

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

"Brethren, fear not: for Error is mortal and cannot live, and Truth is immortal and cannot die."

VOL. I.

SPRINGFIELD, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1851.

NO. 29.

The Principles of Nature.

THE POSITION AND DESTINY OF MAN.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

Subject to speculation with regard to his visible existence and daily occupation, man appears a composition of the most manifest contradictions—he seems both a giant and a dwarf, as we compare him with things or beings either above or below him. He prides himself in an attire of silk, yet cannot clothe a sheep with wool—he cultivates the ground, yet is uncertain as to the result. Thousands tremble at his aspect of wrath, and himself trembles before death. He directs the lightnings of heaven that they do him no injury—yet cannot prevent storm and hail and flood, from devastating his fields and meadows. By a finger's touch upon a trigger he prostrates hundreds of his own species and the brute creation, yet cannot adjoin said finger when separated from its former place. He governs and controls the mighty ship upon the stormy waters, and yet he cannot face the rage of epidemics and maladies. To blow up rocks, to level the highest trees, to give a new direction to rivers, to dive in security into the abyss of the ocean, to elevate himself without wings above the eagle, to penetrate into the bowels of the earth in search of its hidden treasures, to traverse the summit of mountains covered with snows eternal, to tame the lion and the tiger, to guide the powerful steed according to his pleasure—all this he is familiar with and can do; yet insects that offend him, defy his power. His labors directed by skill and sustained with diligence untired, are often defeated and made void by a nothing; the most perfect and beautiful watches he makes with ease; and yet when the watch of life is run down, all his skill and science suffice not to wind it up again. He enjoys a noble delight in planning and executing a praiseworthy action, and yet he is often the slave of passions the most vile, and open enemies to his happiness and peace—nay, they too often degrade him below the brutes themselves. He has the power by a virtuous and true course to elevate himself to the condition of a God, and yet too often he prefers to be a devil. He can, by an enlightened co-operation with divine Wisdom, spread benefit and blessing around him, and yet his satisfaction too often consists in being the curse of his race; he can, by an honest industry, acquire wealth and public esteem, and yet he prefers to enrich himself by injustice and deception, or in fine to smuggle himself into a more elevated station, without realizing that the individual who raises two ears of grain from a field which formerly produced but one, is intrinsically better than a king who conquers half a world to rob and plunder.

Who could explain to himself these and like contradictions, or could bring them in harmony with the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, if man's death-bed should be the limit of his perfection? For what purpose is man endowed with infinite capacities, if the duration of his spirit does not reach beyond the barrier of time? Immortality alone explains the difficulty.

But it is different with the life of the spirit: according to its designation it must exist when the frame it once occupied has long crumbled into dust. Why, demands Jean Paul, very justly, why create a being of earth with wings of light, if destined to shrink again into the shell which gave it birth, unable to free itself by its ethereal capacities.

As the plant withers and becomes as dust, scattered by the winds, do we believe that the elements of the plant have gone from the globe entirely? We know that nothing is lost, it is only the connection of particles which change, merely the form that alters. Everything moves on in an endless circle. And

shall man alone, the master-piece of creation, sink forever in the waves of an endless change?

Skeptic! lay thy hand upon thy heart, and hark! it speaks to thee in loud and distinct tones:

Within me flame celestial rays,
Unchecked when even the frame decays.

Ah, yes! the belief of immortality forces itself irresistibly upon every man who does not wilfully close his eyes to exclude the light of day. For this reason, even in times of yore the creed was universal. The Kamschatdale when he places his dead before animals; the New Hollander when he deposits a corpse within a watery tomb, bears testimony to a belief in futurity. No tribe or nation, but distinguishes unequivocally, between the burial of one of their own species and that of a beast.

The savage at his death, enters at once into the spirit-land of his forefathers. The instinct of an existence which endures forever, goes still in advance of confirming reason; and this general belief, together with the patient endurance of the evils of this life, are religious obelisks upon the tombs of nations. This conviction also, so ancient and so common, effectively justifies the ways of God to man. We cannot deny immortality, without refusing to the Eternal the ascription of every design; without enveloping in thick darkness, the history of the world; without depriving man of his high relations to God; without robbing his earthly life of all harmony, hold and hope—and denying to millions of sufferers their only consolation. We must acknowledge a God, who rewards and punishes, or none at all. To ascribe ignorance and weakness to God, would be as absurd as to accuse him of injustice—and without a proper compensation, where would be his justice to suffering virtue?—all would be inexplicable.

