

Many men, who have not the courage to avow a desire to investigate even, will oppose you from a fear that the interests of their church will suffer, if this strange doctrine should circulate. Other men, while they really believe that they are safe for heaven, will oppose you for the reason, that if you can obtain happiness eternal by such means, it will interfere with a certain right they have in dictating how your ultimate position should be secured. Others will deny all that is taught, because they do not know any thing about what is taught, and never will know, were they to live till the mountains tottered with old age. Many, from a firm conviction that you are wrong and desire to set you right. There is a class, too, who, fearing you may be right, will strongly oppose you from the apprehension that if, indeed, you be right, they must be eternally miserable, and thus they oppose you for fear that some spark will light up their minds and expose the darkness of error which there exists. Many will battle for the honor of Christ. Others fight for the honor of a name. A great many, and oh! how I regret to say, that there numbers in this list, a great, very great many clergymen, will ignorantly oppose you, because they can not admit that any new idea is of any good, forsooth, as if the whole range and phases of God's creation was not ever new and varied, and that every idea, however old, is always elicited from a new cause; this class will oppose you from the motive mentioned above, as well as the fear that they alone shall lose by it. Some from one thing, some from another, some from reason, some from insanity, some purely and honestly, others wickedly and perversely. But the effect will be, after all, to establish, like a sun in mid heavens, truth eternal, unchangeable, immutable, that God is alone and needs no help, that our ultimate destiny, dependent on ourselves, can not be unhappy, if we work and labor to obtain that truth.

And lastly, that spirit and matter are co-existent through eternity, and that the first evidence given to man that spirit

could communicate with him, was the evidence that God is of himself sufficient to the perfection of that which is of himself, and that he is the end and the beginning, and that man, accompanying him from the beginning, shall exist with him to the end.

## Section Twenty-two.

*Monday, May 16th, 1853.*

This evening, in my library, Dr. Dexter and I were discussing some of these teachings. Some one had remarked, that as soon as he became satisfied these teachings were from Swedenborg he believed. The Doctor and I said that we did not assent to that proposition. We did not undervalue the source, or rather channel, through which the teachings came, but what had the most influence with us was, the teachings themselves, their clearness and precision, their candor, the profundity of thought, and the force of the reasoning. Come from what source these might, they would work conviction in our minds.

After we had closed this conversation, and I saw that the Doctor's hand was becoming affected, I asked if I should now propound the questions I had prepared?

It was written in answer:

As we have but little time to-night, I beg you will defer your questions until to-morrow night, as, too, I want to say a word on the subject you were discussing just now.

That I am pleased with the effect of our teachings it would be vanity to deny [as if spirits had any vanity!!], and as the subject opens before you, there will be more of surprise and wonder that even your minds, accustomed as they are to examine carefully the whys and wherefores of every question, should have so many years remained ignorant of the eternal truths which pertain to your immortal nature.

If my wishes in regard to your questions meet your views,  
I will say a few words, and then bid you good-night.

BACON.

We said, Certainly; any course he might adopt would be acceptable to us.

Then it was written:

There is one aspect of our meetings which has not been, before now, considered; as I have waited and watched to analyze your minds, and to test how far I might venture to avow opinions which I knew must conflict with all your preconceived notions, as well as to test the strength of your belief in what has already been written, and also to see how far you would permit your former belief to interfere with your judgment. I allude to the calm and philosophic manner in which you receive these teachings, as well as the candid yet rigid examination to which every subject is submitted.

If I could explain all the means that are used, and the various causes which retard or facilitate the flow of my thoughts, you would comprehend how much these manifestations are changed from their original form by the condition of the minds to whom they are communicated, and you would realize that it is not an implicit faith alone that is required to enable us to teach you understandingly, but that the minds of the circle should be elevated to a condition on a level with our own. The doctrine of affinity is the great law which governs spirit-revelation, in fact, spirit-communication, and thus under this law I am enabled to communicate freely to you the higher purposes of these teachings which imports you most to know. This much, and now for my remarks.

