

Section Forty.

Sunday, June 19th, 1853.

This evening, at Dr. Dexter's, he and his wife alone of the circle being present, it was written:

It will hardly correspond with your notions of spirit-feeling that we should feel disappointment. Perhaps this is not true in reference to any circumstance connected with earth, except when we know that those in whom we have more than a mere interest have not fulfilled our expectations in their aspirations for truth and goodness; but when our feelings are deeply concerned for the successful result of any duty which has been assigned us, and when we have labored for its accomplishment, and have drawn around us all the harmonies of action and sentiment, then it is that we feel disappointment. I feel this particularly to-night, as many spirits are here, and we contemplated to attempt the plans which I mentioned at a previous meeting. Any breaking in the harmony of a full circle always retards the character of the manifestation, and the subsequent circles are shorn of some of their proportions. Nothing should prevent the members of a circle being present at its meetings but sickness, or unavoidable occurrences which detain them. The addition which we proposed to the circle, we inferred would contribute to the freer display of a certain character of revelation, both from the individuals themselves and their magnetic power. But if there is any objection on their part to attend, or on the part of any other of the circle, they had better not become members. What we suggested was for the good of all, but we can not control human feeling, therefore the harmony, the spiritual

harmony must not be disturbed. While I regret the absence of so many of the members, I sincerely condole with the Judge for his continued illness, and can only say, that if he will strictly follow the Doctor's directions he will certainly recover.

From where the mellow light is constantly shedding its mild rays over the whole landscape; where, too, the brilliant tints of that gorgeous brightness which emanates from the spheres beyond illumines the blue space above with the sparkling radiance of a brightness greater than the sun; where the gentle breeze wafts the fragrance of a perfume, richer far than the odors or spices of Eastern fable; where the balmy atmosphere clothes each object with a purity surpassing man's comprehension; where each hill and valley is so beautifully laid out and fashioned in exact correspondence, that the whole landscape seems redolent in beauty of proportion and comparison; where spirits dwell and build their houses amid clustering bowers of roses, and under the shade of the spreading tree, near the bank of some murmuring waterfall, or deep secluded in the bosom of some lovely vale; where the carol of a thousand birds wakes up each echo to the clear tones of nature's music, or fills the air with the glad notes of joyous incense; where grand and magnificent structures are erected, and temples fashioned in all the chaste proportions of true beauty; where, when the duties or labor of the time are over, thousands, aye, thousands upon thousands of glad and happy spirits float in this gorgeous and yet mellow light, or walk in these shady bowers, or mingle in happy intercourse by the side of some gurgling fountain, whose sparkling waters bathe a bank of flowers, or glide peacefully through a grassy plain; where every heart is earnest in its desires to know more and more of the true properties of that wondrous mind with which they are gifted; where every emotion is one of love, and every aspiration to make that love felt; where there are none of the strifes and cares of mortality, and none of the sacrifices of future happiness

for present pleasure or profit; where the soul stands out in its proper guise, and meets the response of thought for thought; where the God who made this vast creation, whose immensity man has not the power even to imagine, is worshiped by the works of his hands; and where the spirit communes with its Creator through its own manifestations, come I, and I need not say how great must be the motive, how earnest the desire, how heartfelt the wish, that the truths I teach may be felt and appreciated, and that the feeling which brings me to you may be met by a correspondence which shall insure your constant attendance, and an ever-increasing and never-ending good; and with emotions of love toward you, and hope, oh! how strong! that indeed I may have been the instrument of directing your minds from the errors of time to the everlasting truths of eternity, I greet you in God's name, and cordially, with the spirits attending, bless you and all our friends who are absent.

SWEEDENBORG.

There is no more marked and natural impulse of the human heart than the earnest longing, the strong desire for some representation of the Power which it is taught to worship. And it is a singular confirmation of the remark that I am about to make, that this desire is manifest in every race of man known to exist on the surface of your globe. Go where you will, among savage or civilized, this corresponding sympathy binds them together, as emanating from the same source. The savage has his idol, or sees in some stupendous mountain the dwelling-place of that Great Spirit whose authority he recognizes, and whose power he worships. The Christian or the civilized erects temples and fills them with images, or suspends in the niches or over its altars the pictures of the Christ, or the mother who bore him, or some of the many good men and women whom he has presumed to be God's representative on earth. What, therefore, is this sentiment but the soul's affinity with the source from which it sprang—its innate claim

of kindred with the God who breathed it into the body he fashioned from earth?

It appears a plain demonstration, that were the soul a mere accident of creation, or if it had no intimate connection with the Creator, this feeling would not be found a universal sentiment, exerting so great an influence on the minds, hearts, and acts of man. On the contrary, we should find no desire to penetrate into futurity, to gaze into the profound darkness which shuts out every thing beyond the grave. We should observe man without any distinct desires above the earth on which he lives, and a being devoid of any religious sentiment, whether from revelation or education.

