

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.

Your learned men ascribe the nucleus of all worlds to what they call gaseous bodies, or nuclei. Supposing this to be true, through what processes of growth and development they must have passed to have arrived at that stage or state where they have become fit habitations for men!

All species of the apple, it is said, are derived from the simple crab apple. And what variety, without number, you find in size, shape, coloring, taste, and flavor! Now, this is eminently true with regard to man; and though I can not say he was derived from one source or one being, yet your knowledge of the various races, species, genera, and orders must satisfy you that in every age of the world some new property has been developed in him, and this in proportion to his situation and connection, until, at the present day, the race of men now moving and controlling the affairs of life have further advanced, and manifest more of the true characteristics of his proper nature, than all classes or nations who have preceded it.

There is a necessity for an advance toward perfection in every thing created by God. Of what purpose was it that he created worlds, and filled them with intelligent beings, capable of understanding and learning from every manifestation of his power around them the effects which certain laws he has established have produced? Of what purpose was it that he should have created them, if he had intended that they—man or men—should have remained in a state of abeyance? Of what use the mind? Of what use thought? Of what use that the sprig should have been lopped off from the oak itself?

God could just as well have created man without a soul as with an intelligent one; and certainly it appears to me reasonable that in planting within his body a spirit susceptible, comprehensive, and intelligent, he intended that spirit should not be satisfied with learning or understanding one fact only, and that it should not be satisfied till it had grasped every thing within the scope of its faculties. There is one idea which has often occurred to me since I left the

earth, and that is, that if it were not intended that both spirit and matter should progress, God would probably have created man with all the powers and faculties of his nature, ready developed at his creation. For were it denied that the intention of his creation was his steady advancement, the mind, when it had mastered one position, would have still remained the same as before it recognized a new idea. There could not have been any appreciation of any thing before it, and instead of knowledge enlarging its range of desire and thought, it would have left it in the same condition as it found it. What think you? On this great principle is based, as before stated, all the law and the spirits.

Now about ourselves. And though I talk to you, my friend, I want you to understand that I include the Doctor, in every thing I say. Writing through him as a medium, I sometimes do not realize that he is present; but enough of that, too.

I feel that your thoughts have been occupied in digesting the great truths taught last night by Swedenborg. I am writing through the hand of Dr. Dexter; and to many persons, looking on and beholding the use of the same expressions as you adopt on earth, they would remark on its foolishness and absurdity as a spirit-manifestation. But look at the ideas we inculcate, regard the thoughts we express. And if in the whole history of written human thought there is any thing that can approach it, either in the magnitude of the ideas or the profundity of the thoughts, then I am heartily willing it should be said to be a farce.

But when man, as have you, my friend, shall have looked into nature with eyes that do not blink at the dazzling gems she holds up before them; when man, like you, has from his inmost heart yearned for some rational explanation of the longing desire to understand your own immortality; and when from the dark abyss beyond this life he shall have presented to his understanding the radiance, the glory, the unsurpassing loveliness of truth, and is willing

to receive and adopt it, then shall old things indeed pass away, then shall shallow doubts give way to confirmation strong as the eternal principles of his own nature, and in the ecstatic joy of a developed mind he will find, as you have found, how great the joy of believing. BACON.

I remarked, that I was yesterday reading some of his essays written when in life, and I came across some which denounced the love between the sexes; which said that no man could be great who had such love, and that great things had been done only by those men who had no wife or children. Now, I wanted to know if he entertained the same sentiments now?

He wrote in answer;

*Oh! how little I understood the true character of the heart's affection! What a confined idea I had of the soul's capacity! But I am sure there is no man, no matter what his abilities—no matter how great the power of his mind—who can arrive at any eminence in the world you inhabit, excepting his heart is filled with love to all and every thing created by God, and who is not capable of appreciating affection's response in every human heart.

The law of God's creation in all its workings is love; and had it not been for your affection, your devoted love, you would have burrowed in the mire of your own natural desires, and never have arrived at the position you occupy.

Don't refer me to my earthly absurdities.

I remarked, that there was another question I wished to ask: It was evident that he was a progressed spirit, and from all the teachings it appeared that he could roam at pleasure amid scenes where all was joy and happiness. Yet it seemed that much of the time he was near me, and of course on this earth, and affected by its sorrows and sufferings. Now what I wanted to know was, what good it did him to be near this earth? He answered in these words:

Judge Edmonds, that I am with you much, I have before told you. That I strive to impress your thoughts, I have before said. Why I am with you, I have partially stated. I am as much interested in the advancement of your race, both on earth and in the spirit-land, as you are and have been in

ameliorating the condition of one class of your unfortunate fellow-creatures. I am not exclusively reading your mind all the time I am with you; and being with you, is a comparative expression. To wish to be with you, is to be there. To wish to be thousands of miles away, is to be there immediately the wish is formed. While with you, I sometimes converse with spirits who accompany me, and who have, under my direction, charge of certain duties. At times, even in your library, I teach the high destinies of their nature to certain unprogressed spirits, whom I persuade to attend me there. At other times I read and reflect, at others witnessing the working of your mind.

