

Section Forty-nine.

Sunday, July 24th, 1853.

Last evening, after an absence of about three weeks in the country, I returned home, and met the circle at Dr. Dexter's; he, Mr. Warren, and I alone being present.

The Doctor was soon influenced, and wrote:

I FEEL at home once again. I confess I do not like traveling and the Western scenery. But I have interfered to say one word of greeting to those present, and to assure them that I am glad to meet with them once more. Swedenborg suggests that some subject should be proposed in which your minds have been engaged for the evening's business. With this I am agreed; and now, as time is precious, let us all go to work with a will, and accomplish what is before us. In love, BACON.

He added

Swedenborg wants the last communication read.

And it was so done. It was then written in another handwriting.

When we are daily meeting with our friends, their society becomes a matter of common habit; but when we are for a time separated we feel their absence, and regret the loss of their society. But when again we are united, our affection seems to be renewed, and a new pleasure occupies our hearts, and we rejoice with them and with ourselves. Judge, I welcome you back, and I am filled with pleasure that your journey has been so satisfactory. I can not believe that you will encounter more of the revilings of the world than you have received when your back was turned to the faces of the foes of truth. Truth fears no foe. It seeks no covert

place from whence to sound forth its claims. It is ignorance and prejudice that, lurking in secret haunts and dark places, hurl their envenomed shafts at those who advocate the freedom, right, and justice of truth. I grasp your hand, and I feel in so doing I meet the returning pressure of an honest man.

Friends, I bless you, and bid you God-speed in all your acts. SWEEDENBORG.

Mr. Warren here alluded to some teachings which he had lately seen, and which purported to be from Swedenborg, and he desired to know if they were from him?

It was answered:

Let it be understood, once for all, that since I have been permitted the use of the Doctor's hand, I have not written any thing through a y person's hand, except, perhaps, an answer to some question, or a greeting to some individual for whom I have a particular friendship. I have felt it important that I should refrain from promiscuous writing, that it might give more authority to our work, and that the Doctor might be satisfied that what I said to him two years since was true.

After a pause, it was added:

Judge, are you able to be impressed for a few moments? I will try and explain why there are so many communications purporting to be from me, by showing to your mind the reasons.

I replied, Yes, I felt very well. And I withdrew my thoughts from external objects in order to aid them. In a short time a train of thought was thrust upon my mind, which I followed for a while, when I asked, Am I right in my conception of your ideas? and it was answered through the Doctor:

Go on; we will tell you as you proceed.

I then gave utterance to the following:

It is now about one hundred years since Swedenborg proclaimed to the world that he had personal intercourse with the spirit-land. It was the first instance since the days of Jesus that spirit-communication to such an extent

had been known among men. There had been occasional instances during the previous fifteen or sixteen centuries, in which there had been spirit-intercourse, in which the spirits had made repeated attempts to open communion with man. But the intercourse through him, proclaimed to the world by him, was of a more extended and marked character, and had attracted the attention of mankind to a greater degree than any thing since the Crucifixion. When he died, unlike most men, when he entered the spirit-world, he knew all about the existence on which he entered, in consequence of his previous experience. He at once discovered how much of what he had taught was true, and how much erroneous; and how much it would benefit mankind if the knowledge he had acquired when in the body could be diffused abroad among them generally. In this respect he was far ahead of many who had long preceded him in their entrance into the spirit-land. He felt it to be at once his mission to endeavor to extend that knowledge, in order that he might elevate man from the depression with which ages of ignorance, bigotry, and superstition had afflicted him. He therefore devoted himself exclusively to that object, and sought for aid throughout the whole spirit-world; reasoning with some, importuning others, demonstrating to inquiring minds the reality of which they had no conception; calling on philosophers for their assistance, and upon affection for its aid; in fine, invoking throughout by considerations not only affecting man's elevation upon earth, but his elevation and happiness in the next sphere, their coöperation in this great work. This labor of his was conducted with the earnestness that could flow only from the most settled and thorough conviction of the reality and practicability of spiritual intercourse.

