

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

beneath the surface, and unfold the ceaseless efforts in another mind to accomplish the same results as we ourselves design.

Oh! how the heart, earnest and sincere, striving to advance, and yet bound by circumstances which it can not control—how this heart, alive, yes, sensitively alive to every thing good, seeing beyond the limits of its own action the bright and beautiful home for which it yearns—how, I say, does it shrink within itself, frozen with the cold reply or the repelling look, when even that word or look is from one to whom that spirit wished to minister for good.

Friends, man is the veriest creature of circumstance, controlled by causes and influences which almost in spite of himself direct his actions on earth. Deal tenderly, then, with that spirit who, bowed down by the weight of care unknown, hideth his bitterest troubles in his own breast, that he alone may suffer. Gently regard all his doings. Credit him for the deep susceptibilities of heart, and learn that to him no sacrifice is too great, could he make you to know how hard the struggle with self, that he may endure troubles in silence, that there may be no cloud between others and happiness. It is the warm sunshine and the gentle rain that vivify the seed, and bring forth the fruit and the flower. God's goodness is gentle, it is tender. In his merciful provision, in the due execution of his laws, he has arranged every thing for the good of man. He has with the practical given us the beautiful. Can you look on the earth when first the morning sun greets the mountain and the dale, the ocean and the lake, and witness its bright beams stealing over tree and shrub, gilding their branches with golden light, and infusing into every dew-drop that kisses leaf or flower the brilliancy and dazzling beauty of the diamond, and behold the mighty influence of its gentle beams, as from the sky it chases the darkness of night, and comes in glorious pomp with red and gold, and pink and purple, throwing its radiant mantle on its pathway through the heavens, and giving to every plant, and tree, and

flower, and the humble grass, new beauties and deeper tints to herald its coming?

Hear the joyous birds—their gushing notes fill the air and merrily bid it welcome. The cold chills of night give place to the warm breath of morning, and then from rose, from violet, from hawthorn, and from mignonnette there ascends the perfume of celestial day. Earth hums its grateful greetings, all creeping things murmur thanks, and the sparkling brooklet as it leaps from stone to stone laughs out glad thanks, and dashes on in joy; the cattle on a thousand hills bellow forth their notes of praise. Man looks up, the sky is beaming in its radiant glory—he looks on earth in its deep robe of green, and it reflects back its tints. He looks again, and again he looks—earth, heaven, birds, flowers, and all created things, are stamped with the impress of its glorious light, so gentle, so calm, scarce breathing life, and yet so strong in their several powers, all yield to its influence and all respond to its might. What would be the effect if it came scorching and drying up the earth, burning and destroying and blighting every thing in its course?

My friends, seek in other hearts the image of your own, and so shall you soothe the weary, tired spirit, so shall you comfort and réstore. I bless you.

SWEEDENBORG.