Should man, as we view him in history, be only the weak, erring, miserable creature he is there depicted, and no more, he would constitute but the most ridiculous production of Chance, or we should be forced to think the Creator had failed in his purpose.

In history, by comparing the evil with the good, the attentive observer will find out—to a certain extent, the plan of Providence—that man is at present only in the anti-room of a better world. Let none, therefore, doubt for a moment, the assumed prospect of a holier, a better, a more spiritual life in a world to come, to which we are already elected citizens.

Man is only created, unbelief to the contrary notwithstanding, for a steady progress toward perfectibility, and that which has not yet been done toward the furtherance of this object, must and will yet be accomplished. The means which God has prepared are imperishable. From this consideration, we shall look upon history as the text-book, the study of which will entwine man's brow with the laurels of humanity and honor. Sufferings and death only exhibit a reasonable appearance, when man's conviction of immortality, written in characters of fire upon every man's heart, is placed between them.

No sooner do we firmly believe that our destination is no other than to be morally good, than we are convinced, also, that our lives extend beyond the limits of time. If reason risk the pretension, that we are to give up our life to the practice of virtue, it must also propose as certain a compensation for this offering.

In the very hope of man, the promise of Heaven is contained, and whatever desires earnestly an eternal life, gives at the same time the strongest evidence of its existence. Man's thirst for happiness proves that there is happiness, for nature never strives after a mere nothing. This thirst, yet unsatisfied, then denotes that the desired good is not attainable here, but in a higher sphere.

Strangers wandering among us, far from the mountains of their nativity, experience an incurable longing to revisit their homes. Man's very patrimony, therefore, must be beyond this earth, for a ceaseless desire and longing possess him. How could the grave be the end of man, when earth cannot satisfy the desires of his nature? No! it must be that a better life lies beyond death's gate; the final cast can not depend upon the first throw altogether. Man's terrestrial existence lies extended between two natal hours; by the first he enters earth, the second heaven; the earthly life is the bud of existence, the dawning twilight of a day, bright, complete and everlasting beyond the grave. The vast powers and faculties in man particularly point to our immortality, which he, however old he may become, can never develop or employ here on earth. Why is he endowed with talents, for whose use and improvement, man has neither time nor opportunity? Infants die before they have time scarcely to feel their existence; young men and those grown up, die, with whom a fullness of power is deposited, the greater part of which is carried with them to the tomb, unused; whole nations perish, who, without special fault of their own, have remained upon the lowest grade of improvement; should we not be puzzled to retain our belief in God's infinite wisdom, which makes nothing without an adequate purpose, if man's life extended no farther than the tomb? And how would it be with the Divine administration of justice in the moral world, if a turf or a tombstone covered up the entire man?

Why are so many noble and glorious actions left unpaid, and so many black and detestable crimes unpunished? Why is so many a friend of virtue, defeated in his wisest and best designs, while the veriest scoundrel rocks himself comfortably for life in the chair of successful villainy, if no time or means of adjustment is to be expected? Shall man be compelled to sow in bitterness here, without a prospect of a rich harvest hereafter? Awake man! A God, the rewarder of every good action forever, rules above thee! Let this, in cases of difficulty and trial, console thy sufferings and renerve thy heart; may it render thee invincible in thy struggle after virtue, and illumine thy soul in the shadow of the valley of Death! Here is only the spring of thine existence—not thou, but thy frail tenement is consigned to the elements—thy body alone is buried.

That which the worm devours, that which becomes part and parcel of a new form, is not man; but the worthless remains of a deserted body. Earth only retakes what property is her own—the spirit returns to God who gave it.

What we call death is not the transition of man to eternity, because man's eternity commences already here, but merely a translation to sublimer and happier conditions; it is only a change of habitation in the great fatherland, it is the exchange of a cradle for life upon the Parent-heart.