That conviction which attended him in his passage from this world to the spirit-land was increased a thousand-fold by what he witnessed there.

It is important to notice here, that these untiring and strenuous efforts of his, causing him to range far and near,

high and low through the regions of space, necessarily caused him to be known to vast numbers of spirits, as being engaged in that work, and as having had experience in his earthly life. But when he had succeeded in attracting the attention of spirits to the subject to an extent sufficient to insure adequate coöperation, it became primarily a subject of inquiry, *How it was to be done.*

The mere proclamation through one or a few persons, it had already been discovered in his own case, amounted to little or nothing. To a few only could a knowledge of it be brought home, and with fewer still could any belief be produced. The very slight progress of the Swedenborgians for a hundred years is evidence of that. Hence the importance of the inquiry, *How was it to be done?* Man was so sensuous, so material, so mere animal in his nature, that the mere address of mind to mind could not effect the great purpose in ages.

Even the teachings of Jesus, if they had been, like Swedenborg's, unaccompanied by any thing addressing itself to man's animal nature, would have been almost as ineffectual as his. The miracles, as they were called, which attended the mission of Jesus, were powerful if not essential elements in the propagation of his doctrines. Hence it was apparent that some mode of reaching man's physical perceptions must be devised, and that not through one person only, as in the case of Jesus, or through a few—a score or two, as in the case of his immediate disciples—but, if possible, through great numbers; thus not only diffusing the knowledge abroad among men, but affording the most satisfactory evidence against the charge of collusion. And it was reasoned that, as in the case of Jesus and his disciples, in the case of Swedenborg himself, and in the case of others through whom spiritual communications had been made in past times, a peculiar condition of their physical nature had allowed it, so that same condition existing in many others, as it necessarily must, might be availed of to effect the great end in view. Therefore the first direction

of the minds engaged in this work was to affect the greatest number of those whose physical condition would permit them to be affected. Clairvoyance and psychometry were something toward it, paving the way, as it were, like John in the wilderness; but still there was wanting the evidence addressed to the senses, which man's physical condition so imperatively required. At length, through the combined efforts of those engaged in the work, and chiefly through the practical philosophy of FRANKLIN, the mode of communication by *raps* was discovered. When at length it was learned on earth that a communication could be had with spirits by rappings (and it was a considerable time after the discovery had been made in the spheres), then the spirits sought out others whose physical condition permitted the raps to be heard through them also, and thus rapping mediums were noticed in other sections of the country. At first, as you will all remember, this spirit-intercourse was held almost entirely by rappings. Various other phases of it, now known, have gradually grown up since then, and are the result of the progress thus far made.

When the mode of communication by raps was discovered, it was manifested in this country in preference to any other, for two reasons. First, it was the country of *Franklin*. Second, this country was in the enjoyment of greater mental freedom than existed in any other part of the world, or had ever been known in it; for here man was free to investigate whatever he pleased, because truth was left free to combat it. As the intercourse through *physical* manifestations extended and progressed, and men became believers in spiritual intercourse, they became (by virtue of a law whose existence and operation the wiser spirits know full well) more and more capable of being approached by spirits, until moral or mental manifestations (call them which you will) have extended and are extending to a still wider range than physical manifestations have ever obtained. Thus vast numbers have been found in this sphere of existence, through whom, either by mental or physical mani-

festations, disembodied spirits have been able to communicate with man in the form. Now this has not been by a miracle, a prodigy, a special providence, or the suspension of God's immutable laws, but it has been in accordance with, and in execution of those laws. Hence the power of spirits out of the body to commune with spirits in the body is not confined to a few, but belongs to all, as a part of their nature.

There may, it is true, be exceptions of spirits too material and gross to approach up to the level of your stage of existence; but, with that exception, all in the spirit-world, whether wise or foolish, progressed or undeveloped, vicious and evil-disposed, or virtuous and holy, can alike exercise the prerogative of communing.

As the knowledge of this new discovery was diffused abroad among the inhabitants of the spirit-world, it was received by them with an interest far more intense than any of which you can conceive; and is strongly in contrast with the obstinate blindness with which mankind in this sphere receive it.

