

Shuddering at the thought of the past, and despairing of the future, he rushed to his lonely cot, and there, throwing himself upon a wooden pallet, gave vent to the strong yet silent agony of his mind, for inexpressibly bitter though it was, and shaking his manly form like an aspen leaf, yet his pride would not permit a groan to issue that could make his remorse known to others. But those shining ones were nearer to him than he imagined, their kind and watchful care was more than he knew of. To them his emotion was known, and they clustered around his cot to cheer and encourage him. One only of them entered, and it was she who had even in the evil past kept alive in him some of the saving instincts of his nature, and who had been dearer to him than all else besides, ere impelled by the fate which conducted her to purer regions she had left him alone in his gloom. She gently seated herself by his side, and in an old accustomed tone of fondness and heartfelt sympathy wooed him from his dark despondency. The deep bitterness of his despair was soothed, he became more gentle in his struggle with himself, his tears flowed more tenderly, he raised himself up and attempted to throw himself into her arms. But, alas! he felt that he was all too gross to clasp her, whose presence he was yet so very, very conscious of; and instead of that indomitable pride, which but a little while before had shaken his frame to its inmost recesses, he felt stealing upon him a sense of deep humility, which bowed him to the earth while it pointed him to heaven. He suffered her to lead him to the door of his cot, where, affectionately leaning upon his shoulder, and surrounded, though unconsciously to himself, by many, very many, as bright and gentle as she was, she pointed out to him the beauties of the scene around him, which he might still enjoy, and how wide was the field in which he might yet be useful in serving his fellows, and in purifying his own grossness.

When, at length, her soft pleadings had calmed the turbulence of his soul, and shed abroad upon it a holy repose,

she left him and ascended to her own bright mansions above, with a countenance beaming with affection, and pointing still higher up. And the picture closed upon my view, leaving him standing by that earthly cot, and surrounded only by earthly objects, but with all his aspirations centred upon that brightness which he hoped that yet even he might make himself worthy to enjoy.

Section Thirty-one.

Thursday, June 2d, 1853.

This evening, at Dr. Dexter's, only two of the circle, the Doctor and Mr. Warren, were present. The others were absent from illness. The Doctor was influenced, and the following was written:

I REGRET that any of the members of the circle are absent to-night, as nothing so much retards the full harmony of spirit-intercourse (especially when the object is of grave import) as any difference in the magnetic current. I can not even myself imagine what keeps Mrs. D., as, expecting certainly to meet her, I have made no inquiries. But even without the absent ones, let us feel that where two or three are gathered together with pure desire for knowledge and truth, the doors shall be opened, and the light they seek shall be poured into their hearts in streaming floods. I therefore greet you, the present, and those absent, with heartfelt affection, and charge you that you be true, be firm, be consistent, be self-denying, bearing and forbearing, and loving all.

SWEEDENBORG.

If we reason from nature in reference to the soul, we find

our researches embrace many apparently incongruous departments; and yet all so intimately connected, so admirably proportioned, that the direct conclusion must be that the soul is distinct, and manifests its individuality even when identified with the body.

Every part of the human body has its constituent, and although the whole organism is composed of a few leading substances, yet the various textures, membranes, etc., differ in their construction, in the relative proportions of these agents, and are unlike one another. But this is of small moment when the inquiry is extended farther. Thus no particle of matter can be lost. The smallest grain or atom resolves itself into its proper connection, and is incorporated into some organic body, after having been perhaps decomposed, and to all appearance destroyed. This idea, though universally acknowledged, is not viewed with that interest its importance demands.

Now nature is the same in the spirit-world as on earth, and if we reasoned *ad rem* or *à priori*, as we can not conceive of spirit-manifestation separate from matter (for neither God, nor the spirits emanating from him, have ever exhibited their peculiar attributes unconnected with tangible substance), we are irresistibly led to ask, why should not the soul, after its separation from organic matter on earth, live or exist in connection with matter in some form in the world to which it goes? What more natural to the reason than this question? When the mind attempts to separate the spirit from matter, it has no just conception of spirit. Therefore we can not invest the Creator with form or personality. What sort of person would that God be if the form depended upon the idea of man? The form would resemble that of man, as he is supposed to be the image of the Being who created him. There is no point from which an idea can be formed; and if with all the various attributes with which the Creator is invested there is but one point from which any resemblance could be traced, how utterly does the mind fail in carrying out this connection

