

some are abusing him, calling him all sorts of names. Some shake hands with him, and yet are afraid people shall see them do so. But they seem to think so much of him. Yet he wears the same calm expression of countenance to all. He tells them there are the papers, just as they were given to him, and it is not his fault if they differ from their opinions. They must judge for themselves.

I see one man approaching him, who is very dark and repelling. He threatens him. He would annihilate him if he could, he talks so bitterly. Yet he sits calmly midst it all. Close by him stands a majestic spirit, who sustains and strengthens him. That causes him to look so firm. He loses none of his dignity or self-respect by any thing that dark one has said. He is neither awed nor overcome, but is sorrowful. I see the tear glisten in his eye, as he turns hopeless away.

That dark man is surrounded by a gloomy cloud. He has two or three others with him. He stands up higher than they; but they all feel the chilling influence of that dark cloud, but not with such force and fury as it works on him.

What a storm is raging around him who brought the papers! There is such a dust and confusion around him that I can hardly see him. But he is not forsaken. There is something bright and shining right over him. The storm will not hurt him. He has six or seven people near him. How bad they feel! They are crying, and I see him no more, while the storm rages with more violence than ever.

But ah! now I see him again. There he is, right in the light! The storm has passed away, and he looks happy and pleased. He seems strong and young. Just see how beautiful every thing is since the storm has gone! how many green and beautiful things spring up all around him! The air is clear and balmy. A great many old things have tumbled into ruins, and every thing has a renewed and youthful look. Those who were near him now look so rejoiced. The storm has damaged them some, too, but it has done

them good. Their countenances look clearer and better. He has gone through a great deal, but he has become purer, and looks like an infant. He is so spiritual. He is the image of a good man: serene, joyful, and happy. He was suffering in a good cause, and see what good has come of it.

Now all that excited crowd trouble him no more. He looks so beautiful, fresh, and new. The sun shines so brightly over him, and the birds sing so cheerfully around him.

And now he passes from my sight, in a cloud of glowing light. And so, dear friends, good-night.

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### Section Forty-six.

*Sunday, July 3d, 1853.*

Dr. and Mrs. Dexter and Mr. Warren present.

Dr. Dexter was influenced to write as follows:

I AM glad to meet you again, my friends, for many reasons. I am happy to see all my original circle together; for with spirits, as with men, we form friendships which are indeed based on the true affections of the soul. And when we have striven for a long time to open to the mind the beauties and truths of our connection, without success the intimacy begets a deep feeling of interest, especially where we finally accomplish the design of our labor. Thus with you; for a long time I toiled with the Doctor, and I have felt what that yearning of the heart was that actuates his wife; and when, indeed, my labors were triumphant, I was drawn to him and all his family by ties stronger than those of life. I have watched him and his family sometimes

hourly, and have endeavored to direct his thoughts toward those subjects on which his spirit yearned to be satisfied. And I have toiled to diffuse that spirit of harmony among all, which is so important for progression and improvement.

I have never, during my intercourse with you, in any sense, flattered the selfish propensities of your nature. They of themselves are all-powerful, and they usurp the mind when least expected. They maintain possession sometimes under the garb of an earnest desire for independence of thought and action. But when to the soul the true character of these feelings is laid open, it learns how fearfully it has been deceived. For indeed, then, what has been viewed as the spirit's right is found to be the exercise of feelings arising from the predominance of selfishness in thought, word, and action.

My friends, the life given you on earth is one filled with all manner of temptations besetting you on every side, and so varied and multifarious that you are deceived ere you are aware that you have been tempted. What would be the benefit conferred on man by opening to his comprehension all the mysteries of spirit-life and all the beauties of the spheres—revealing the truths belonging to his material and spiritual nature, if we were not able to teach him how that life on earth should be directed; how to govern his passions, how to progress, how to live that his death may be productive of life everlasting in happiness? Could we meet you face to face, and impress on your senses the undoubted evidence of our identity, you might recognize then that you were, indeed, destined to live with *us* forever, or to dwell in those dark spheres below us, where the light of truth is scarcely manifest. But we come to you, and though believing in our presence, you may yet doubt, and fear that you are deceived. There is the doubt that you may not understand our teachings; and there is the doubt that our teachings may not refer to yourselves personally. Hear me to-night, and let not only your minds understand what I say, but let your hearts open and receive the words

of your spirit-friend. Heart must respond to heart, spirit to spirit. The thoughts that agitate your souls and excite the action of your selfish propensities must be laid under the stern control of your pure desire to love nothing, to know nothing, and to live for nothing but the truth as it is from God; that your hearts, pure and undefiled, may meet the response of those of your friends, that you may indeed bear each other's burdens, and assist each other in your pilgrimage toward and through the spheres.