Then, again, I listen to your conversation with your friends or visitors; but the advanced spirits never witness any act of man which is improper to be noticed by any other person, that is, any necessary or proper act of life. When you suffer, we try to assuage. When you are tired, we study to suggest a remedy; and when you are ill, we call around you those in whom you have confidence, and they endeavor to relieve you by controlling your nervous system.

The great object of progression is not confined to a locality or sphere, to a neighborhood or person. You are as much interested as we are; and when an idea is generated on earth which advances your material or spiritual condition in the least, we feel the influence of that progressive step, and are attracted to the source from whence it emanates, and endeavor to make you feel the full effect of that influence, as we know you ought to appreciate it. I think your question is answered.

I said, No, not entirely, and I was apprehensive that I had not worded it so as to convey the precise idea I intended. My object had been, not to inquire so much whether it afforded him pleasure, as it was to ascertain what good it did him, or what advantage it was to him thus to be near the earth. Thus, it had been said that my wife's progression had been advanced by her dealings with me, so what I wanted to know was, whether his progression was in like manner advanced by his connection with earth?

In brief, yes. Every act that man or spirit accomplishes for good, is just so far a step forward in the development of his nature. Your wife, in accomplishing what she has done, found her reward in the increased flow of all those affections which contribute to the elevation of her character.

Besides, in directing your mind to the anxious inquiry after the truth of spirit-intercourse, she developed traits in your mind which had slumbered there since first it was exercised by thought; and as this was generating an idea for good, she, as the instrument, felt the revivifying effect of that act. No man does a good act but his nature is bettered; and it is the property of goodness that it never loses any thing by cultivation. It was a reciprocal effect. She has had her reward. I, too, shall have my reward; but my labors are not yet done. BACON.

Section Seventeen.

Tuesday, May 10th, 1853.

This evening Dr. Dexter and Mr. Sterling, of Cleveland, Ohio, were in my library.

Mr. Sterling made some remarks about the difficulties he encountered in communing, and about the different languages used by the spirits in conversing with mortals, and about their conversing with each other without using spoken language.

I remarked, that I supposed that in proportion as they were developed and advanced, the less need they had of spoken language, and the nearer the earth they were, the more they had occasion to use it.

After some such conversation it was written:

THE opportunity presented to certain individuals to witness the more advanced revelations of spirits, is for the

accomplishment of the object which we have so earnestly at heart, that of spreading and disseminating the doctrines taught by them. It is indeed a privilege, scarcely to be estimated rightly by those to whom these manifestations are given. One fact I ought to specify, that we do not always select the proper person to whom we have imparted the truths we desire to teach. Thus, when we have often thought we have found the person who would aid us in our efforts properly and wisely, we have learned, after a while, that he was wanting in certain characteristics, which retarded our exertions and rendered our revelations so unsatisfactory, that they really seemed to be entirely different from what they were intended.

Then, again, the circles are not always harmonious, and the subjects proposed are so much below the teachings we wish to utter, that it interferes with our ability and power to manifest the true desires of our heart. In communicating to circles or individuals by words or written language, it must be understood that the ideas which are usually adopted as correct, are so only in part. Thus spirits who rarely visit the earth (progressed spirits) do not always converse with one another by words—their intercourse is by affinity. But those whose duties and inclinations lead them to earth, must of necessity possess the requisite qualifications which will afford an easy and certain manner of being understood. How could a spirit be understood if he had no medium of expressing thought? If he impresses mind, he must shape the thought he creates in a proper form, so that the idea can be communicated properly and be understood. Spirits, therefore, write the different languages of the various countries where they may be attracted, and can thus manifest their thoughts and the great truths of spirit-progression in a language understood by those whom they address. We use the same means you would avail yourselves of, if you were placed in a situation where it became important to learn a language of another country. The spirits of the higher spheres have

scarcely need of language, and the idea of the Judge is quite correct, that the nearer the earth they are, the more they are obliged to express their thoughts orally or otherwise.

Now be quiet and silent, while I say a word or two to Mr. Sterling, as he is anxious to learn something of the manner in which he should proceed in regard to the subjects of investigation.

There should be no desultory matters introduced into a circle which has not been organized for a long time, and in which the members are not so harmonious as to render it unnecessary that the connection should be constantly kept up. As I remarked to the Judge at the earlier part of these teachings, you can correctly ascertain the true character of the spirit purporting to teach, by the subject-matter of his teachings, as well as by the peculiar method by which he communicates his ideas. No spirit of the higher spheres can utter thoughts below the position he occupies. This is an important statement, and should be remembered, as from this evidence you can, sooner or later, detect any attempt at imposition by inferior or mischievous spirits.