But God has no less wonderfully made man than he has naturally implanted the true desire of nature in that soul, which by right claims kindred with himself. And while this soul's desire has been wrongly directed by the admixture of creature worship with Creator adoration, God has placed all around us the evidences of himself, as the Power whom we should worship, the Being from whom wisdom, goodness, and love have emanated to both man and every other part of creation.

Thus while this desire is a paramount feeling in every heart, and while it actuates all men alike, the very images of himself which have been placed before the searching eye of man, have been neglected for some mysterious representation of God, surrounded by attributes with which the natural mind has clothed him.

Nature everywhere is God's acknowledgment of himself, and is enough to satisfy the most earnest longing of all men, if it had not been perverted by the arts of man and the concerted plans to form a church on earth which should shadow to the world God as a spirit, but in reality personating God as a man.

I have made these remarks in a desultory way, merely to show you that God's works on earth are no less a response to the spirit's desire than are his works in the

spheres. Nature claims that affinity as well as man, for God himself can only be seen through his works; and as we study ourselves and nature, we shall better appreciate what that nature is, and understand the high destiny to which it may attain by a life corresponding to the lessons which the most insignificant object of God's handiwork teaches.

Destiny of man! What can that destiny be, when the soul realizes it is free of itself to advance, untrammelled by the dark abstractions of man's dicta, or unretarded by the fables which he has devised to keep the mind in ignorance of truth, of love, and the universal application of nature's laws to nature everywhere existing! Good-night.

SWEEDENBORG.

Section Forty-one.

Wednesday, June 22d, 1853.

This afternoon, while sitting in my parlor with Dr. Dexter, I had a call from a friend. The subject of conversation for more than an hour was spiritual intercourse, and it seemed to be his object to impress on my mind the necessity of regarding with great disfavor, if not with absolute discredit, any communication that went to convey the idea that any one was singled out for any particular mission, or that I was receiving any truths that everybody else did not receive.

After he left, Dexter and I remained conversing on the subject.

When the spirits began to commune with us, it was evident they had heard our conversation, for thus they wrote:

If all minds were alike, and all men gifted with the same faculties and properties of intellect, there would be no difficulty in propagating truth as it is, unshorn of all charac-

teristics—plain, simple truth. Man is as susceptible of error as of truth, and it is only those minds which seem intuitively to comprehend its nature that are ready to receive truth under whatever form it may assume. There are men who contest truth, even when convinced of its reality or necessity. It is to such minds that we are to teach, not the higher manifestations, but the simpler forms; that if indeed they reject, the influence it may have shall not comprehend all that is important for man to know. Then what is to be done when all demonstration may be perverted by one, rejected by another, and denied and reviled by many? Is there not in the truth itself a power sufficient to overcome all opposition, all perversion, and accomplish its design and purpose of itself? Can that which so essentially concerns man, as the knowledge of what is right, be diverted, be made to produce evil instead of good? Shall those laws which indeed are from God, and when properly and wisely understood answer the intent for which they were instituted, be forced by man to the injury of his race? Alas! it is so. Alas! that this should be the great obstacle to man's progress on earth, and, in fact, is an all-powerful cause of his lingering by the wayside even in these spheres. What do I say, that truth itself is made a means of evil? Yes, and the history of man from the earliest period until the present time corroborates this statement. Look at every nation of which we have any knowledge, that has made its mark on the passage of time, and you will agree with me that my remark is just. That there has been no settled belief on what has been revealed as true does not in the least alter the truth itself. From the beginning until the present time the eternal manifestation has been the same yesterday, now, and forever! What has been truth to the Egyptians is no less truth to the Romans; and the divine emanation has lost none of its purity, its godlike attributes, even though that truth is altered or denied by the mass of men at the present day. In your earth, light is from one source, and your philosophers have invented means by which they have

divided it into what they call its several properties or colors. So with truth. Man's ingenuity has succeeded in giving it so many forms, that it has lost its distinguishing quality, and under the aspect they exhibit it in, it has little or no correspondence with the original idea. What, then, shall be done? How convince your minds that what we teach is true? How show you that you are not perverting the form of truth, and are not in your designs giving to the world that which bears no resemblance to the original, and which may generate evil instead of good? How know you that we have not pandered to those latent passions of your heart, that in their free exercise you may conserve the injury of your race, instead of the good which you believe to be your desire? Let us see. On retroviewing the history of man, we are struck with one prominent feature which that history presents. Though it may be masked by the peculiarities or eccentricities of his tribe or nation, we still find this characteristic to obtain, whether to the individual or to the race itself. Thus the Romans forced all men to become Romans, or at least to feel the omnipotency of their power as a nation; and neither were they satisfied until they had incorporated into their government even the most distant countries, or forced them to pay tribute to their treasury, or to acknowledge the supremacy of their laws. It was so with the earlier nations; and from thence until the present day it has been a struggle with the powers of earth to embrace under their own rule as many of the weaker nations as it was possible, in order to exercise an authority which should distinguish their possessions as belonging to or incorporated with their home government.