I greet you in the fullness of love undying; and I charge you to open your thoughts to one another, and to mingle your affections and aspirations together; that together you may wander toward the mark of your high calling, which is the development of the perfection of your natures.

SWEEDENBORG.

Here a pause having ensued, the occasion was taken to ask some questions relative to spirits requiring sustenance, when the following was written:

Mr. Warren, when I said that the sublimation of matter rendered it, as it were, independent of the various influences which govern matter in the gross, I thought I had comprehended all such questions. But these things come under the heads of subjects treated of in the next volume of our teachings, respecting which I have some directions to give, which must be followed.

I have not manifested myself for several days, the reasons for which I will give to Dr. and Mrs. Dexter privately. But to-night I wish to say a few words to you, and wish you to reflect seriously on what I say.

It is not for the purpose of showing to the world that spirits can confer with man, or that God's law obtains in spirit-connection as well as physical, but it is for the purpose of showing you the truths of your spirit-life, after the spirit has left the body, that we leave our high estate and the blissful life of the spheres, and come to earth to teach you.

What do you desire? Can one say, Oh! how my soul is refreshed with the bright visions of progression opened to us by your communications, when he gives way to all the influences of evil thoughts, and renders our teachings of no avail? It is well that your own hearts are brought up before the bar of strict examination, and all the passions and feelings which have governed them are exposed to the searching investigation of truth. You desire that you may, step by step, ascend from one condition to another, leaving behind you the evils and errors of your material nature, till at last you may stand in the presence of those bright spirits whose minds are pure and undefiled before God. Your spirits long for the time when you may wander among the beautiful scenes of the spirit-world, when you may drink up from every object around the truths of nature and of God; when filled with joy inexpressible you may give utterance to thoughts which reach the intense desire for perfection; when divested of every thing impure, the spirit sees in spirit the eternal essence freed from all admixture with earth; when not a thought, not a desire, shall bring back its earthly connection; but filled with love and inspired with wisdom, it lays its grasp even on the footstool of the throne of God, and claims possession as its birth-right! Is this so? Verily, and I believe it. But even if it be so, how does your life on earth correspond? Are you patient? Do you forbear? Are you willing to sacrifice your own feelings and give way to the feelings of others? Do you love purely, justly, and unselfishly?

Can you lay your hands on your hearts and say, I have given no one pain, I have controlled my own nature, and in my desire to progress, in my love for the truth of God I have done to others as I would they should have done unto me? How is it? Is there no lurking desire in your hearts that has led you astray? Have you studied the necessities of another nature, and made just allowance for all its manifestations? Have you loved as God loves—willing to trust, willing to suffer, willing to yield for the sake of

love? Oh! have you brought up the deep motives of your soul and laid them bare to the examination of your own consciousness? I ask in the name of God, have you felt that you have advanced one step toward purity?

These questions behoove us to come at once to the investigation of our propensities. How, then, have you governed what you know to be the controlling influences of your nature? Can you say, In the life I have led I have shown to the world my faith in spirits by following the directions they have given us? Can it be possible that the world will believe that spirits can communicate with man, and that communication is for good, when the great and glorious truths which we reveal are hidden by your own lives and denied by your own conduct? You will say, I have tried; yes—and I believe you; but have you shut your ears to the demands of self, and alone opened your understandings to the truths of God? Reflect for a moment.

Here ensued a pause, in which some remarks were made and some desultory conversation held, when the writing was resumed.

Life is forever—and forever must that life struggle. Forever must the desire for good be paramount to the demands of evil. Were it not so, there would be no progression. Why it is so, we shall learn when we stand in the celestial spheres, gods in wisdom and in perfection. But as the spheres are above, so must be our spirit-flight, soaring on the wings of divine love, and wafted by the breezes of earnest and truthful desires. Thus, when we have triumphed over the influences of matter, we become the causes which govern and control it; or, indeed, the instrument by which the divine laws are executed.

