

Section Fifteen.

Sunday, May 8th, 1853.

This evening, at Dr. Dexter's, it was written:

THE night is dark and stormy, and the air should be chill and uncomfortable. You draw near your firesides, and sit conversing with one another, and opening your hearts to the genial influence of social connections. With us, we do not feel the effect of storm or cold when approaching your earth, and our spirits are not clothed with such garments as hide the true purposes of our hearts. We converse with one another, but our meaning is perceived without the expression of thought; and the farther we progress, the more is our spirit manifest through all the developments of its covering. But to-night, in spite of rain or chill, I meet warm hearts and strong desires to excel, and I give you a response founded on the very basis of our creation—a response of love and truth, and greet you in the name of God.

SWEEDENBORG.

I propose you ask your questions.

I did so, and asked first this:

You say they are impressed to go forward to the "place," etc. As you thus describe a material heaven, let us know where it is located, where is the food grown, and where are located those little communities? What is the soil in which the food grows? Is it earth or air?

It was written in answer:

I can answer that to-night, if you wish; but as it will take, perhaps, the whole evening, would it not be better to defer it? Still, I will be governed by the wishes of all present.

We expressed our wish to have the answer now, unless he had something particular which he wished to communicate.

He wrote in reply:

No, nothing but the continuation of my teachings; but I will answer this, and, as I may write for some time without stopping, you can amuse yourselves as well as you can, *without*, however, interfering with the magnetic connection of the circle.

My experience will, perhaps, be taken for a direct history of the subject proposed. My motives have been vilified and questioned; and even while on earth, I encountered much opposition from all classes of men styling themselves Christian, who denied the main features of my doctrines, and contended they were untrue, because I could not have had any association with spirits.

I was called crazy, and my writings were censured as blasphemous, because I had given the experience and lessons of a life, the object of which was to penetrate into the arcana of nature, and the design of which was to live as pure as was possible for my material nature to permit. What I taught while on earth I was satisfied was correct. I was directed by spirits, whose lessons and explanations I thought I understood, and my earnest desire was reasonably and rationally to explain the wonders revealed to me, substantially as I viewed them, and to give to the world, in truth, the instructions I derived from them.

But after my death—or, rather, after I left the earth—I commenced a course of review on all the matters which I taught as true, and when my spirit, divested of its grosser covering, became itself a personal actor in many of the scenes which I had attempted to describe, I learned how easy it had been for me to give an incorrect coloring and shape to the great doctrines which I had supposed I had taught correctly.

I have made these remarks in order to explain what follows.

Living, as I said, with the sole and only motive, to ele-

vate my nature, and to aid mankind in their race toward eternity, I had no fear of death. I had lived to impart to the world the realities which were unfolded to my mortal vision of the various conditions and states of the world I now inhabit. I had lived pure and unspotted, and when I left the world I was ushered into what has been stated as the sixth sphere.

But in the course of the great revolution which took place in my opinions on many subjects, it became necessary that I should visit many of the departments of spirit-life, and thus, and by conversation with and accounts given me by other spirits, I have become acquainted with many of the facts which I now inculcate.

Let it be understood, then, first, that this is a world occupied by spirits, or, rather, men, women, and children, mingling as their desires, tastes, inclinations or pleasures impel them, accomplishing and carrying out the great objects of their formation, the development of the spirit itself to that exact state when and where it will manifest the properties and attributes so corresponding to those of the Great First Cause, that they can live and exist eternally in direct communication and connection with all that possibly can be known or realized as God; and, second, that the different spheres are localities assigned to the progressed spirits, and they represent a state of elevation, and are reached only by a still more sublimated and refined materiality and advance of knowledge and goodness of the soul than belonged to the bodies or spirits occupying the sphere below.

Now when I arrived at the sixth sphere, I found myself surrounded by spirits whom I had known on earth, and was immediately made a member of a community, composed, for the most part, of spirits of relatives or friends with whom I was connected in life. The newness of every thing impressed me with delight. The air was pure, and the whole heavens were bright and clear beyond all comparison. I saw no difference in the sky, except its brightness and purity; and on looking abroad on the earth, I

could detect no difference in its appearance from our earth, except in the heavenly beauty and harmony in the arrangement of the landscape. The diversified character of the scenery, the mountains, not ragged and steep as on earth, but rounded with every regard to the harmony and beauty of all the other scenery. The trees, the rocks and mountains, the flowers and birds, the gushing torrents and the murmuring rivulets, the oceans and rivers, man, woman, and child, all passed before me, so far excelling every thing I had conceived or imagined in the beauty of form, in the glorious demonstrations of their nature, in the palpable and evident exhibition that they were beings who inhabited an earth near to the gates of heaven, that my spirit, lifted beyond itself, sprung forth in one spontaneous gush of love and praise, and I blessed God who had vouchsafed to me the privilege I then enjoyed.

We occupy earth—tangible, positive earth—as much as your earth; but the advanced state of both spirit and locality renders it unnecessary for us to labor much to obtain food for the support of our bodies. Then, again, the earth brings forth spontaneously most of the food required for our bodies. And I would say, the advanced spirits do not require as much food as those who are below them. Their bodies, in every sphere to which they are elevated, lose a portion of their grossness, and as they are more refined, they become more like the spirit itself. We have trees—real trees and flowers, and mountains and rivers, and rocks, and every thing material; but you, who have traveled into some unsettled and far-off lands, can realize the great difference there is in your own land in the various manifestations of nature. You can behold mountains on mountains piled to heaven, and at their feet vast plains spread out, where not one blade of grass, not one green twig gives evidence that it is fit for the habitation of man. You can go farther, and behold the rugged and barren places which have been conquered by man's indomitable efforts. The dark forest which for ages covered the land has fallen be-

fore the determined energy and labor of man; and the somber recesses, fit habitations for the bear, the tiger, or some poisonous reptile, have been made to yield to man a tribute of labor, of effort, of *mind*. Thus when comparing this condition of things, your mind can the more readily perceive what is the state of those worlds fashioned for the residence of spirits, whose minds, filled with knowledge, and incited only by the strong feelings of love and adoration to God, are placed there to live, to inhabit that earth, and to form just such connections and associations as the same spirit did on earth.

