

of the side wall of the room, and it then occurred to me that this unseen power, whose manifestation I had so often witnessed, was in some way operating on me. To satisfy myself, I asked in an audible voice, "Did the spirits just rap?" there were three distinct raps in reply. I then asked, "Are the spirits trying to influence me?" again there were three distinct raps. At this I arose from my chair, arranged my books, and then retired. The sensation in my arm left me while occupied at my table, and did not return. After I was in bed, however, there were raps on the head-board, and my arm slightly trembled, but I resisted the influence with all my will, and it passed off. I should like to understand to the effect of what natural law this singular manifestation can be ascribed? As far as I was concerned, I certainly had nothing to do with its production. I was not engaged even in thinking about spirits, and much less expecting any such influence on my own person. Why were the raps heard at the same time? and why did they take place in my bed-chamber also? The special effect produced on my own organization, I confess, troubled me not a little. If there had been before this period a lingering doubt in my mind that the phenomena of so-called spirit-action on the physical system of the mediums might have arisen from some power emanating from the minds or bodies of the circle, I could not deny that my mind had no influence in generating the sensation I had experienced in my own person, and as there was no one present with me in my office, I could not attribute the manifestation to the mental force of another person. Conscious the whole subject of spirit-obsession, as far as I individually was concerned, was obnoxious, and that I had resisted the sensation in my arm with the whole force and power of my will, I could give no other solution to this singular affair than to ascribe it to some invisible, intelligent source which designed to place me under its control, and which positively succeeded in so doing.

From this time I was frequently impressed by this same kind of influence, which, however, the exercise of my will enabled me to throw off without such a decided possession as I at first observed. When I visited a circle my hand and arm would be agitated as long as I remained sitting, and often after I have left the circle the same trembling sensation would be felt for hours. Not only was the arm the seat of spirit-possession, but my whole body has

been subjected to their impression; and I recall to mind a remarkable attempt, continued for two whole days, to bring me under this influence, which so affected my whole system, and especially my right arm, that I found it impossible to resist them. It followed me wherever I went, and in whatever business I was engaged, whether waking or sleeping it was the same, and during these two days my mind and will were taxed to their utmost to counteract its effect, but without success, and not until almost prostrated by fatigue did the trembling of the arm cease.

In view of this apparent design of the spirits to develop my organization, as the medium by which they might communicate with this world, the question arises, if it requires an entire passiveness of the mind for the electrical connection to be established by one will over another, and that the electrical or psychological affinities of a number of individuals, seated in a circle, are also necessary to generate this peculiar agent, how was it that my arm was brought under the control of this influence, when, as often stated, I was an unbeliever, and my mind opposed to every form of the manifestations? Certainly *I* was not passive. It would seem probable, at least, that my own mind being in a condition antagonistical to this power, if electrical or psychological, my mind and body would have been impregnable, and no effect could have been produced on either system. I leave this problem to be solved by those who attribute so-called spirit-manifestation to material agencies, and pass on to other portions of my subject.

After this concerted and continued attempt to impress me had passed over, I refrained from visiting circles, and thought by staying away I might be free from any impression; on the contrary, my arm would be moved when asleep, and awake me by its motion. During the time I abstained from sitting in any circle, I was twice lifted bodily from my bed, moved off its edge, and thus suspended in the air. The first time I was so dealt with, I had retired to a different room from the one I usually occupied. I had not been asleep, and was conscious of every thing around me. As I lay composing myself for sleep, I discovered my whole body was slightly trembling in every fiber. I attempted to raise my hand, but I could not move; my eyes were closed, and the lids fastened. My mind was unusually active, and I noted every thing that took place with an intenseness of perception I never before

experienced. My bodily sensation was likewise increased in power. As I lay there unable to move a limb, my body was lifted from the bed, and moved gently toward the edge, with the bedclothes over it; there it remained a moment, and then it was moved off the bed into the room, suspended in the air, and there held for an instant. Just at this time the fire-bells rang an alarm, and my body was suddenly brought back to the bed and deposited in the same place I had previously occupied, with a sort of jerk, as if it had been dropped from the hands which held it. I immediately recovered my powers of locomotion, and arose from the bed and examined the clothes, and found they had been drawn over toward the side whence I had been lifted, and were trailing on the floor.