All nature is not alike, but in all nature is the principle of good, instead of the principle of evil. The cares of life are the evils which beset us; and there are others with which we have to battle. But as I have asked in love, for your self-examination, I tell you in love to go on, for the day is not far distant when, eye to eye and face to face, you

shall have the tangible demonstration of what I have told you; and your souls shall feel that one triumph over self is a victory which enhances not alone *your* happiness, but gives speed to the footsteps of those who precede you here, and will give to your spirit-life a joy I can not explain.

But, above all, let your hearts open to one another. In the interchange of thought for thought you shall find how much you are bound one to another, how much you can assist one another, and how much love there is in the human heart.

Some remarks were made, when it was added:

I am glad you have contested my remarks. I will explain. Do you not, when you are charged with doing or saying any thing which conflicts with the opinions of others, or when your own opinions are opposed, feel that after all you are right, and have the *consciousness* of feeling that you are right? Do you not in this forget that others may feel just as you feel?

If you will analyze your hearts, you will find my words true.

I have nothing more to say, but that you all should examine yourselves. What I have written is for thought, for earnest, deep reflection; and I trust, when next we meet, you will give me an expression of your feelings on what I have written.

## Section Forty-seven.

*Sunday Evening, July 10th, 1853.*

Present, Dr. and Mrs. Dexter and Mr. Warren. Dr. Dexter was influenced, and the following was written through his hand:

WHEN in some moment of life when the soul asserts its supremacy and controls the natural tendencies of our material nature; when catching in its aspirations a glimpse of its glorious destiny it pours forth gushing from itself the finer feelings of its spirit-origin we yield to the claims it asserts, then the heavens, studded with its bright stars, offer a lesson at once divine and full of wisdom. We watch some star whose twinkling rays penetrate to our hearts, and we feel the soul springing forth from its body and, rising upward, speed its way toward that star, as if it were its home. We people it with our friends, and we clothe its mountains and valleys with woods and grass and herbs and flowers and murmuring streams, and birds that flit from tree to tree and sing their songs of love. In some fair spot, sheltered by a lofty mountain, surrounded by shady trees and bathed by a gurgling brook, we locate our home. There, where the air is filled with the fragrance of flowers, and echoing the songs of birds; there, where the sun ever shines, and the landscape eternally presents new beauties to attract; there, where the soul feels that it is free to act itself, bound by no observance of form or custom, do we meet with those friends whom on earth we loved most, and in whose hearts we found our own identity. Yes, we look at that star and watch its sparkling, as if every twinkle was a sign of love, and bid our spirit revel in the scene its own yearnings have called up. We watch, but it

is the vigil of the weary spirit tired of the hard realities of life, knowing its prerogatives, and making tangible its sympathies. To us the vigils we keep on earth elicit feelings assimilating with the spirit's watch. Oh! when we have left our homes, and the bright, the inconceivable glories which there exist, drawn by the irresistible desire to instruct, to teach the truths, to us made certain; when weary with effort and tired with the vain complainings, the severe reproaches, the unjust charges, and the foolish bickerings of our dearest friends, we look upward and behold our star shining amid the works of God, then our hearts feel what the instinctive action of the soul must be. The soul! its birthright is the whole of nature. Yes, beyond the spirit's range, above its conceptions, far, far away to the east and the west—to the north and the south—with worlds on worlds, and spheres on spheres—where the light of suns unnumbered develop the mighty manifestations of its Father and its God—where reign worlds bright and dazzling, and exceeding even the wildest dreams of spirit-enthusiasm; filled with beings more brightly beautiful than beauty's impress on the image of its Creator; yes, again yes, where the thought stretched beyond itself tries in the vain attempt to calculate, is the soul's heritage—its eternal birthright. It claims it all. It owns no confinement, it recognizes no barrier, but in its progress lays its hand on all as its own! Can *we*, then, who have just stepped over the threshold of this inconceivable heritage, and have witnessed its relationship with nature, soul, and God, can we hesitate, then, in face of our difficulties, our trials, our disappointments, still to go on? No, with us the beginning is the end; for its commencement is the never-ceasing effort till the mission is past.

Thus, then, come I to-night, looking to my work on earth as the star which I people with souls emancipated from error and clothed with truth; ushered into a liberty of eternity, and filled with a desire that leads to God.