other than through the whole of God's manifestations of himself through his works! But the condition of matter necessary for such an amalgamation must be unknown to us as well as to you, for if the identification of spirit with matter were unfolded to your minds, the whole mystery of the Great First Cause would be understood. Are we prepared for this revelation? The thought is limited by the objects from which impressions are received. It is this fact which has contributed so much to create in some minds the idea of a material heaven, in which a God resides, who is so much like man, that he is subject to all the passions, feelings, and desires of his earthly nature; and it is this limited comprehension of what God is, and what the true destiny of the spirit is, that has filled the world with error, and has produced so many narrow prejudices among men, and built up a church on a foundation of opinion instead of fact and truth.

It is not strange, therefore, that with the descriptions of the material body after death, and of the spirit-world, too, your ideas should be confused as to what the nature of the spirit-body is after the decease of the form on earth. The account which has been given you of the passage of the spirit into the body prepared for it, just after it has passed from life to the spheres, must seem unnatural. I doubt not it is, for the reasons given above, that you can not reconcile any other action of Nature's laws than that to which you have been accustomed. And I am conscious that, until the time shall have arrived when the spirit-communion will be more tangible than at present, your views must be limited and your conclusions complex.

I have made these remarks for you, Mr. W., as your mind has been much interested in the consideration of this part of our teachings; and you have not been entirely satisfied with my explanations.

Neither do I wish to have you or our other friends receive as truth that which they can not understand. But if for a moment we consider this subject, we shall be sur-

prised at the ease with which the mind can be relieved of its strongest objections, when the influences of natural laws are permitted their full operation, limited by no narrow prejudice, circumscribed by no sect or doctrine. Thus, why should vitality or life exist in every thing God has made? Why should the barren soil of the arid desert, when removed from its original locality, be made to produce vegetation as well as that which has been cultivated for years? Take the soil from earth's center, and bring it to the surface, and it will germinate vegetation in some form as soon as it feels the light and heat. The hardest rock, when decomposed, will bring forth trees and flowers as abundantly as the most prolific soil. No matter what the substance, and no matter in what form or combination, it is teeming with life, and under some circumstance or other will manifest its ability to support or give birth to life.

Now, were the power of God exhibited only on this little ball, we might with reason say, after this earth there can be no other. All things but the soul cease here. But at the same time there is and must be a continual resurrection of matter. There is not, nor can there be, any cessation in the continual round of birth, life, decay, and resurrection, even on your earth.

But suppose it were so, does this alter the workings of God's laws in other spheres? And if, after all our struggles, the fact is proved that no matter is lost on earth, does it not prove that there is a necessity for the soul's combination with matter in some form, even after it has left the earth?

Here a pause in the writing having ensued, Mr. Warren remarked, in reference to a matter previously agitated, that it would imply the performance of perpetual miracle, if, when the spirit left the material body, there must be created for it a new body or spiritual form properly corresponding to its nature; while if, by the same inherent power, the spirit clothed itself with a form, or had one already generated within the material body, there would be no miracle; whereupon Dr. Dexter's hand was influenced, and the following was written:

I believe I said "the soul entered the body prepared for

it." The manner in which this took place I could not explain, for the spirits could not see the transformation. The body, however, is ready for the spirit, and it is, or may be, that the soul after leaving the earth generates its own form. But until I have entered the higher spheres I can not give you a just explanation of this.

My remarks have been more in explanation than in continuation to-night, as the circle was small; and I thought it best to be rather desultory than to pursue our regular subject.

At our next meeting I will continue my description of life in the spheres.

With my best affections for the absent, both the Judge and Mrs. D., I bid you good-night. SWEEDENBORG.

Section Thirty-two.

PART FIRST.

Saturday, June 4th, 1853.

This evening, at my library, Dr. Dexter and I alone being present, it was written:

ONE of the hardest tasks in this our sphere of material action, is the bringing up for trial and judgment all the motives, feelings, and incentives of the heart before the stern governor of the mind, Reason, and hearing all the arguments, both for and against, on the course of conduct we have pursued relative to ourselves and others.

The difficulty lies not so much in the analyzing of motive and feeling, or in the full display of thought or passion;