In all our teachings you will observe that we have omitted to say any thing regarding the Christ, or the views we have of the true intent and purpose of his mission on earth, as well as his connection with the great Being who it was said was not only his father, but the Godhead made manifest in

the form of this very Christ Jesus. We have felt that the very idea of intercourse with spirits out of the form would be denied and scouted at, and that this idea alone was of itself sufficient for our purpose first to establish, and that the advance of any opinion, opposing the very basis of the faith of much of the Christian world, would, before the fact of spirit-communion being recognized, destroy all that we intended to accomplish, and would raise up such a host of opposers that there could be no chance for the proper circulation of the truth of the facts which we labored to teach.

Thus on this subject, as well as other matters of great importance, the advanced spirits have refrained from imparting their knowledge of the true mission of Christ, and were it not that I feel I can say to you what is proper should be said at this time, I should decline even now from calling your attention to the true facts of the case.

But it is well you should understand that I can only reason. Your inferences are within the control of your own thoughts, and you have received so many ideas lately which you have reasoned rightly upon, that I am confident I can venture to give you my arguments without any apprehension of their being misunderstood.

One consideration should always be borne in mind, as it must be assumed as a fact, not only as regards your world, but our world too, in fact, the whole operation of God's laws, whether pertaining to himself, or whether in reference to any department of man or matter, that God never works by miracle.

This idea received and established will satisfy you, that all the vague and incongruous theories of the power of the Creator and his manifestations are but the confused impressions of what God might do, not that which he does exhibit.

Thus, at the bottom of all religious doctrines which recognize Christ as the son and incarnation of God, there is an incomprehensible idea that some wonderful act, out of the common way, was performed by the Creator when he

impressed his own identity on a being of his own creation; that instead of a body or being, born into the world with the usual spirit-part also, God in a miraculous manner connected the whole of his universal being with the embryo, and thus was born Christ as a man in body, but in spirit the very God himself. That also out of the common course he generated a living soul; that in a miraculous manner he created out of the life-principle in the woman a being partaking of all the properties and attributes common to man.

I can not comprehend why that Being to whom is ascribed a knowledge commensurate with his very nature and pretensions, and who is considered to be a Being without change, and who, it is believed and taught, has established laws which are sufficient to accomplish all that they were designed to fulfill, should so far deviate, in a matter so completely under the control of certain laws, the effect of which has obtained, and does obtain, in the propagation of every species of man and animals as well as in vegetables, in the most minute insect as well as the most powerful animals known to man, should, I say, in a matter so well understood and so completely established in the very impulses and sentiments of our nature, deviate from the ordinary operation of those laws, and create a man in such a singular way, when it would have answered his purpose just as well to have complied with the requisites of the laws he had instituted for the effect of this very purpose. But there never was a successful system of religion without its grave mysteries, mysteries not to be understood by any but those who were the high priests of its altars.

A popular religion without its indistinct mysteries would not stand a year. No, the moral influence which guides and controls the Christian, aye! the savage world, is the dark and profound ideas of the mysterious powers granted to those who teach their doctrines, the awful powers and the dark shadowings of that Being whom they represent as unchangeable, "without shadow of turning."

It is said that God created man from the dust of the earth.

Now this is very well; but can it be conceived that when God had fashioned this world, and had instituted laws for its government, had created animals under this law, that he should so far deviate in the very commencement from those laws and create man, who ever afterward came under the full influence and workings of those rules, in an out-of-the-way manner, as if he were afraid to trust himself or the laws he had founded?

What sort of being can he be who makes laws, and commands all his beings to respect and obey them, and who has made the very instincts of their nature conform to their proper influence, and then he, the framer, the Being of all others the most likely to regard them, should, to accomplish an object just as well effected under those laws, become the first infractor, the first violator? Human intellect can not reason on this subject. It would appear so contradictory, that the good sense of man would reject the idea, were it not surrounded by the incomprehensible mystery which has been attached to it; so that man fearing to investigate, yields a blind belief, and trusts the keeping of his own judgment to the control and custody of men who play with it to suit their own purposes, and direct it as they wish or please.