I salute you and I bless you. There are sympathies con-

necting spirit on earth with spirit in the spheres. This sympathy binds us together. In it are love, truth, and eternity.

SWEEDENBORG.

A pause occurred here, when the conversation turned on *progress*, and it was observed, that we often see but little improvement in an individual in a lifetime. The writing was then resumed.

I imagine that what is termed progress is but imperfectly understood. The remark you made, Mr. Warren, is comparatively true. Man, on earth, manifests but little of the progress he has made, even in a lifetime exceeding the age of man. The reason is obvious. The soul's progress is in itself. How far the material surroundings may be cultivated I do not pretend to say, but that his organs alone obscure the positive advance that the soul has made, I verily believe. One obstacle to the direct observation of what may be the progress of spirits is fear of the ridicule of the world. The finest, the tenderest feelings of the heart are those most commended in man, but they are those most satirized. Few men have the boldness to avow that the older they grow the more they appreciate what belongs to themselves and their race. Thus, confined in bondage worse than slavery, they suffer the soul to develop itself, unknown, unacknowledged, and unconfessed. But miserly though this may be, the gems thus hoarded up in life pass current in eternity.

Progress is the inception of truth and love, and the consequent development of the desires and affinities which correspond to these two principles. A soul progressing obtains one idea by which it is placed in position and location to associate with others who have also learned the same; and they develop together an idea still more in advance. Thus they progress on the mind's inception alone. But freed from all restraining influences here, the spirits act as well as conceive, and thus, step by step, they traverse the spheres, till at last they reach the eternal idea, the divine embodiment, and are perfect even as God is perfect.

A conversation here ensued, arising out of the last remarks. Allusion was made to the idea advanced by some spirits that we should all progress until a certain point, where, becoming Godlike, we should lose our identity by absorption into the Godhead, whereupon it was written as follows:

And you will never lose your identity. If God designed to absorb all souls into himself, there would have been no necessity at first to give off from himself distinct identical germs, possessing all the characteristics of independence. Therefore, as every spirit is independent in his mind and its exercise, how could God contravene his own institutes? That is impossible, and from this I reason.

I shall not keep you up much longer. The excessive heat under which you are all laboring retards free manifestation; but if you wish to ask questions, I will answer.

A pause having occurred, a discussion arose as to how spirits could pass through solid substances; and it was asked how it was possible for a spirit, clothed in garments, to pass through solid matter, unless the garments possessed the same aptitude with the spirit's body, of uniting when severed, by their own inherent power. In answer to this and the conversation generally, it was written:

In the first place your ideas of spirit-body—of the advanced spirit, are as crude as matter. Spirit-body or spirit-matter is intangible; and it is so sublimated that it is like electricity almost. We do not pass grossly through matter, but we *will*, and like a current of electricity, we pervade matter. Our clothing is adapted to our conditions, and thus we are able to take with us what is on us. Spirit passing through matter is like the life which is in all things, or like the influence of God's power on all material things.

Of course I refer alone to the higher spirits. There are such who can exist in matter, and pervade its every part with their own organization.

This is my explanation. Good-night.

## Section Forty-eight.

Thursday, July 14th, 1853.

Present, Dr. and Mrs. Dexter and Mr. Warren.

Dr. Dexter was, after a long delay, influenced (he being somewhat indisposed), and the following was written:

How difficult it is to control the working of the human breast, and how fruitless are all our attempts to reduce thought to the arbitrary restraints of sect or society! There is a feeling paramount in every mind, that the sentiments which govern our own characters are either misunderstood by others or intentionally misrepresented, that our feelings are pure, that we ourselves are willing to yield to the peculiarities of others, and that we try to add to the comfort and happiness of others by whom we are surrounded. Perhaps this may be so, and I doubt not there are those who strive to subdue their own inclinations, and whose earnest wish is to make others happy. This labor with our own passions must be productive of good, must root out the lurking evils of our own nature. But, alas! that even in this effort to subdue the mind's propensities there should be at times as much of evil as of good. It is not enough, that we strive to regenerate the tendencies of our own natures; it is not enough that we toil for our own perfection. If we disregard the feelings of others if engrossed in ourselves we do not recognize the trials, the troubles, the perplexities, the cares, and anxieties of others, the struggles and desires to do right, and the irresistible force of compelling circumstances that direct the action into other channels than the one intended; if we do not penetrate