Many spirits, bound to the earth by the strong ties of attachment for those whom they have recently left, are anxious to commune with them. Many who have too long ago passed from earth to have any such personal ties, are still drawn to earth by the propensities which have marked their life here, and which still linger around them. Some wish to commune from an unselfish desire to alleviate the condition of mankind. Others, alas! feeling still the passions which tainted their mortal career, desire to commune in gratification of their fear, their hatred, their envy, or their jealousy. And, I repeat, that as the reality of spiritual intercourse was the natural result of man's progression, all these various classes of spirits could commune, the one as well as the other.

But many found this difficulty. Mankind had so long been in the habit of bowing to the authority of names, that neither mediums, nor persons in the flesh communicating

through them, were willing to receive communications unless they bore the sanction of some great or distinguished name, or some name which would of itself have influence upon medium or interrogator. For instance, how often have you yourselves seen when a spirit has attempted to communicate, that the first question was, "Who are you?" Not what do you teach? but who are you? And how often have you seen, when an unknown name has been given, that the spirit has been repelled and not permitted to commune at all! Now this has been observed in the spirit-world over and over again, and the knowledge of it extends all through and among those who have attempted to have communion. And those who have either had a name that was odious among men, or one obscure and unknown, have found that by this besetting propensity of man to worship the authority of name, they were to be entirely excluded from the privilege of intercourse if they attempted to do so in their own name. And this privilege, so much more highly prized by them than you, they were to be deprived of by your perverseness, if they truly told you who they were.

It is not strange, therefore, that very many, either from an over-anxiety to commune, or from a careless disregard of what they deemed a trivial falsehood, assumed false names; and among all those who have been falsely personated, there has been no one more frequently so than Swedenborg; for the simple reason, that there is no one in the spirit-world so generally known as him as identified with this new discovery. And many of those who assume his name do not know but that on earth, among you, he is regarded in the same light in connection with this matter. Hence they so often take his name, and because they suppose it will be the most acceptable to you.

Let it be not supposed, however, that all those who thus falsely assume his name intend to teach falsehood, or to make a statement in any other respect untrue. They perceive that the price they must pay for communing is this false personation, apparently harmless to them, for they

can not help asking themselves, Why do men care so much more for name than for substance? But they intend in all else to teach truthfully as far as they know. Some, indeed, having learned what Swedenborg did teach, suppose they are teaching exactly his doctrine now. But there are some who, for mischievous purposes, assume a false character, and teach false doctrine to deceive and mislead.

Out of this general statement the danger of spiritual intercourse may be discovered. Out of these crudities and false teachings the truth must be sifted, as must often be done in mere mundane matters. We have but one guide, but one protector against the errors which may thus mislead. That guide is the free, unbiased, candid exercise of our reason; that protector is purity of intention, holiness of thought, and a firm reliance upon the providence of God.

After the communication had been given, we got into conversation about our forthcoming publication, and it was written:

Friends, there needed some policy in arranging the matter for the first volume of our work. At first it was intended only that I should teach the general ideas connected with the spirit-world, but as we found the Doctor willing and susceptible, Bacon and others concluded to connect other thoughts with my teachings, and thus we have written what we have. If we had particularized every thing in relation to the spheres, it would have made a volume too large, and perhaps would have been monotonous. We have written enough to excite the popular appetite for more; and when we commence our second volume, we will then answer all your minute questions, and specially devote a certain time to the explanation of all your queries. I hope this will satisfy, and thus good-night.

SWEEDENBORG.

Section Fifty.

Monday, July 25th, 1853.

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

WERE I to greet you to-night with the ordinary salutation of meeting, it would not express the feelings which move me to-night toward yourself, Judge, or the Doctor. But more especially toward yourself are my feelings running over with affection, and I am forced by the strange circumstances surrounding you, to show more than usual sentiment in addressing you, as much for the purpose of assuring you that the spirits of just men made perfect are aware of the charges made against you by vicious wicked men, as to manifest an intention to give you that kind of support and assistance the present occasion demands.

