not marry me? Well, we shall see. I think the like power which once subdued him will again be a match for his pious resolutions. I must go and see my husband. *My husband, indeed!* does the law make

husbands—does the church make husbands? if so, I should have had a husband. Is there such a thing in this world as a true husband? Is there a man to be found whose heart is so loving, whose mind and intellect are in harmony with the woman society calls his wife? I feel there is one man in existence whose heart is capable of beating responsively to my own, and only one in this drear and miserable world, and he is *not* my husband. If there is goodness or justice in earth or in heaven, may he who created us unite for ever these two hearts. I will now go to my husband's bedside; I have commenced a conflict from which I cannot retreat."

"When she reached her husband, she found him in a very exhausted state; but he was the first to speak. 'My dear,' he said, 'I thought you would never come.'"

Mrs. Thomas. "I understand you are very ill; is there anything I can get for you?"

Mr. Thomas. "Nothing, except the medicine."

Mrs. Thomas. "Take your medicine then, and I will prepare you a little light food."

"The night was spent in watching, by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas, he growing worse, and she occasionally inducing him to take a spoonful of arrowroot, with a little brandy in it. When I left, Mrs. Thomas was preparing to go to the funeral, arranging with her servant to attend upon Mr. Thomas, who was unable to leave his bed."

Bonelo. "You must now return to Mr. Thomas, and remain with him until you have something of importance to communicate. Our brother Fetong will be with the funeral, and Dono and Donina will also accompany Mr. Weston. Here is the mournful procession, and here are our spirit associates. Donina, we meet you with pleasure, and hope to find you more advanced in your knowledge of the laws which control human action, and which reveal other laws enabling spirits to influence the lives of those in earth-life with whom they are in affinity. Maternal and filial affinity are the most powerful in their influence of any other order of affinity, except conjugal, or rather we should call it *natural* affinity. The mutual love of yourself and your son has a powerful developing influence over him; imperceptible to him, it is true, but not to you. If direct spirit-intercourse existed, such affinity would quickly develop mediumistic qualities in his nature which would enable you to teach him the laws of which you have acquired a knowledge; but until such a thing is possible, you can only work by impression, and that imperceptibly to himself. He will hold to his dogmatic belief as long as he lives; for it is insurmountably difficult, situated as he is, undeveloped and inharmonious as his nature is, for him to be willing to make the material sacrifice which a change in his religious opinions would involve. A knowledge of the laws of spirit intercourse must become general among mankind ere long, but it never can be introduced to them

through the priesthood. The dogma of a personal devil, so generally believed among them, and their fear of the influences of evil spirits, the existence of which their own undeveloped natures suggest, will be for a long period effectual barriers against a knowledge of the laws of spirit communion being received by them, or their sincere followers. We see, as they commit the remains of their departed brother to the grave, there is scarcely one among them who has a hope or an aspiration beyond it. So dreary is the belief of the professed followers of Jesus in these days, that when they bury their friends, all their hopes seem lowered into the grave with them. The only resurrection of which they seem to have any idea is of the earth, earthy—the resurrection when the dead shall be raised. That is, at some future day they expect this world to be burnt up; and they look for a restoration and raising to life of that material body of their friend, after it has long gone to share destruction with its mother earth. They cannot conceive it possible for God to create out of that material body a spiritual body like our own. They think it an easier task to bring together every particle of the material body at the last day—a body which they can see—than for Him to create a body they cannot see. It is no matter of surprise that those who are not spiritual should be able to apprehend only such things as are material. When the nature of man becomes more spiritual, he will then have a spirit discernment, and this spirit knowledge will be as possible to him as to us.”

“Dono and Donina will now proceed to accompany and watch attentively their son. Fetong will remain with Mrs. Thomas. The procession is now leaving the graveyard. They think they have lost their friend, and the widow imagines she has lost her husband; not knowing that he is now in the enjoyment of more perfect happiness than has ever been known to him before. If she could only understand this, she would cast off all widows weeds, and rather put on garments expressive of rejoicing. Now, Ceneric, I must return to the Council in the spheres, and leave you here as counsellor and director. Dono and Donina will continue to be the guardians of Mr. Weston; Fetong will stay with Mrs. Thomas for the present; and Glerow will watch over Mr. Thomas while he lives; and at his death you will give such directions as are necessary. Adieu, my brother.”

CHAPTER V.

Harriet. “Now, my dear Mr. Wilson, you have found yourself so absorbed in what you have seen and heard, that you seem to have forgotten where you are.”

Wilson. “True, my dear Harriet; I have been living my life over again.”

Harriet. "You have no difficulty, then, in identifying Mrs. Thomas with Mrs. James, nor Mr. Weston with Mr. Wilson, nor Miss Vernon with Miss Vincent?"

Wilson. "Certainly not; everything was represented precisely as it occurred, so far as I knew about it; but there is much I did not know, and which is now quite clear to me."

Harriet. "Has it made you unhappy to see your life reproduced?"