Man's very vices, his insatiate thirst after luxury, gold and honors, proclaim that he is born to boundless happiness. His violent passions, which, like the wings of the eagle, stretch themselves beyond his nest, and which despises the valuables of earth, prognosticate a nobler relation and prove our claim upon Heaven.

As earth is a sphere too circumscribed for them, it is evident that a higher purpose is opened before us, and that human happiness rests on a surer foundation than the gratification of desires we have in common with the animal. And does not Nature herself yield conclusive reasoning in behalf of immortality? Nothing in the material world is ever lost; that which seems destroyed comes forth again in a new shape.

The caterpillar envelopes itself and passes into a state of insensibility, but soon it bursts from its self-constructed tomb, and comes forth a light and elegant butterfly. The seed consigned to the lap of the earth putrifies and dies; but in a few months the waving ear usurps its place. Can it be otherwise with man, creation's crown? Should he alone go down forever, while from the decay of less noble matter, activity and life are manifested?

This demonstrates that the resurrection from the dead is not so unnatural, as infidelity would have us presume, when it is coupled with the progress to immortality, and understood in relation

to man's duration throughout futurity, in an organic but refined nature, compatible with his existence in God's eternal empire. Immortality is a chief feature in man's future, and presupposes recollection after death.

Not to be sensible that one exists, is annihilation; and to be insensible that one has existed, is not duration, but a new beginning. Virtue, without memory, would be disconnected with futurity. The Here and the There must form one unbroken whole. It is more especially the remembrance of virtuous actions here, that can procure us happiness there. Man must be aware of the foundation laid upon earth, to build thereon in Heaven; the point where he left off here, he recommences there. What man's precise situation may be beyond this, in what manner his present life will be united with the future, where he shall live, and what the current of his thoughts will be, are questions we will not undertake to answer.

Eye hath not seen it, ear hath not heard it, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what the Almighty has prepared for those who truly and sincerely love, honor and serve Him. Man, awake to thy dignity, do honor to the superiorities of thy nature by acting justly. In the voyage through life, be Prudence thy anchor, thy compass—Duty! Long may be the passage—deceitful the wave—far distant the longed for shore; yet thou unflatteringly must on. Shame to thee if thou tarry behind when all else in creation advances. Improvement more especially is thy destination. Humanity, said Schiller, must increase and ripen, and from point to point lead all creative time. Thou darest not enclose thee within a limited circle of the truthful and good—nor follow blindly the transmitted customs.

Many hold fast the tradition of the ancient philosophers—that man is a creature of habit, let many endorse the opinion; but thou, show thou that the strength of thy spirit is superior to the force of habit.

Never act from prejudice; it proves merely weakness or want of vision, and in so far is humiliating. The more thy circle of knowledge expands, the more powerfully will the heart attract thee to the good, and the nearer art thou to the course marked out for thee by the Eternal Hand.

Have respect also for the good of others—despise no man. The most insignificant can be useful. Every one, however unimportant in civil life he may appear, can by the favor of circumstances rise up to a high degree of influence and usefulness. Examples to prove this are not few. Servants have become the supporters of their broken-down masters; beggars, with bread, have appeased the hunger of those once wealthy; low bred knights have saved the lives of kings and princes! Degrade no man to a mere tool! He is unworthy of the name of man, who selfishly prefers to use others, to the desire of being useful himself. Honor the Rights of Man, even in the lowest. He that speaks in favor of the Rights of Man, is on that account no Jacobin or Carbonaeri; otherwise we must call David, Solomon, the Prophets, and even the Saviour, by such names, for the latter expressly ordered the Gospel preached to all men—that mankind without distinction of color or station, might become wise unto salvation. Nothing more effectually awakens sympathy for the Rights of Man, than self-endured wrong and injustice and hardship. Too truly it is not an isolated occurrence, that the axe has been laid at the root of the tree of human rights, in defense of which a world, but a short time since, was in arms. For nations, or rather government, who at one time could not repress their indignation at the inhuman traffic in human beings—at another, did not hesitate to exchange and sell whole nations.

Who could not shed tears of blood over debased, trampled down Humanity?