I was deeply moved at this special evidence of spirit-manifestation. The repeated and determined attempts to bring me under their control had been disregarded when the impression left me. Heretofore my arm had been the organ to which their efforts had been chiefly directed; now my whole body was subjected to their influence, against my will and desire, and all my struggles and efforts to resist them. For the first time it occurred to me that, perhaps in this evident design to develop me as a medium, I might, by submitting to their direction, arrive at the whole truth of spirit-intercourse with man. I felt impelled to ask if there were spirits in the room. Three distinct raps were given in reply, indicating they were present; and then too deeply agitated to question further, I again returned to bed to ponder over this, to me, uncontrovertible evidence that spirits could indeed influence man, the truth of which I was then willing to admit.

The other occasion when I was subjected to a similar manifestation I was in the country, and the spirits moved my body in the same manner after I had retired to bed. At this, as well as the first time, I was so singularly influenced, the whole process was unexpected, and it seemed to be the intention of this invisible agency to impress me when I was least prepared to expect it. This ability of the spirits to impress me without any previous preparation on my part unfolded to my mind the intimate connection existing between beings of this and the spirit-world, and their power of manifesting that relation under all condition and circumstances. But as if to give me still further evidence of that ability, they showed me that by my instrumentality they could manifest that

intelligence which characterized them as sentient, reasoning beings. Thus, after the experience I had had of their physical power, I sought opportunity where I might witness more of their doings. When in pursuance of this design I attended circles, my hand was seized and made to write. At first the sentences were short, and contained a single idea, but as I became developed they wrote out many pages, embracing various ideas and subjects. Still there was no manifest purpose in what was written through my hand that they intended to write a connected work on any subject.

Occupied with my profession, I could spare but little time, comparatively, to general or special circles. Every meeting, however, at which I was present, something new was always developed, and the handwriting of the spirits manifesting assumed peculiar and distinct character, thus identifying the individual who wrote through my hand. The earlier attempts we were hardly able to decipher, but after some practice the writing was rapid, bold, and easily read. From the first essay of the spirits to influence my hand to write, it was the medium by which many, both friends and strangers, communicated with the circle; but when the design was apparent that they had developed me for a special object, my hand was controlled by two spirits, whose names will be found recorded in this book as Sweedenborg and Bacon.

During the whole time, from their earliest endeavor to write, they have used my hand as the instrument to convey their own thoughts, without any appreciation on my part of either ideas or subject.

I know nothing of what is written until after it is read to me, and frequently, when asked to read what has been communicated, I have found it utterly impossible to decipher it. Not only is the thought concealed, but after it has been read to me I lose all recollection of the subject, until again my memory is refreshed by the reading. This peculiar effect on my recollection occurred more frequently when the spirits commenced writing; and I have been told by them that it was produced by their efforts to separate the action of my own mind from their thoughts, when teaching on a subject which required several sittings to finish.

It was necessary at the earlier period of my development that I should sit in a circle before my hand could be moved, and sometimes I would sit an hour or more before any perceptible influence

would be discovered. As my susceptibility increased, the impression was felt almost as soon as the circle was formed. Now I am instantly under control the moment the business of the evening has commenced, either with or without the aid of other individuals. Often, when I am alone in my office, my hand will be moved, and I am obliged to abandon every other purpose till the spirits have concluded their communication. An incident of this kind happened some months since, after I had retired to bed. I was awakened out of my sleep by the rapid and violent motion of my hand. It was midnight, and I could assign no cause for this unusual manifestation, and essayed to throw off the influence by all possible means, but in vain. I was compelled to rise and procure pencil and paper, and a long communication was written before they would permit me again to sleep.

Another instance of their presence, when I was alone, took place a few weeks ago in my office. I had just returned from visiting my patients, and had seated myself in a rocking-chair, not intending to remain but a few minutes. I was scarcely seated, when my right hand began to move. In this hand was a small gold pencil, which I had just been using. I was somewhat impatient at this display of their presence, for I did not know how long I might be detained, and I could spare them but a very little time. I therefore pettishly exclaimed, "Don't detain me to write now, but show me something new." As if to gratify my request, the fingers and thumb were brought together at the ends, leaving the pencil resting on the ball of the thumb, and the fingers closed, forming a roof over it. In this shape the hand was pressed firmly on the arm of the chair, so I could not move it. The pencil was then turned round several times, drawn out from the hand, and lifted up toward the palm, without even a movement of the fingers or hand during the whole operation. At this moment a lady, resident in my house, who was an unbeliever, happened to come into the office. I asked her to watch the pencil in my hand and see if it stirred. I also charged her to watch my hand, and to observe if it moved in the least. I then asked the spirits to move the pencil as before, and the same process again took place in every particular, corresponding with the first. Whether this satisfied her or not of the presence and action of spirits, I am unable to say. I have her corroboration, however, of the fact as it occurred, that it was im-

possible for the pencil to have been so agitated by any effort of my own. It should be noticed in this connection, that when I am alone, as also when in a circle, the manifestation, whether by writing or any physical display, is entirely free of any participation with my own mind, either in the subject taught or in the effect produced on my body.