Wilson. "Yes, for the time it made me feel extremely miserable; but it has now rendered me happier than I could have conceived it possible to feel. I begin to apprehend some of the laws of spirit existence, and I feel the more I know of them the more shall I be able to understand why my earth-life was unhappy. I even now perceive that ignorance was the main-spring of my errors, and superstition a barrier to the attainment of knowledge; and that fear filled my nature as a consequence of this ignorance and superstition. I could not love God, because I did not know His true nature; and I formed such conceptions of my own nature and destiny as others in like conditions with myself had formed before me. *Superstitious*, I now see those conceptions must have been, for none of them were consistent with nature and reason, and, as I have just learned, could never be realised. But the thoughts which make me feel so intensely happy now, are that knowledge is breaking in upon my eternal darkness, and where formerly existed disappointment, hopelessness, and misery, there are shining forth contentment, hope, and happiness. I have learnt, while I have looked back and in thought lived over again my earth-life, and viewed it by the light of the knowledge I have acquired, that those very things which I had considered my great sins and misfortunes were natural effects of natural causes. The reason why they made me unhappy was that I did not understand their cause. I can now look upon those most painful circumstances in my former existence without feeling that remorse which came to me before this light broke in upon my mind. I feel I am no longer under condemnation, therefore do not need an atoning saviour. This is what you meant, my dear Harriet, when you said, the kingdom of heaven is within you. The meaning I now attach to these words is very different to that which I saw in them then."

Harriet. "May I consider you content with the heaven God has provided for you? Is the angel of hope your constant companion? and do the natural ordinances of this state of spirit-existence fill your heart with satisfaction and happiness?"

Wilson. "These three questions are already partly answered, and are not asked by you with the expectation of having their replies repeated. I regard them rather as expressions of pleasurable surprise that the change in me is so complete and assured."

Harriet. "Yes, my dear Edward, you are right; for it gives me much pleasure to hear you speak of the light and love now dawning upon your mind."

Wilson. "I now see how differently my earth-life might have been spent; could I only have had the knowledge then which I have now, how happy and useful I might have lived."

Harriet. "Yes, Edward, and if the like knowledge had been possessed by some one else whose destiny was linked with yours."

Wilson. "Harriet, my angel wife, if it be true that the vital elements of our two natures existed, as you and others seem to think, in one identity before becoming man and woman in earth-life, it is essential to their happiness with each other that both should have knowledge,"

Harriet. "It appears to be consistent with reason and nature that such should have been the case. The opinion is confirmed by the fact that when man and woman are affinitally united, the laws of affinity and equilibrium always bring both to the same level. If united in earth-life, the one in the most advanced position raises the other to his or her condition, and they always become more harmonious the longer they live together. Now, the secret causes of this mutual love are not miraculous, but natural. Mankind do not find their natural affinities accidentally, nor is affinital love the effect of conjugal union. *They* enjoy a happy earth-life who, in the selection of their conjugal associates, regard the voice of their inner nature. But the full extent of their capacity for conjugal happiness can never be realized by those who, from ignorance, marry where the inner nature of each cannot reciprocate; in accordance with universal law, each will progress, but their progression will be individual and distinct, not identical and harmonious. If conjugal union is not the result of affinity, those thus united can never become one; they may realize such happiness as their material natures are capable of, but internal union not being possible, spiritual harmony cannot exist between them. In such a condition, although not perfectly happy, they will nevertheless be ignorant of that perfect spiritual love which will be realized by them when they reach the ultimate of their natures, *affinital love*, and knowing no higher state, will be content with the blissful ignorance in which they live. The unions of affinity, as a rule, are reserved for this more advanced condition of being—few are able to attain such a condition in earth-life. It does, nevertheless, sometimes happen, and as mankind progress, it will become more common. I consider a knowledge of the science and philosophy of love does much towards assisting in apprehending the truth of the pre-existence of man. Although no human being is ignorant of the existence of love, yet it is only those who are spiritually enlightened enter into the study of it scientifically and philosophically. Love is a subtle, unseen substance, which can be realized by the sensations and effects it produces only. It is the purest element in the universe, and operates on the finest sensibilities of man's nature. The law of equilibrium gives it movement, and the law of affinity directs its destination. Affinity is the desire of two parts to return to

their original condition : the current of love ever flowing between them, makes perpetual separation an impossibility ; but, in accordance with its own laws, is ever bringing two separate parts in closer contact. The union of affinities is therefore inevitable and eternal. Man, after the material incarnation, is male and female, and each must retain their separate individualities ; yet the force of affinital love within them is ever seeking, and never being able to accomplish, the annihilation of the other individuality. The material individuality is for ever a delightful barrier to its accomplishment. This is the science of affinital love ; and, in its bearing upon the question of man's pre-existence, what then must be our philosophical conclusions."

Wilson. "We can arrive at no other than these, that man and woman now, if they had a pre-existence, must in that existence have been one."

Harriet. "If they had,—we have here scientific facts about the existence, nature, laws, and influence of love, which facts, to my mind, force us to the philosophical conclusion that man must have thus existed."

Wilson. "I cannot see in what way we are necessarily driven to such a conclusion ; neither can I understand how man can have had a previous existence, and yet be destitute of all knowledge of it. You argue as though God could not create man and woman with the faculty of love inherent, that union, propagation, and eternal attachment should be natural. We have memories which lead us back to the occurrences of our earliest childhood, and if man lived in a condition of perfection before his birth in earth-life, he must, according to nature and reason, have had *some* faculty, if not memory, connecting him with a life which must in some form have been matured."