DOING GOOD.—How often do we sigh for opportunities of doing good, whilst we neglect the openings of Providence in little things, which would frequently lead to the accomplishment of the most important usefulness! Dr. Johnson used to say, "He who waits to do a great deal of good at once will never do any." Good is done by degrees. However small in proportion is the benefit which follows individual attempts to do good, a great deal may thus be accomplished by perseverance even in the midst of discouragements and disappointments.—Crabbe.

Psychological Department.

Tale of a Sleep Walker.

During the Revolutionary war, there was a gentleman of large property residing in Brooklyn, who was addicted to walking in his sleep;—panic struck at the invasion of the enemy, he daily expected that his dwelling would be ransacked and pillaged. Under the influence of those fears, he arose one night, and taking a strong box which he never attempted to lift without assistance, he proceeded down stairs, furnished himself with a lantern and spade, and in a deep wooded glen about a quarter of a mile from his house, he buried his treasure, carefully replacing the sods so as to create no suspicion of their having been removed. This done, he returned, undressed and went to bed. Next morning he was the first to discover the absence of his "strong box," without having the slightest remembrance of what had passed. Enraged at its loss, he immediately accused his domestics of the robbery, as no traces of violence were perceptible either on the locks or doors of his house, that could induce him to suspect strangers. Month after month elapsed, and still the mystery was not solved, and his family began to want the necessaries of life, without the means of procuring them.

At that period of public calamity no money could be raised on real estate, and it was that season of the year when agriculture had ceased, which left him no means of earning a support for his family. To augment his misery, his only son lay confined by a violent fever, without any of those comforts of life which his situation demanded. The mind of the despairing father was strongly affected by this melancholy view of the future; his rest became more frequently broken, and he would often wander from room to room all night, with a hurried and unequal step, as if pursued by an enemy. His wife and daughter, who were accustomed to these nightly wanderings, never attempted to disturb him, unless they were fearful some accident might befall him. In this case it was necessary to employ violent means to awaken him; upon which he would exhibit so much fear and distress that they usually suffered him to gradually recover from the trance, which was succeeded by drowsiness after which he would sink into a light and natural sleep, which generally continued for several hours.

One night, as his daughter was watching at the couch of her sick brother, she heard her father descend the stairs with a quick step, and immediately followed him. She perceived he had dressed himself, and was lighting a lantern at the hearth, after which he unbolted the door and looked out; he then returned to the kitchen, and taking the lantern and spade, left the house. Alarmed at the circumstance which was not usual—though it sometimes occurred as above related, without the knowledge of the family—she hastily threw on a cloak, and followed him to the woods, trembling with apprehensions of—she knew not what, both for herself and father.

Having gained the place where he had three months since buried the box, he set down the lantern, so as to reflect strongly upon the spot; he then removed the sods, and striking the spade against its iron cover, he laughed wildly, and exclaimed—"My treasure is safe, and we shall be happy." And shouldering his heavy burden with the strength of Hercules, he stopped not as before to replace the sods of the earth, but snatching up his lantern, pursued his way directly home, to the joy of his daughter, who could hardly support herself from the fears she experienced, which were that he was about to dig his own grave, and either commit suicide, or murder some of his defenceless family. Inexpressible, therefore, was her joy, on seeing him ascend the stairs and place the box in its former recess; after which, as usual, he retired to rest. His wife and daughter, however, were too anxious to sleep themselves; the one sat impatiently watching the dawn of day, the other retired to the apartment of her suffering brother, to relieve his mind by the joyful event, and her hope of his immediate recovery.

When the gentleman arose in the morning, his wife observed the same gloom upon his countenance as he anxiously inquired

about the health of his son, and expressed his sorrow at not being able to procure the comforts of life for his family which were so much needed. Finding him totally unconscious of all that had passed the preceding night, she watched the effect which the discovery of the box would have upon his mind; and as she expected, with an astonishment almost amounting to phrenzy, he exclaimed—"Who has done this? From whence came the box?" Not until after he had listened to the evidence of his daughter, could he be convinced of the possibility of his performing such an act while asleep.

Phenomena of Death.