In reviewing what I have written, and taking the many statements I have made contradicting the revelations of other spirits, the whole object of man's creation must be considered. What is creation in its whole but the gradual progress from the lowest form to the full development of man himself?

To suppose that this earth is, of all the works of God, alone the place selected for the residence of spirit in the flesh, is to deny the evidence which daily passes before your own senses, as well as the truths elicited by actual research. Now, reasoning from what data you possess, you must be satisfied that in your earth there are many grades of creation, both in the animal and vegetable world, and that the whole work together just, probably, as it was designed by the Great Architect of the whole.

To suppose that creation or man had gone contrary to God's intention, when first fashioned by his hand into existence, would be an absurdity, and, in fact, would deny the ability and power of the Creator to form a world and establish laws for its government which would conform to the principles on which they were based. And, again, when you look abroad on the planets moving in their orbits with no deviation, and the sun and moon answering the specific object of their creation, the earth bringing forth its treasures of gold and silver, and trees and fruit, and food for man—in fine, all the natural laws of God working to-

gether, without one deviation or departure from the precise purpose for which he created and established them—would it not be strange that he should have so signally failed in accomplishing his purposes in regard to man? Is it not surpassing strange that when the maturity (or age) of creation can not be ascertained from any development of present effects, and that only an atom or speck of all his works can be understood from actual observation, and that, too, creation in all its vastness is as much beyond the research of man as is a visit to the sun, that man can decide as to the events and results of God's laws in relation to the whole?

When so little is understood of your earth, can it be possible that that of which you know nothing—the soul of man—can be limited and confined, its destiny determined, and its condition and action circumscribed by your ignorance of laws of which you know as little as you do about God himself? No! the limitations assigned both to matter and spirit, by sect or denomination, are a perfect absurdity. What do you know of man, and who can limit the action of his mind? Who can control the innate promptings of the spirit, and circumscribe to given laws the impulse of that principle which is a part of that Great First Cause which fashioned from chaos the whole vast universe? Can it be done by a doctrine—a theory? But I can not dwell on this part of the subject longer.

I remarked that all my question had been answered, except as to the place or locality, and as to that I was conscious how difficult, if not impossible, it was to make a statement which I could comprehend. I would not, therefore, press that part, unless he wished to teach upon it.

He wrote:

No. I am glad your mind, Judge, recognizes the difficulty of understating locality in this connection. I might say Mars, or Jupiter, or Venus; but your mind would tire were I to lead it where spirits of the sixth sphere dwell. I can not locate it. Suffice it to say, far beyond the confines or limits of any star or planet of which you have knowledge.

I then inquired, Those whom you describe as so material or gross, are they detained near the earth, and so nearer and nearer, in proportion to their grossness, so that they wander darkling around their old haunts?

And it was answered:

That is a comparative term—"near the earth." They visit the earth frequently, and their tasks and habits correspond with what they used to be when on earth. To compute the distance would be beyond my ability.

Is progression and purity the all-engrossing topic of thought with them?

No.

Your duties being so much on earth, and your connection with earth being so intimate, is not your happiness much impaired by our sufferings, or the thousand-and-one considerations which cause us unhappiness here?

Yes.

In your government, do your little communities band together and form larger ones, over which, also, there are governors, and so on, like system upon system of worlds? The answer was:

Circle within circle, winding spirally upward, until it centers in one ruler over all.

If the spirit-body is a new one entirely, and of new materials, in no respect emanating from the old, how is it a "sublimation" of the old? Just carry out the consequences of this idea.

When you reflect that matter is the same, existing through all time, your question is answered.

Are there spirits in a state of existence above yours, just as invisible and inaudible to you as you are to us?

Yes. How shall I find words to explain this seeming mystery? But I will ask my friend Bacon to answer that question when you two are together, and I wish you would propose it at the earliest opportunity.

Section Sixteen.

Monday, May 9th, 1853.

This evening, at my library, I read over to Dr. Dexter the minutes of last evening's interview, and it was written:

THERE is no state of existence, Judge, but has its better spirits above it. There is no mind so advanced and enlightened but there is a mind more developed, more progressed, to which the other will look, with deference and respect. If this obtains on earth, how much more should this law exert its full influence among spirits! It is a singular fact, in the progress of all things on earth, that the most inferior plant can, by cultivation, be made to manifest properties entirely distinct from the original, yet retain all the characteristic features of the germ. Now you take a peach, and in its original form it is almost worthless, yet by cultivation you develop the fruit to that degree of perfection that of all fruits of the earth it is most sought for and admired. These simple facts are pertinent illustrations of the great law which had its beginning with God, and will end only when the Creator is unable to execute the laws he has established.

Thus all progressed spirits have above them other spirits, who have passed through the death of the spheres, and therefore have become so much more ethereal and refined, that those in the sphere below necessarily can not see them. And though I pretend to a certain degree of advancement, yet there are conditions above my sphere where reside spirits whose bodies I can not behold, only when my mind, like your own, is in such a state that they act upon it, as certain spirits did on yours, by visions and imagery.