Harriet. "My dear Edward, there is sound reason and common sense in your objection to receive, on the testimony of others merely, the idea of man's pre-existence. The concluding part of this representation is now proceeding, so if you will defer the argument for the present, we will resume it again when we return home."

Wilson. "Certainly ; I should not on any account like to miss the conclusion of this drama."

Albeto. "Spirits of this and higher spheres, we have assembled for mutual help, mutual congratulation, and mutual love. In this, the sphere of knowledge, you are ever receiving into your midst spirits from the earth, and from other material globes. Your labours of love will therefore of necessity be of an elementary nature. As spirits from the earth are receiving our special attention at present, the condition in which they live and die will be more likely to interest us now than that of the inhabitants of any other world. Our brother, Bonelo, who went on a mission to earth, will give us a condensed report of the result of his visit. We have also a brother whose earth-life has been spent in that

locality to which our mission has been directed ; it will be interesting to all of us to hear him speak. Bonelo will now address the assembly."

Bonelo. "My brother Albeto, in speaking to you and this Council, it is needless to give a full statement of what we have observed in the earth-life of those with whom we have been in immediate contact, as the leading events have been already represented to this auditory. In the earth-life of every human being there is much that is painful to reflect upon, except when such reflection is enlightened by knowledge and guided by wisdom. The lives of those individuals which have been dramatically represented to us, are not an exaggeration of the condition and conduct of a class of mankind. There are other phases of human life, which have not been exhibited here yet, equally interesting and instructive. The discordant conditions in which mankind live develop themselves in a manner as varied as is their natural character, and the circumstances of each individual's life. As mankind generally are ignorant of the discord existing in their own natures, and equally ignorant of the causes of what they call *sin*, they each fall into the like error of condemning the other for conduct, the motives for which exist in themselves, but are developed in a different manner. They do not apprehend the fact that the physical and intellectual constitution of each individual, combined with the force of circumstances, are the originating sources of mental condition, and for the existence of these sources he cannot be made individually responsible. In consequence of this ignorance, the intercourse of man with man is the reverse of harmonious. Each class justify their particular conduct, vindicate their own errors and follies, and condemn as evil those of others whose action and opinions are in opposition to them. The religious, the political, the literary, and scientific, the social, moral and domestic relations of mankind each have their opposing cliques and parties, opinions and dispositions. And each individual in every class sees himself justified in the actions of his life—thinks that his errors and sins are only those which are common to mankind, and while he vindicates them in himself, condemns the like conduct in others. Spirits who visit the earth should be advanced in knowledge, or be in the company of those who are; as they will suffer in proportion as they are prone to enter into the events of the lives of those they visit. Spirits advanced in knowledge, who have learnt the origin, nature, and destiny of human existence, are both interested and instructed by a study of human life. The scenes they witness on earth are known to be the effects of natural causes, which are ever developing themselves in a different manner. The sufferings they look upon give them no pain, for they know these are only a means to an end. They can regard monopoly, selfishness, cruelty, and wrong unmoved; they may see poverty, wretchedness, and crime without feeling the delightful calmness of their own natures in the least

disturbed. A knowledge of the laws of God, which are the causes of all these effects, tells an advanced spirit to look beyond all these surface conditions. A knowledge of the infinite goodness of God, and the glorious destiny of man, fills such a spirit with gratitude and love; and although he would do all in his power for the removal of the suffering which he beholds, yet he is unable to render any relief to the sorrows of humanity, except in accordance with the immediate laws of God."

Mr. James, Senr. "The subject on which our brother Bonelo has been speaking is one of great interest to me. I am here for the purpose of representing myself as I was soon after my first arrival in spirit-life. I have very much pleasure in speaking now as I felt then, and, when I hear from the lips of our brother Bonelo the utterance of such wisdom, I am constrained to go back in thought to that memorable time. Having just finished my life on earth, I necessarily see mankind in a different light to that those do who, like our Brother Bonelo, are elevated so much above them. I have so recently been one of them, entering into their sorrows, and enjoying like pleasures, that I look upon earth-life as something more beautiful, more happy, more harmonious than our friend from the higher spheres has pictured it to be. Before I realized the glorious life of the spirit-world, I imagined there could be no sight so grand and beautiful as the rising and setting of the sun. I regarded the earth as the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; I looked with delight and gratitude upon all the earth's productions—there was not a leaf, a flower, a bird, an insect, or any living thing in creation, but to me was an object of interest and admiration. The whole earth was filled with the glory of the Lord; it shone with beauty for the eyes of man to behold; it teemed with plenty to satisfy all his wants. There was not a desire or instinct of human nature, but I was enabled to apprehend how God had made a million times more bountiful provision for its gratification, than man was willing to believe, or able to appreciate. Earth-life was a happy life to me, my friends, and if others would have seen the goodness of their Heavenly Father's hand in all they received, as I saw it, they might have been equally happy. My life was one daily course of gratitude, admiration, hope, joy, peace and love; and whenever a shadow crossed my path to shut out for a time the loveliness which was impressed upon all earth-nature, it could ever be traced to one cause, and that the ignorance of man. I reflect with gratitude upon the influence the doctrines of Christian religion exercised upon me when I was first brought to feel the inharmony of my nature; they afforded me hope in the midst of darkness, ignorance, and despair. The teachings of Jesus suggested to my mind the possibility of a life beyond the grave, for they contained principles which, if understood and practised, I could see would bring mankind into a condition of harmony with God, with nature, and each other. I soon learnt that mankind did not, as a rule, apprehend these