To be shot dead is one of the easiest modes of terminating life; yet, rapid as it is, the body has leisure to feel and time to reflect. On the first attempt by one of the frantic adherents of Spain to assassinate William, Prince of Orange, who took the lead in the revolt of the Netherlands, the ball passed through the bones of his face, and brought him to the ground. In the instant that preceded stupefaction, he was able to frame the notion that the ceiling of the room had fallen and crushed him. The cannon shot which plunged into the brain of Charles XII. did not prevent him from seizing his sword by the hilt. The idea of an attack and the necessity for defense was impressed upon him, by a blow which we should have supposed too tremendous to leave an interval for thought. But it by no means follows that the infliction of fatal violence is accompanied by a pang. From what is known of the first effect of gunshot wounds, it is probable that the impression is rather stunning than acute. Unless death is immediate, the pain is as varied as the nature of the injuries, and these are past counting up. But there is nothing singular in the dying sensations, though Lord Byron remarked the physiological peculiarity, that the expression is invariably that of languor, while in death from a stab, the countenance reflects the traits of natural character—of gentleness, or ferocity—to the last breath. Some of these cases are of interest, to show with what slight disturbance life may go on under mortal wound till it suddenly comes to a final stop. A foot soldier at Waterloo, pierced by a musket ball in the hip, begged water from a trooper who chanced to possess a canteen of beer. The wounded man drank, returned his heartiest thanks, mentioned that his regiment was nearly exterminated, and, having proceeded a dozen yards in his way to the rear, fell to the earth, and with one convulsive movement of his limbs concluded his career. "Yet his voice," says the trooper, who himself tells the story, "gave the smallest sign of weakness." Captain Basil Hall, who in his early youth was present at the Battle of Corunna, has singled out from the confusion which consigns to oblivion the woes and gallantry of war, another instance extremely similar, which occurred on that occasion. An old officer, who was shot in the head, arrived pale and faint at the temporary hospital, and begged the surgeon to look at his wounds, which were pronounced to be mortal. "Indeed I feared so," he responded with impeded utterance, "and yet I should like very much to live a little longer, if it were possible." He laid his sword on a stone at his side, "as gently," says Hall, "as if its steel had been turned to glass, and almost immediately sunk dead upon the turf."—*Quarterly Review*.

Singular Circumstance.

The following fact appears in a recent work by a physician:

A mother, who was uneasy about the health of a child who was out at nurse, dreamed that it had been buried alive. The horrid thought woke her; and she determined to set off for the place without a moment's delay. On her arrival she learned that after a sudden and short illness, the child had died, and had just then been buried. Half frantic from this intelligence, she insisted on the grave being opened, and the moment the coffin lid was raised she carried off the child in her arms. He still breathed, and maternal care restored him to life. The truth of this anecdote has been warranted—we have seen the child so wonderfully rescued—he is now, in 1843, a man in the prime of life, and filling an important post.

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

R. P. AMBLER, EDITOR.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., FEBRUARY 22, 1851.

NATURE AND REVELATION.

The popular expositors of Religion, in building up an exclusivism for themselves, are wont to speak of the "dim light of nature;" as though nature was something obscure, and unprofitable to investigate. Let us look, for a moment, at the charge implied in this expression,—that the canons of religious belief are sole and infallible guides for human conduct, and that all besides are unworthy of attention.

We readily admit that the law of God, or a just and true expression of the divine will and purpose concerning man, is the standard by which we are to be governed in the practical affairs of life. The question then is, what is the law of God, and how are we to discover it? What is the true, unalterable expression of the Divine Will, and how may we obtain assurance that our feet are grounded upon the rock of Truth?

We judge a person's character by his deeds,—we make his works an exposition of, and index to, his principles, tastes, and capacities. If we examine some work of Art, and find beauty, grace, and harmony there manifested, we readily and correctly infer that the author of this work, is, in mental constitution, one of refined sentiments and exalted sensibilities. And so if we examine some work of mechanical ingenuity, which, in its intricate, yet harmonious mechanism, and in its adaptation to accomplish the purposes for which it was intended, exhibits constructive skill and good powers of design, we conclude, with safety and certainty, that the originator, or inventor of the work, is a person possessed of good reasoning powers and mechanical skill.