Therefore I can not be mistaken in my views. You must comprehend me when I say the very *res in rem* is not tenable. It wants proof to satisfy the sterling common sense of man, and had he acted on the fair properties of his mind, and had not trusted his very judgment to the priests and churches of all sects, from a slavish fear, long, long ago this idea would have been exploded, rejected as unfit for the spirit which claims kindred with God himself.

But suppose all that has been written of the manner of Christ's birth and conception is true, suppose we admit that it was compatible with the nature of God, how shall we reconcile the object of his birth with what we know of the Creator and the very laws by which he governs man as well as all created beings?

To presume a necessity existing which made it expedient that the Creator should go round the effects of certain acts contravening the laws he had founded, and this, too, on the part of man, would, in spite of all willingness to admit the most absurd ideas, to my view, conflict with all the received notions of God as revealed in his works, or even taught by the high priests of any religion accepted by man.

How could he propose any method of evading a law? Why, the law must be presumed to be the very principle most fitted for man and his action under it, and that the proposition emanated from him to transcend the effect of this law would be virtually to say as from God himself, "If you find my laws too stringent, I will devise a way in which you can escape the true purpose for which I established them. I will set aside my own nature, and in contradiction to the universal command I have issued to you to obey them, will show you how you may violate them, and yet come under no punishment."

I ask you, is this not so? But I will write more to-morrow night. Good-night.

BACON.

### Section Twenty-three.

*Tuesday, May 17, 1853.*

This evening, in addition to the Doctor and myself, Mr. and Mrs. S. spent the evening in my library.

I began by asking some questions touching the last evening's lecture.

My first one was this: At one time you say you "can only reason," at another you speak of "the facts of the case." Now, has it not been possible for the advanced spirits to ascertain certainly about the existence, and birth, and actual history of Jesus?

It was answered:

ALTHOUGH I mentioned "facts," yet you will observe I cited no evidence except the principles on which I suppose the laws of God were predicated. I meant that you should accept my reasonings for what they were worth, as I could not give you the true history of the birth, and life, and mission of Jesus Christ.

Yes, there are spirits who know every thing in relation to the circumstances which gave birth to Christ. They are far above my position. They occupy those glorious spheres where all that can be known of God is revealed to them. But those omnipotent truths we are not permitted to know for a certainty, till we are divested of all that is gross in our organization, and all that is of error in our minds. Certainly it is not to be told you again, that there is as much conflict of opinion on the true nature of Christ here as with you. But I am reasoning from causes which come under the full operation of the principles on which they are founded, and the effect of which is observed in every thing which emanates from God—every thing natural, every thing divine.

One great feature in all the operations of our Creator, in

all his acts, in all the laws he has instituted, is, that he never acts or manifests himself unconnected with matter. Therefore for the human mind properly to comprehend any of his attributes separate from this union would be entirely impossible. You will understand, then, why I have written on this subject as I did last night.

I next asked this question: You say that in your state of existence obedience to the law is not enforced by any tribunal, but is, as it were, instinctive with you. Is that any thing more than carrying a step or two farther the same principle which makes us in this life obey certain laws, such as those of hunger, thirst, self-preservation, etc.?

It was answered: No.

I inquired further: Is it a consequence of our progression, that our instincts also thus progress too?

It was answered:

Yes. That is the true explanation, Judge. As the mind progresses, there is a just appreciation of the laws controlling the organic part, as well as a proper idea of what are our moral obligations to ourselves and to one another. Thus when the mind perverts the one, it renders the perception of the other obtuse, and the effect is manifest in the density of the body becoming more distinct, and consequently the full and free operation of the spirit is retarded. Instead of progressing, the spirit retrogrades.

I said that I was now done with my questions, and it was written:

Well, then, if the effect of such acts on the part of God was obviously to have produced to the thinking mind such a view as I have mentioned, the idea could not have been disseminated, had it not been the policy of the leaders of the then new revelation to have awed the minds of believers, by investing the birth of Christ with a mystery so profound, that it would of itself have taken their credence by storm.