teachings, therefore they did not obey and practice them. Feeling individually responsible for the knowledge I had acquired, I sought to practice, in my intercourse with my fellow men, the principles I had acquired from the teachings of Jesus. I was thus enabled to accomplish for myself what all mankind could also accomplish for themselves, and that was the attainment of a condition of happiness arising from my internal sense of love to God and love to man. When I had once reached this condition, I found my life one of progressive happiness. My wife, my children, my home, were natural sources of joy and thankfulness to me; and I soon discovered that the whole earth was equally full of what my God intended for my use and delight. I was thenceforth enabled to see beauty and love in everything; all nature was a garden of flowers, an instrument of music always in tune, and always pealing forth harmony for the enchantment of my soul. In every man and woman I saw a brother and a sister, and felt a pleasure in perceiving them happy, and a sympathetic sadness in their sufferings and sorrows. I saw injustice, monopoly, cruelty, and crime, and every day of my life their victims were objects of commiseration with me, while, as far as it was in my power to counteract evil influences which affected them, I did it. I could not look upon human wrong and suffering, as our brother Bonelo states advanced spirits do, with calm indifference; it would have been felt by me as a course of conduct selfish and cruel in the extreme. The teachings of Jesus led me to feel it my duty to weep with those who wept, and not to look on human sin and suffering with cold indifference. If humanity is one vast brotherhood, I reasoned, each member must feel a portion of the burthen his brother has to bear. I therefore laboured for the defence of the weak, when oppressed by the strong; I stood for the vindication of the wrongly accused, and made his cause mine. I was not indifferent to the accumulation of wealth, for I knew this was a power for good or evil in the hands of those who obtained possession of it. I knew how to value the elegancies and pleasures of life, and did not deny myself any comforts and enjoyments of which my reason approved. In this manner I realized much happiness in earth-life; for the world was not a waste howling wilderness to me, but a paradise and a garden, whose beauty inspired me, while I freely gathered of its fruits and flowers. There was this difference between my brother Bonelo and myself: he looked upon earth with the view of an angel, having no sympathies nor interests in common with mankind; while I looked upon it with the eye of man. The earth was the most beautiful world I knew of, and so long as I lived in accordance with those infallible principles of love to God and love to man, I was contented and happy. I saw in my wife all that I could desire in woman—grace and sweetness, purity, and devotion to my happiness; she was the angel of my hope and love, the companion of my heart, the sharer of my substance, the participator

in my joys and sorrows. Together we fondly lived and laboured, while thought, desire, and action were all reciprocal. Our children were the offspring of love, the gift of God; we loved them with deep parental affection; we regarded them as children of the great parent of all humanity. Their filial love was a spring of mutual happiness, a new bond of union, and an ever-increasing cause for thankfulness and hope. My love of my friends had an enlarging and enlightening influence over my mind; and my love of the country of my birth filled me with noble, honest pride and patriotism. The animosities of sects, classes, and peoples I left to those who liked them; tumult and war I denounced as being contrary to the laws of God and the well-being of humanity.

Peace at home, was our prayer,

While we heard from afar

The echoes of strife,

And the clamours of war.

I strove to assist every enterprise for the amelioration of the evils which afflicted mankind, and joined every effort made for their mental, moral, and religious education. What more did I need to make me happy? my inward and outward life were harmonious; I lived peacefully, and looked forward to death without fear, and, when it came, found it a quick transition to a state of being the perfection of which I had not conceived as possible to exist.

As I look upon the countenances of this immense auditory, and see flashing from their eyes knowledge, love, and wisdom—as I see their noble forms, and realize this lovely land in which they live—I feel that earth-life is the plant, but spirit-life the flower of human existence. I feel that however pure and beautiful the perfections of earth appeared, they were the perfections of a rudimentary state only. I feel, moreover, that as man is progressive, and God is infinite, there must still exist beyond this lovely sphere others as much transcending it in beauty and grandeur as this does the earth I dwelt on. Perfect as I thought my earth-life to be, I now see it was but so in degree; in this sphere we have glimpses of higher spheres, and, as we attain to more advanced conditions, visitors from these tell us that we, like them, shall rise, and share in the higher love and wisdom. This hope supplies those aspirations of man's nature which are the reaching forth of his eternally progressive capacities. I see now what is man's greatest want, and that God has made a bountiful provision for its supply. But I discover also that man is as ignorant of the aspirational capacity of his nature as he is of the means God has provided for its gratification—the aspirations of mankind, being misunderstood, are consequently misdirected. I now look upon the Christian religion as being well adapted to man in this undeveloped state. The contrast between the condition of penitence, faith, hope, love, justification, and sanctification, of the orthodox Christian, and of the secularist, is much in the Christian's favour. The former has a hope blooming with immortality beyond the