I suggested to you the other evening, that the medium through whom the manifestations are made, should be selected with proper regard to his ability and power of mind, and also with reference to his organization of body, his education, habits, associations, and the society in which he lives. When, therefore, you have obtained such an one as I have described, select those persons to compose the circle who strongly desire to obtain knowledge as well as facts, and who are willing to wait and watch until the suitable moment shall have arrived to ask the proper questions on any part of the subject which they do not understand. Be not fickle, and let not too many minor questions be proposed on topics of no great consequence, and which, when answered, would not satisfy the ulterior demands of this great subject. But earnestly, and, above

all, patiently, go on, vigorously prosecuting your inquiries on the one subject under teaching. Many circles fail of eliciting great thoughts, or even any truth, from the fact that there is a frivolity of conduct, a certain carelessness of manner, and want of that due consideration of the importance of the researches for which they are sitting and inquiring.

Of course, I know nothing about the peculiar circumstances of your failures or success in prosecuting your researches, and neither do I know any thing of the true character of the person of whom you spoke, except from the impression of it I find in your mind. From that, I should judge that she had not yet appreciated the true nature of spirit-revelations, and she requires to be taught the primary lessons on this matter. Bring her mind to estimate rightly what the true intent of spirit-communion is, and lead her to seek from the beginning the gem which is hidden from her mind under such a mass of contradiction and seeming obscurity. Then she will go with you heart and soul, and, perhaps, as is woman's nature, leave you far behind in her rapid progress through the mysteries of spirituality.

As for yourself, I can only say, your own good judgment should be exercised on all subjects presented to your understanding. When you converse with spirits, do not take the statement of your friends as infallibly true. They may not intend to mislead you, but, perhaps, they are not so advanced that they can truly instruct you about subjects which you are anxious to understand. Learn, too, that except for special purposes connected with this subject, we rarely say any thing about your personal affairs. We can not judge more correctly of the consequences of your acts in life than can you. As our thoughts are almost entirely absorbed in matters above and beyond the things of earth, when a spirit directs you about personal affairs, doubt, and you will always be satisfied in the end that you doubted just at the proper time. But never cavil at a circle. Nothing detracts so much from the elevated mind as the

constant apprehension that he is deceived. What may appear incredible to-night may be so clearly explained to-morrow, that you will wonder at yourself that a doubt entered your mind. Be willing to be advised by those who have received greater light than yourself; and when so advised, remember that the mind to which has been vouchsafed the higher teachings of the spirits can not if it would, press on you considerations which it has received for the mere purpose of gratifying vanity. Every revelation of high character leads the mind one step toward its eternal progress. And when your notions and prejudices on many subjects shall have been submitted to the searching analysis of spirit-chemistry, you will be confounded at the causes which have rendered your investigations so perplexing, and you will regard most of your past experience as of but little consequence compared with the great truths which will be opened to your comprehension.

Your mind is so unsettled, that I am afraid I have scarcely made myself intelligible. BACON.

Mr. Sterling then left, and I asked some inconsiderable question, and received this answer:

I wish you could know the engrossing topics of my heart. When I have imbued yours and the Doctor's minds with all I have to explain, then shall I wend my way back to those glorious spheres where my soul can rise step by step toward the eternal rest in store, where the chord touched in love on your earth will vibrate in such tones of harmony through *all* the spheres, that there will resound one grand response of celestial melody that shall fill the remotest bound of creation with the inspiring theme of love, love forever and ever.

Section Eighteen.

Wednesday May 11th, 1853

This evening, in my library, it was written:

I FEAR I can not well talk with you to-night, as I find my amanuensis is in an unfit state of mind to write freely. I wish the Doctor were with *me*, as I could then give him the sympathy he so much needs. After a while, perhaps, I could write more easily, but I want he should go home early, and rest both mind and body.

We then sat and conversed for one hour or more, when the Doctor's hand was moved, and the following questions were propounded, and answers given:

I said, Let us not forget that Luther and Calvin were once with us, desirous of conversing, and that we are willing and will be ready at any time to have them do so.

It was answered:

I have not seen Luther or Calvin since the night when they were here. When the proper time arrives, they will visit you, if you wish.

I then asked this question: Will spirits be instructed generally as to your arrangements and plans through us, and so be led to aid them? And how can inferior spirits be prevented from communing?

It was answered:

Spirits recognize the feelings of the mind in its reflex action. Thus, when your mind is engrossed with an important and grave subject, the effect of which would contribute to the benefit of man, they feel the influence of the thoughts; and the progressed spirits, acknowledging the principle from the affinity with their own desires, will aid you in accomplishing your purposes. Thus, then, there is no difficulty in attracting around you good spirits, if the