I reiterate this statement, that it may be understood that the teachings revealed by my instrumentality in this book contain thoughts, sentiments, and statements differing *in toto* from what were my own views when they were communicated. It will be observed, also, that the style and expression of Swedenborg is unlike that of Bacon, and while the latter at once plunges *in medias res*, the former almost invariably commences his teaching with some thought individual in its application to the circle. I have said the thoughts, etc., of these spirits disagree with my own. I mean, the history which they have given of "life in the spheres" was opposed to my idea of spirit-life when it had left the body. It is unnecessary for me to say, however, that a belief in the ability of "spirits departed" to commune with the living, comprehends likewise a belief in the glorious revelations which they have granted us. But they ask no blind faith in their identity or in their doctrines; they have inculcated love to God and love to our race as the governing principle of life on earth and life in the spheres, and yet they have left it to our unbiassed judgment to decide whether they have taught truth or falsehood.

I have now given a brief history of some of the causes which have induced in me a belief in spirit-intercourse. In the language of the gentleman whose name is associated with mine on the title-page of this work, "it is not a tithe, not a hundredth part of what I have witnessed of a similar character." No; I have confined my statement to my own experience individually. I have omitted the many and varied manifestations in which I had no part, but which were far more wonderful than any thing I have related. There might have been cause for doubt in those manifestations which I witnessed through others, but those which were given through my own organism compelled me to an admission of their truth. In all and every of the phenomena of life there are certain laws that are acknowledged as the governing principles which control their manifestation. It is the prerogative of the thinking mind to trace the

cause from the effect; that is, to employ its senses, and to judge by analogy whether these laws are capable of producing those effects said to be consequent on their operation. Our perception of sensible objects depends on our senses, and on them we must rely. Thus when a limb is fractured by a cannon-shot, the mind recognizes the truth of this reasoning. If the hand is plunged into the fire, the force of the analogy is sustained, for a certain effect follows. But are not the same effects produced, whether the arm is voluntarily thrust into the fire, or is forced into the flame against the will or consent of its possessor? Is he not just as capable of judging of the effect produced in the one case as the other? In full possession of my senses, so did I discriminate in the effects produced on my organism by the spirits who used my arm as the medium of their communications. I saw that I was independent in every act of life. I could eat when I was hungry, and drink when thirsty; I could go and come at pleasure, and in every thing which concerned the action of mind or body, my will still maintained its independence.

Reasoning from the facts so abundant in every possible phase, it was evident that in one condition I was able to reject that which was unpleasant and accept that which was pleasant, but in another I was forced to yield my will to a power I felt entirely disregarded it.

In one condition I could not be forced to eat or drink, walk or ride, merely because another mind willed I should do so. My own volition had something to do in this matter. My tastes and inclinations, thoughts and sentiments, were in no wise changed. I was identically the same. I could will and act with the same vigor that had always characterized my mind or body. The violation of a physical law was followed by no new result, and my mind acknowledged its obedience to those same omnipotent principles which it had regarded as sacred since it was capable of realizing what was the nature of its obligations. There was no new law devised for my mental or physical government, for in all my relations with the world I still recognized no new development. I was the same; a reasoning being, just as capable of using the faculties I possessed in deciding whether the manifestations through my arm were generated from a psychological or electrical source, or whether they were the effect of my own imagination, as I was ca-