But how could Christ have taken on himself the burden of the sins of the world? When God created man (under the Mosaic account), and placed him in the garden of Eden, he fell by violating a law which the Creator had es-

tablished. Pray, tell me now, was it possible for the spirit, not yet given off from the germ or source, to have been implicated in the sin of the first man? To become a participator in any criminal act, it is necessary one should be cognizant of the wrong done, and assent to its commission, or that one should unite with another in committing the act itself.

Now, I contend, that if God punished Adam for eating of the tree of which he had forbidden him to partake, he did so because he violated a command. This is acknowledged. Well, if it were a sin for Adam to violate a law, how much more impossible would it have been for God to have punished those who were not cognizant of the act, mentally or otherwise, or to have doomed the unborn spirit to the same punishment as he inflicted on the man Adam! Certainly, therefore, the souls of men, born long after or immediately after Adam's fall, could not have been included in the curse pronounced on him. And you will apprehend my argument, that there was no necessity for such a mediator between those who could not have been implicated in the sin and their God.

That there was and is sin in the world no one denies, but that the old or present sin originated with the act of Adam in the garden of Eden I do deny, as incompatible with every thing we know characterizing God. Pray tell me, if an act of wrong committed on your earth includes the spirits here in the consequences, how could any spirit ever arrive at the highest spheres? Now the act of Adam, according to this doctrine, implicated, involved the spirits not yet developed as distinct identities. It was an act not only shrouding the earth in gloom, but leaped over time and penetrated eternity, and laid all spirits, whether disintegrated from the parent source or those who were developed, under tribute of the same sin.

It seems to me its influence went still farther, and as God himself was and is the source of all spirit, the very Creator, the God, came under the law of punishment which

it was said he pronounced on the first man. But could it have been necessary that God should have made a savior?

When you cast your reflection back on the spiritual condition of the world at the time Christ was said to be born, you will understand all the necessity which existed. The laws, both natural and divine, were perverted, and though God was acknowledged by a few, yet almost the whole of what was called the civilized world denied his existence, and worshiped a thousand gods, of as many attributes.

The idea, as I understand it, was to establish the belief of God, not of Christ, Jesus was a reformer. By him the first true idea of what belonged to man as of himself, and to God as the Creator, was given to the world. Christ taught nothing of himself. He called for no belief that of himself he could accomplish any thing. But he taught that man was a part of God, that in his spirit existed the elements of eternal progression, and that all that was required of him was to believe in God, to love one another, and to develop the powers and faculties with which that God had gifted him.

After a short interval he added:

One word I will say in final illustration of my views of the religion Christ taught. It is, that God is love. In every situation of life this evidence is conclusive, that God loves every thing he has created. Aye! every object of his handiwork proclaims this truth, that love eternal, undying, is the source of all his works. Every man, in every condition, assents to this doctrine, and go where you will, converse with savage or civilized, you find that every faith is founded on this axiom.

BACON.

## Section Twenty-four.

*Thursday, May 19th, 1853.*

This evening the circle met at Dr. Dexter's.  
It was written:

THERE are to-night with me many spirits of your friends, who have met accidentally, but who delegate me to say that their affection surrounds you, and their love is a part of your existence, as through it you receive many impressions for good, and by it you are supported to endure many of the troubles and ills of life. Cordially, heartily, and affectionately, they with me greet you to-night. You are guarded bodily by your nearest relatives, and your spirits are the special charge of those friends who, when on earth, loved you most, and whose feelings assimilated with your own.

SWEEDENBORG.

Now your questions.

I prefaced my questions by saying that some of them were propounded in a spirit of caviling, because I was desirous of seeing how far the teachings would bear a treatment to which I knew they would, by-and-by, be subjected.

My first question was this: What do you mean by saying that "death is the first and last struggle where there is pain?"

It was answered:

This expression refers to death alone; and as there is no other death in the passage through the spheres, this wording is correct, as well as the idea. Death of the body is probably accompanied with pain, and when the spirit passes through the death of the spheres, it is rather a state of unconsciousness than death. This is my meaning.