grave ; and although those properties of his inner nature *faith* and *hope*, are fixed upon objects which must eventually fade from his vision, yet they are the means of developing these properties, which in the secularist are dormant. The Christian religion is therefore valuable as a means to an end ; it prepares man for the reception of the light and liberty of spirit-life. Orthodox Christianity has its numerous forms and phases, varied and contradictory as the inharmonious conditions of the human mind in an undeveloped state. The teachings of Jesus were pure and true, for his mind was harmonious, and consequently a most fitting medium for spirit teaching ; but his immediate followers, like the orthodox believers of the present time, interpreted his life and teachings in accordance with their own mental and physical conditions. However imperfect the Christian religion may be, the world has been, nevertheless, the better for receiving it : it has brought spirit-life and immortality to light ; and although it does not teach the nature of that spirit-life, yet it paves the way for such teaching. If mankind would receive the doctrines of Jesus in their purity, and live natural lives, they would be happier, and better prepared for death and the after-life, than they could possibly be as secularists without their spiritual faculties developed. Although spirit-life is, in a certain sense, a material existence, it is a spiritualized materiality. Our language is *thought*, our intercourse *feeling*, our sight is *faith*, our realization of the provisions of spirit-life *intuition* ; our bodies, with every sense and faculty purified, intensified, spiritualized, find nothing in earth-life of any value, except its internal spiritual properties. If these are developed (it matters nothing by what means) the spirit at death is emancipated from the ignorance and gross materialism of earth-life, and enters at once on a delightful career of eternal progression. But if man dies without having known this internal development, the process is more tedious, and much more protracted here than it would have been in earth-life under the most unfavourable circumstances. It has been my happiness to realize the change from earth-life to spirit-life when in a measure prepared for it ; but I see thousands of others who have arrived here without such a preparation. When I behold the wonders and beauties of this spirit-world, I cannot help thinking that had it been possible for mankind to have had tangible evidence of these realities, the Christian believer would have felt far stronger incentives to a life of aspiration, and the secularist to a belief in his immortality. I am now in the full enjoyment of an existence of purity, hope, and perfect happiness ; but I feel a deep sympathy with *her* I have left on earth who shared my joys and sorrows. She is oppressed with grief at what she thinks to be the loss of her husband, although she has one cheering hope (the result of her reliance on the teachings of Jesus), of again being united with the object of her love in a state where parting cannot come. But what would now be the feeling of her heart—would not that sor-

row be turned into joy if she could but know the whole truth? And my beloved son, towards whom my heart yearns with parental love; I see now how, through ignorance, I erred in defending him and our pastor against imputations cast upon them. I am now beginning to discover that Divine laws rule the universe; and while man condemns his fellow man as a criminal for any violation of human law, in his ignorance he thinks the laws of God may be broken with impunity. It is natural for me to feel deep emotion when my thoughts are directed to those on earth who are all the world to me; I know I shall soon meet my darling child here, where no discord can enter, and no jealousy can exist.

And now I see him coming; his spirit has left his mortal body, and ascends in company with her whom the world considers it a sin for him to love. Yes, they are now together entering this happy place. (Enter Mr. James and Miss Vincent). Welcome, my son, let me fondly embrace you. Welcome thou beautiful partner of his love. What God hath joined together, no power in the universe can put asunder."

James, Junr. "Father, we have been conducted hither by the loving spirit who accompanies us; it delights unspeakably my every thought to meet you; but when I see the welcome this lady receives, my heart leaps with joy, and I am overwhelmed with gratitude. Father, I do not know the meaning of your words, what 'God hath joined together,' will you explain them to me? I came to you, for I was conducted hither, but not knowing who I should see. Had I thought of meeting you, I would have come alone; knowing your purity, I should have feared to bring this lady into your presence."

James, Senr. Why? my son; because your love for her was not in accordance with the laws of human society?"

James, Junr. "Yes; I thought you would like all others in earth-life, condemn both of us, and become my chief accuser at the judgment seat of Christ."

James, Senr. "And you do not understand wherefore, in this purer world, I give to you both a reception the reverse of that I should have given on earth under like circumstances? I will tell you the reason, my son and daughter, why I said, what God hath joined together, no man in the universe can put asunder. If, therefore, God hath united you, it is impossible for me to put you asunder. And what am I that I should call into question the righteousness and goodness of God? If God had joined you and her who was your wife on earth, according to human law, no power could have broken the union. But as the power of affinital love separated you from her, and united you and this lady as one flesh, I bow to the working of a law of Him whose wisdom, power, justice and love, no mortal can ever question."

Miss Vincent, "May I then call you father? You called me daughter; and if love for him who is your beloved son entitles me to this happiness, I have indeed a claim which none can deny.