pable of deciding any other question depending on the voluntary or involuntary action of my mind or body. I, who in every situation of body was free, uncontrolled, was subjugated by this unseen, invisible force against the determined resistance of my own will, and the positive struggles of my own muscles. There could be but one decision to which my mind could arrive when its prejudices and educational biases were forced to succumb to the power of reason. And when at last the truth opened to my view, I beheld in this intercourse of the "spirit out of the form" with "the spirit in the form" the positive demonstration of the immortality of the soul. In the thoughts which they uttered, the glory and might, the wisdom, power, and love of our Creator were made manifest. And what have they taught us? They have taught that as the creeping thing, impelled by the very impulses of its being, prepares itself for perfection, and bursts from its silken tomb with new developed form, appetite, and nature, so the spirit, the germ of that form on which God has stamped the impress of his own image, springs into a new existence when it gives its body back to earth. They teach us that man aspires to immortality because it is the birthright of his soul; and because in the adaptation of spirit with matter in this world God has instituted certain laws for their regulation and government, and it is the very observance of these laws which will enable the spirit to develop those glorious attributes which its Creator has bestowed; that as spirit and matter were created and mingled together in this the first stage of existence, it furnishes indubitable proof that there is some end worthy the immortal aspirations of the spirit in its advancing struggles after knowledge and goodness. That as the Spirit of God pervades matter everywhere, and he is manifest by the works of his hands, it is a rational inference that matter and spirit are individually developed; and as the spirit springs from earth in its search after the indefinable mysteries of its eternal home, it finds ready prepared for it the body which accompanies it forever. That this intimate association of matter and spirit is manifest in all the vital, chemical, and mechanical forces at work, from the first organized cell in which the body of man is designed, to its maturest development in all that characterizes it as a sentient, reasoning being. That this being endowed with attributes to comprehend its relation to the material objects surrounding it, is conscious that there is no degradation in this

physical existence, for it is the first stage of progression in companionship with its spirit, that terminates only when man has become perfect, even as God is perfect.

It teaches, that that philosophy which shuts up the inner life of the soul, and denies to it the knowledge of its high destiny, fails to prove that there is any absurdity in the doctrine of the progressive development of soul and body, and utterly fails to prove that there is any absurdity in believing that the spirit, after it has left this earth, can return to it and hold communion with the friends and loved ones it has left behind. They have taught us, that in the unutterable longing of the soul to know something about its eternal existence, it attracts toward it those spirits who, in obedience to natural laws, can commune with us, and impress on us a deeper knowledge of the laws of our nature and the designs of God, and reveal to us a brighter insight of his love to ourselves, and to every thing he has created. And in this reflex of their intelligence, continually advancing, continually progressing, they show us that the worlds above worlds, and spheres above spheres, filled with the sentient emanations from the great First Cause, are bound together in one harmonious connection of necessity and assistance. They have taught us that God is love, that the basis of all his laws, natural and divine, is predicated on this divine principle of his nature—that the soul which refuses to act in compliance with this law enjoys nothing, because it has voluntarily separated itself from that harmony which unites as one all intelligence and all matter, from the rudest manifestation to the most perfect development—that happiness is only to be attained by fulfilling all those obligations that love requires—that every soul that is out of keeping with divine order must remain in the license of a perverse will, forever vile, until restored by the regenerating influences of progression, upward and onward forever.

And they have taught us that beauty and happiness, the developed holiness of progressive advance, are the essential attributes of *perfected* intelligence, and that spirit everywhere shall feel His might within, effectuating its full deliverance from all the grossness of matter or sentiment, when the soul shall have *worked* out and perfected its own salvation with fear and trembling. And they have taught us, if we rightly receive and improve the opportunities now afforded us through spirit-intercourse, we shall learn the high pur-

poses of our creation and the glorious destiny before us, we shall see the rays of light flowing from the center and lighting up the dark places of spiritual existence, we shall go to the Source of that light, and bear with us that illumination we have received from the truths the spirits have revealed, and we then shall understand what has been concealed for so many thousand years, *the identity of God's design* in developing and perfecting spirit, and we shall the more readily recognize the truth of this doctrine from the testimony offered us by "things seen and unseen."

I have thus given, as briefly as possible, a part of my spiritual experience for the past two years; and it may be allowed me to say, that it has opened to my view a glimpse of that world hitherto shrouded in impenetrable darkness, and sealed, as it were, from mortal comprehension. In the teachings of the spirits, and in their manifestations, I recognize the manner in which the Founder of the universe revealed himself and his laws to his children on this earth. I can now understand how it was that the spirits of the old patriarchs, purified and perfect, walked with God, and held familiar intercourse with the pure spirits from the higher spheres.

I can now understand how he led them, step by step, and gave them line upon line, evermore brightening their desires as they advanced toward the fullness of time, and revealing to their spirits the grand destiny he had designed them. I see *progress* stamped on every aspiration of the human mind, as it is on every part of God's universe—progress from the animal to the intellectual—from the material to the spiritual, and bestowed on the spirit set free from the grossness of matter, as the highest boon of its Almighty Creator.

Shall the proof of these statements be required, my answer is—I know them to be true by the satisfaction they afford to the demands of my spirit, and in the revelations through my own organism, that the progress of nations, the progress of society, the progress of the Christian world, and the progress of man are all contemplated in the evidences of Divine law, as vouchsafed to man through nature, by spirit-communication, and the eternal manifestations of our common Father.

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