Judge, it is not always, as you have experienced in a career somewhat checkered, that a sincere desire to do good is rewarded with the approbation of those from whom you would most expect to receive approval. There is too much suspicion in the minds of even great men of the motives to award praise for a sound and successful virtuous effort, let that effort be directed toward whatever object it will most conduce to perfect. Man in his general characteristics looks on the mind which has launched out into unknown waters, and proudly and determinedly sought from the deep profundity some new continent on which to plant the standard of truth, as if it were an adventure entirely selfish. He can not reconcile the apparent motive to those which govern his own actions. Thus there is, even in the most intelligent, a desire to invest with attributes of

perverse selfishness all attempts to subdue error. But this is a story you already have learned. It only remains for me to say, that the cause is strong enough to support its most obscure believer. There is always in the human heart the responsive certainty of doing right, and always a like certainty when wrong is committed. In your heart, to-night, the jewels most prized are glittering in the light of a virtuous intent, and the refraction on the world will exhibit how much is the value thereof to yourself and the world.

BACON.

I here remarked, how strong, during the whole day, and now my affection for him was glowing.

It was answered:

Well, Judge, in your own heart you realize the feelings of mine. Minds disciplined alike are sure, when brought in contact, to adhere closely by the force of innate affinity.

The same subjects which would have interested me when on earth, would, and do interest you, and in the whole of your life you exhibit in some respects the same sort of characteristics which gave form and personality to my own. And permit me to say that the longer we converse, and the more our thoughts are brought out and compared together, the deeper will be our affection, and the more endearing our friendship. But to you both, and I am not accustomed to express much feeling, I say, that if love uninfluenced by a worldly or selfish motive is worthy your acceptance, you have mine in truth, and for God eternally.

Section Fifty-one.

Wednesday, August 3d, 1853.

This evening, Judge Fowler (for twelve years one of the Circuit Judges of the State of Kentucky) was sitting in my library with me. Dr. Dexter came in, and after conversing for two hours on the subject of spiritual intercourse, to which the Judge said his attention had been originally drawn by my first publication on the subject, I asked if we might not hear from our spirit-friends, who were doubtless present.

In a few moments the Doctor was influenced, and wrote as follows:

I CAN NOT have any thing special to say to your friend from Kentucky, but I feel gratified that men occupying exalted positions like himself are investigating and believing the truth of spirit-intercourse. It is not sufficient that men believe, that they acknowledge there is no deception in the phenomena they witness; truth admits of no half-way interest; it requires, when once a man is satisfied, that he shall seek to disseminate that truth, and afford to others the same benefit he receives from the adoption.

The question asked in your letter, Judge E., is of great importance, *Cui bono?* What, indeed, is the object of this new revelation? It is certain that a mere belief in the upside-down tipping of a table can be of no vital benefit to any individual or to his race. Tables may be moved and raps may be heard, but these evidences of a power not materially existing in this world can satisfy no thinking man if there were not something beyond all this worthy of being understood. Now, what is this? It is that man has not been taught his true relation even to the life he now enjoys, or his connection with that other state of existence beyond the grave. Educated after the fashion of some one sect,

men imbibe certain notions characterizing that sect, which are not absolute revelations from God, or even predicated on his laws, but are the positive creations of mind materially influenced, and thus do not in the least exemplify the design of our existence or the purpose of death. If the laws of God had not been instituted for a purpose as important as his character is omnipotent, there probably would have been some different manifestation of life than that which now gives significancy to the whole material creation. But death was just as much of an object following life, as was the gift or establishment of life itself. Therefore death was to be understood, or, at least, should be, for one great idea belonging to death has scarcely been apprehended, or, in fact, appreciated. Death is the continuance-life; it is life without the restraints imposed upon it by the limits of a single planet. Now, though it is important that the designs of life should be investigated and understood, it certainly is of as much importance that that life in its continuance should be perfectly appreciated, for the one is of short duration, and the other is for eternity. This, then, is the object of spirit-communion, and it behooves all believers to understand what they believe, that when satisfied themselves they may be able to satisfy others.

BACON.