When in earth-life, my love for him would have enabled me to endure toil, poverty, shame and dishonor. And now, in spirit-life, I desire no higher joy than to live in some obscure region of this beautiful world, sharing with him whatever be his lot. I am content to have no other eye to look upon us but the eye of God; to have no other hand or voice to support and cheer me, than that of him whom you say God has made my husband. With him, and these dear children of our love, I am contented and happy. Had our reception been otherwise—had you cast away your son, and he, in sorrow and shame, had been condemned to a condition of loneliness and misery, I would have been his companion then. But I am overwhelmed with happiness to find our reception by you, who more than all others we feared meeting, to be that of a loving father; and instead of words of reproof, condemnation, and abandonment, or even forgiveness, those which sound doubly sweet on my ears when uttered by you. You reason so kindly to convince us that our very life, unholy and impure as we thought it to be, was in perfect accordance with the laws of God. You agree that she who was your son's wife by human law, was not his wife in the sight of God. You bring hope and joy to this troubled heart of mine. I feel towards him the pure affection of a wife; I feel for these dear little ones all the deep devotion of a mother. Can legal conjugal love, be more pure than mine? can legitimate parentage result in a truer motherly love? The highest aspirations of my spirit while in earth-life have been towards some state of being in the future where love would not be associated with shame and dishonor. Little did I think that the realisation of my wishes was so near, when, worn down with sorrow, weariness, and affliction, death came to my lonely chamber. No loving hand was there to press mine, no dear voice to whisper a hope beyond the grave; all was gloom, darkness, and despair, as I closed my eyes upon the world. What then was my joy and thankfulness to my God when I awoke in spirit-life, and found him waiting by my side whose faithful love had cheered me in earth-life and lived beyond the grave; and who now had come with open arms to welcome me to the spirit-land. Could I feel otherwise than grateful to God, thus filled with joy and hope? I saw now that our love was natural, and must be immortal, for it had survived death; and I knew that if it was natural, it could not be contrary to the will of God. These thoughts gave me peace, confidence, and hope; as my poor heart was now seen to be right in the sight of God, I could feel a strength, a courage I had not known before; I could dare the whole world to denounce and frown upon me; I could dare the malignity of demons and the torments of hell, for I was filled with love and hope. God did not condemn you, said my inner nature, why then fear a universe of hatred and condemnation? God is greater than the universe; His love is more powerful than the hatred of all created beings. I no longer felt any fear or resentment, but was assured that He

who had provided so bountifully for me, had also cared for others in like manner. I no longer felt I was loving a man who belonged to another; nor taking away from another woman her husband. I realized, in truth, that God had joined us together; and that any other union was the work of man, and external only, consequently only temporary. This is the firm rock of inward consciousness I now realize, and no power on earth, nor in heaven, can prevail against it. You, my father, it seems have learnt something I have yet to learn: the natural causes for this undying love—for this eternal union—for you speak with that confidence which knowledge gives: when you say, what God hath joined together, no power *can* put asunder. You, who lived a pure conjugal life on earth, welcome with affection your son's mistress, and call her daughter, when you know there lives one who claims him as husband. What is that knowledge which makes you speak and act thus? Teach me to know whence I came; let me solve the mystery of my being, the origin of my love. Tell me of those regions where nature gives birth to spirits. I feel within me a yearning for something beyond even this state of being. I feel I am immortal, that this love within me is immortal, and therefore it must ever have been. Where, what, and how have I lived before? I begin to rise above my present self; I begin to look to a past eternity, where this longing, loving spirit lived in unison with its other half. Ah! now I see this other half is here in him; and now it is no longer unison, but harmony; harmony of thought, harmony of desire, harmony of aspiration. This harmony shall never cease its celestial vibrations; but each sense, each thought, each emotion, each desire, shall ever produce in each other's breast one unending harmony to God."

Mr. James. "Daughter, you ask for knowledge; you ask for what a child of God never asked in vain. He who gives light to the universe, who calls into being infinitude, and to each particle of matter, and to every insect, ordains laws of existence and conditions of happiness, will not deny you the desire of your heart. True, my daughter, it is knowledge which causes me to love you; it is knowledge of the nature of God and the laws of human life which make me call you daughter. If I was as ignorant now as when in earth life, of the nature of love and the laws of affinity, I would not have so addressed you, nor said that God had joined you and my son together. But since I have entered on this sphere of existence my capacity for the acquisition of knowledge has become enlarged, and the supply ever exceeds both the desire and the power to receive it. The attainment of knowledge is unlimited, and eternally progressive; as is the nature of man, so is his ability to take in the objects and truths of the laws of infinitude. Man's only limit in the universe of God is his want of condition and capacity to appropriate; God's supplies for mankind are infinite; man's ability to receive those supplies is the result of development. It matters nothing in what sphere of the uni-

verse man exists, he is subject to the same laws ; even in earth-life this want of fitness to receive is man's only limit to the realization of knowledge : these truths I did not obtain until I reached the spirit spheres. Seek knowledge, my son and my daughter, and beauty and happiness will be ever opening to your sight, and pouring in upon your astonished and delighted hearts more abundantly than they are able to receive. When this is exhausted, or rather when your faculties are sufficiently expanded to fit you for higher states of being, those laws of God which brought you both into existence, united you in the bonds of eternal love and led you to these realms of joy, will conduct to more exalted spheres of infinitude. Now, my children, live together in love, as God has given you power to do, and be happy for ever ; and these offspring of that love shall grow up to manhood and womanhood under your parental care and instruction. Each faculty, as it is developed, will need rightly directing by you, that no discord may enter their minds to disturb the harmony of nature in which alone perfect happiness can be found. You will have domestic, conjugal, parental, social, and fraternal duties to discharge ; there is occupation here for every capacity of man's nature. And when man reaches a condition of development in which love and wisdom inspire and guide him, in every desire and action of his life he is harmonious and perfectly happy."