This feeling is not more a feature of general national concern than it is of sect or denomination, whether it regards administration of laws or the dissemination of faith, the advancement of good or the exercise of ambition, of cupidity, or evil of any kind. There has not existed on this earth a sect, a persuasion, an association, or a church but has exhibited this marked, this ALMIGHTY desire to persuade

all men that they were right—to show by indubitable authority that to them, as a sect, the truth was given, and that no one could be saved unless he conformed to the requirements of their faith.

And the desire to make proselytes has not been limited to a fair and impartial exhibition of their claims, but they have forced their belief by the sword, the cannon, the torture, and the faggot. Can it be that the truth needs support from the unlicensed bigotry and passions of men! From the teachings of Aristotle to the protestations of Luther, aye, from the church of St. Peter to the log meeting-house of some Methodist preacher—in all ages, by all men, by saint, by savage, or divine—the whole history of man teems with evidences of the correctness of my sayings. And how is this? I have already answered, that man, believing from the evidences he recognizes, insists that he alone is in possession of truth, and that others must believe as he dictates.

My friends, has this been the method I have pursued in my instructions? Have I, or has Sweedenborg, insisted that you should believe what we have taught to be alone the truth? Have we raised your view heavenward, that the light thereof should fill you with pride or excite your vanity? Does, indeed, what we profess to have taught you as truth develop in you a desire to build up a name and fame as individuals? Have we taught you that the God you love regards you as progressing toward his purity when actuated by the passions which retard your progress, such as pride, vanity, or ambition? To what end have we desired that any should be forward in the cause of truth? By any peculiar doctrines they were to inculcate, other than that man, influenced by circumstances surrounding him, was to work out his own salvation by denial, by self-sacrifice, by endurance, by persistent perseverance? Were they to be thus forward from the vain title of leader? Could it satisfy them that man should recognize them as such, when, indeed, their hearts were filled with all the passions

of the man, instead of the attributes of a progressive spirit?

It is not to be told you at this time that there is as yet no common ground for spiritualists to meet upon. And why? Because all desire to impress the mind that they are the favored recipients of spirit-truth. And what will time say to this?

What will time say to this? What will it say to you who are borne along by its resistless tide?

It will say to you, Man, the truths you avow are the seeds of discord to thousands of your fellow-men. The assurances you have given to the world are firebrands which have burned up the faith of a nation. A nation! verily the world! And yet, though your names will be in every man's mouth, how know you that the revilings, the epithets, the curses that will be uttered, will not make your souls tremble and your courage falter? Have you vanity? Let it run riot now, for the time will come when even that vanity will not afford you consolation. Have you ambition? Let it soar in its wildest graspings, for the time is not far distant when the truth alone will hardly afford light to the dark way before you.

Be sure that in the integrity of your own single-heartedness, in your sole interest for the good of man, will rest your hope when there shall be clouds and darkness.

Now let vanity exert her sway and ambition her power; let the mind build up visions of glory and of renown; but before you both there is but one object—the progressive development of your own souls; for without that you will be but stumbling-blocks in the way of truth—an eyesore in the path of holiness.

BACON.

Then it was added:

To-morrow afternoon or evening I will give you an idea of what I mean in what I have written to-night. I have long wished to say to you what is before you, and while the subject naturally drew out of me the dark side of the pic-

ture, justice requires that we should also truthfully picture the happiness, pleasure, and profit that will also result from your action.

Some inquiries were made as to our book, and how we should publish it, and it was said:

At the circle to-morrow night, when all are present, we will give you our wishes, and we hope they will be considered and acquiesced in without the least ill-feeling possible—all in love, and for the cause you advocate.

Section Forty-two.

Thursday, June 23d, 1853.

The circle met this evening at Dr. Dexter's. All were present. When the Doctor's hand became affected, he wrote as follows:

By permission I am allowed to continue my remarks for a short time from last night, in order that I may finish the subject which I then commenced. It is suggested that the circle should, while the Doctor is writing, place themselves in such positions as will afford them most ease. The circle may talk, and other exhibitions may be made, and no disturbance to the Doctor will take place. As this is my first formal appearance before all our circle, may I say that with no common feeling do I meet you, with no ordinary emotions of love, of joy, and of hope do I come before you, and I trust that your own hearts will respond to mine, and the many, very many spirits who are present, till all our souls, like one spirit, shall unite in the harmonies of truth, love, and the earnest desire to progress.

BACON.