Albeto. "Spirits of the sphere of knowledge, you are in a condition in which you are ever desiring, ever seeking, and ever obtaining knowledge. So long as the acquisition of new truths, as a simple mental process, affords you satisfaction, you will be content in this sphere of existence. But as soon as your aspirations begin to rise to higher conditions, you will seek higher spheres, and not till then. To spirits just arrived from earth in a condition of ignorance, this is a blissful heaven, where every desire of their nature is matured and gratified ; but to those whose natures are developed, and by whom knowledge has been acquired in earth-life, this can be a temporary resting-place only. We have presented to you, my friends assembled here, a delineation of one phase of earth-life for the instruction of those who may need it. We have introduced so much of the wisdom of the higher spheres as we consider you capable of understanding. We hope that the thoughts which have been developed have all been satisfied by the soliloquies, conversations, and events which have been presented, and that you will all leave here the better for our labors. Let me glance for a moment at the chief lesson taught on this occasion. The eternity of man's existence, the study of which has been suggested as an ennobling and elevating mental occupation, is a subject of intense interest in the higher spheres. Not so much the acquiring a knowledge of the fact of such an existence, as learning the manner of it ; not so much to know whether man has always lived in some form or other, as where and how he lived in his pre-existent state. We do not question the reasonableness of

such being the case; we indeed firmly believe that universal nature teaches it; and we see how much man's happiness may be promoted by having his attention directed to this most important truth. We do not fear any evil effects could follow the introduction of such knowledge to man. In this sphere many of you think it would tend to loosen the marriage tie as it now exists, and disturb what little harmony man is now enabled to enjoy in domestic life. If this result should be permanent, it would not be our desire to give mankind such knowledge; but the effects referred to could not follow, even temporarily, because such knowledge can be received by those in advanced conditions only; all others will ridicule and reject it. Those who have lived a life of suffering or unlove in the marriage state, through misdirection caused by their ignorance of the laws of affinity, will be developed to a condition in which they will be able to appreciate such knowledge. Love sufficient may exist between husband and wife to make them contented with each other for the whole of earth-life, yet their union be *not* one of affinity. Such love is the result of harmony of the physical and intellectual organisms, their inner natures remaining undeveloped. Marriage unions may and do exist which, for the happiness of both, should be mutually dissolved. The divorce court, the legal separation of man and wife by the desire of one party only, and legal separations the result of violence and selfishness, are caused by barbarous laws, barbarous institutions, and barbarous natures. Such knowledge as that of pre-existence and affinity can only be received by such natures, after their having passed through a painful process of development to capacitate them for its reception. Now, to the myriads who have yet to marry, such knowledge would be worth more than material wealth—more than honor, distinction, or power. It is only by affinital marriage unions that the highest happiness of earth-life can be gained; and there is no misery so permanent and intense as that endured by those living in the marriage relation when one is repulsive to the other, and circumstances make mutual separation impossible. The elevation of humanity from the present condition of discord will not make much progress until a knowledge of God's laws in relation to marriage becomes more generally diffused. Mankind must unite in accordance with the laws of affinity, if they would be happy and would rise to that condition of harmonious development of which their natures are capable. The offspring of such marriages will be the Christs of humanity, and become a power in the hands of communicating spirits for the diffusion of spirit-knowledge. The last question of importance to which I shall refer is that of spirit-intercourse with man. The power of spirits to commune with man is limited by the spirit's knowledge of the laws of such communion: But the power of man to receive such intercourse is limited by his condition. The difficulty which now exists obstructing such intercourse is in the unfavorable condition of man.

Those of you who have recently visited the earth must have seen how differently your influence operated upon mankind to what you at first sight expected and desired. You find man afflicted with a disease which makes him unhappy, and your love for him leads you to desire to make him happier. The disease which afflicts him is ignorance, and its effects are discord—discord of thought, desire, and action. You come in affinal contact with him, but does your purity make him more pure—does your knowledge make him more wise—does your love attract his mind from the inharmonious affections of earth, and raise it to God and the spirit-world? I answer for you: its immediate effects are the reverse of these. Spirits seeking the welfare of those they love on earth, no sooner come in contact with them, than, just in that proportion in which they are impressionable, or affinity with their friends exists, will effects follow such contact. But what are these effects? Just such as the condition of those in earth-life must of necessity produce; and their ignorance can only be removed by knowledge; discord can give way to harmony alone. The power of your spirit-presence within the sphere of those you love in earth-life cannot give them knowledge nor harmony. Your influence over them is a stimulant to action, and that action can be in accordance with their state of growth only. When a man in a condition of ignorance is stimulated to action, his actions cannot be those of a wise man. When in a condition of discord and misery, under like influence his actions are more immoral, and his misery becomes despair. The only way open to us to influence mankind for his good is to act in accordance with the laws of his being; and before we can raise him to a condition capable of receiving knowledge, every discordant quality of his nature must be developed to a state of harmony. The inharmonious conditions of men's minds cannot be changed miraculously; they must act out their own discord, and the more fiercely the fire of ignorance and misery burns, the sooner will the combustibles which feed it be all consumed. Our love and wisdom will give us hope, and when mankind are at their worst, from our point of view they will be at their best. With his imperial will, man may do violent and demoniacal actions, owing to his ignorance, and the intensity of his misery. Wars, murders, and suicides may be the result; but desperate as his condition may be, it is beyond our ability to restrain man's will-power. The exercise of this force is free within permitted limits, so that man may become a demigod or a demon in his own sphere. Knowledge, therefore, can only be imparted to man when he is willing to receive it; and he may be in such condition of willingness when he discovers the suffering his ignorance always brings him. When such time comes, our endeavour must be to bring before his notice the fact of our existence, and this will be a lesson to man of his own immortality. Next, we must teach him that we are always near him, and that will cause humanity to reflect, and to reason. Then he

must be brought to understand that we know all about him, even his most secret thoughts, and this will alarm him; but we must then convince him that we love him, and this accomplished, our path will be clear. We can afterwards teach him the nature of God and the destiny of man. Man will then commence to thirst for knowledge, and as we impart it to him in accordance with the laws of his nature, he will become more and more happy. The ruling truths of spirit-intercourse with man will become manifest as our work progresses; and whatever is natural, however insignificant it may appear, and however contemptible it may be looked upon by mankind, if it only brings before their notice the fact of our existence, will lead to the object we have in view. In nature there is nothing mean nor contemptible; God has called all things into existence; it is therefore worthy of our notice that small causes often lead to great results. Brethren, we now say adieu for the present."

Mr. Wilson. "I suppose this is the conclusion, Harriet?"

Harriet. "Yes, everyone is preparing to depart; the children have already gone. I suppose that which was most interesting to us, Albeto's address, had no attraction for them."

Wilson. "Shall we stay, and speak to Mr. and Mrs. James before leaving?"

Harriet. "Not now; we shall have other opportunities. You want to tell them how happy you are; is it not so, Edward?"

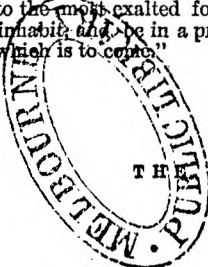
Wilson. "I want to let them know how changed my feelings are towards them; but I suppose they will expect that such is the case."

Harriet. "They will come to our home very soon, you may be sure, so we will make the best of our way thither."

Wilson. "Now, Harriet, I begin to understand better the nature of human life, and the laws which control it. I cannot resist the force of the lessons this representation has taught me; nor can I object to such personal significance when the illustration of such important truths is the object. It was very painful at the time to see myself thus truly presented to my own eyes; but it was a true picture, and though not agreeable to view, it revealed to my astonished eyes the laws and influences which had impelled me to action. How different is the life to which I am now introduced compared to that for which I had prepared myself; and yet, I cannot think it is less happy. I feel within me a conscious sense of hope, joy, and satisfaction, which I have never realized before. Every object, and every intelligent being I see, suggest the truly natural manner of life in which spirits continue their being."

"I may now, in conclusion, say a word or two to the reader. It has been my object, in giving this short story of my earth-life and its surroundings—with experiences in spirit-life on my first arrival there—to present to the world the truly natural manner in which mankind exist in the spirit state. I have not shrunk from the

utterance of the truth, for fear of shocking those false notions of modesty, purity, and happiness which prevail in earth-life. I have spoken of nature in a natural manner, with the hope that I may be understood and the truths I have written be apprehended. After having witnessed the reproduction of my own life, I felt that if I could have known the laws and spirit-influences which were at work during my earth-being, I should have shaped my course very differently. The same laws, and similar influences, are operating upon you, dear reader; and if you will direct your ways in accordance with nature and reason, those laws and influences must bring you into harmonious relations with universal nature, and you will be happy. Your existence in the earth-world will be a continual unfolding of your inner powers, and you will be ever rising to higher possessions of knowledge and wisdom, until death shall come, when your spirit will enter on a far more perfect plane of being. The same power which brought you here will conduct you there; all fear, all anxiety, cast to the winds; live your earth-life in love to God, and love to man—and you will then rise to the most exalted form of happiness possible in the world you inhabit and be in a prepared state for the realization of the life which is to come."



THE END.

ERRATA.

- Page 6, last line but one, and page 7, first line, for "charity" read chastity.
- „ 50, line 41, for "a Curiosity," read Curiosity.
- „ 53, — 17, for "own," read new.
- „ „ — 18, for "always" read already, and for "in," read is.
- „ „ — 19, before "has" insert which.
- „ „ — 20, for "diversity" read divinity.
- „ 60, — 33, for "Friday" read Sunday.