From what has been said, we deduce this principle;—that all forms and effects are but outward embodiments, or expressions of interior, pre-existing and producing principles, or causes. For instance, in the case of the machine, it existed in *idea*, in the mind of the inventor, before its external or substantial construction, and hence the machine itself, from general principles to minute details, is an external representation of the previously existing internal mental conception. If, now, we wished to learn the character of the originator of this work, how could we better do it than by an inspection of this *evidence* of his ability, which is before us. If it displays a vast and complex system of mechanism, we would regard it as conclusive evidence of the possession of large and comprehensive powers of design by its author;—and the possession of an upright and benevolent, or perverted and vicious disposition, would be determined by ascertaining the uses for which the work was designed.

But we pass from a consideration of the author, to the machine itself. We are wishing to ascertain its design and degree of efficiency. And in trying to do so, we discover that by a certain application of the motive power, and combination of the different arrangements, it works harmoniously in all its parts, and just and benevolent ends are subserved; while a different arrangement results in disorder and confusion, and injurious effects are produced;—would we not conclude that in the first instance we had discovered the true design and degree of efficiency?

But now we have presented to us a written code of rules, purporting to have emanated from the author of the machine, and designed for its proper regulation. What degree of authority shall we allow to them? Evidently this:—If the written code enjoins an observance of the same rules which necessarily inhere in the constitution of the machine, and are essential to its proper regulation, then they should be received as worthy of observance. But in this event, be it observed, our respect is due, not to the written word, but to the *law*, of which this word is the mere expression. And no more respect is due to the law, when *thus* expressed, than would be if we had discovered it by the practical operation of the machine itself.

In the light of the principles established in these illustrative cases, let us determine the true revelation of the Divine Will, and the degree of estimation in which any written record is to be received.

It is evident, then, that all the works of creation are but transcripts, or outer manifestations of principles and designs previously existing in the mind of the Great Designer—the Deity. And it is apparent, too, that these works, being productions of the Great Mind, become external representations of the inward wisdom, power, and design—in one word, character of that mind. And, further, it is plain to us that the constitution of these works may be truthfully determined by ascertaining what functions they fulfill when working in their legitimate order and harmony. And these considerations enable us to determine the degree of authority which should be attached to any written code of laws purporting to be designed for the regulation and government of the works of Nature, including man, as the most exalted of those works. It is manifest, then, that these laws, to be worthy of our esteem and observance, must give expression to those principles which reason and experience teach us are inherent in the constitution of Nature. To illustrate: there is a scriptural precept enjoining us to be temperate in all things. If, now, the order of nature had connected health and happiness with *intemperance*, of what avail would have been a command enjoining its opposite? But when we find that temperance is essential to happiness—that it is inherent in the constitution of Nature—we then determine the value of the command, "be temperate in all things." It is a *law* to us—not because it is *commanded*, but because it is an expression of a principle having its foundation in nature. But if the sacred oracles had been silent on the subject, and the revelations of the physiologist had made it plain to us that temperance is the law of health and happiness, the truth *thus* imparted is as sacred, divine, and authoritative, as when it comes to us embalmed in the traditions of antiquity as a direct mandate miraculously descended from the Author of all.

And this principle is applicable to every reputed Divine command. If these commands are *adapted* to man,—that is, if they call into action any function or faculty of his nature—they are *right*, and the warrant for their righteousness is a "*thus saith Nature*." It is right because it *is*, and is in harmony and accordance with the eternal constitution of things. Is any command a law because it is *enacted*, or is it not enacted because it is law? Back of, and behind the written requirement must there not be a necessity for the law, and an adaptation to human capacity to obey? If there is not, it is not law to us. It cannot be, because it either falls short of, or transcends, our nature. If there is this necessity, this adaptation, then the written law is but an expression of the requirements of Nature.

And this is the conclusion of, and deduction from, our train of thought:—

"TRUTH IS DIVINE, *wher'er* it grows"—

as divine when announced by the poet, the philosopher, the statesman, the physician, as when declared by one who assumes to be "the servant and ambassador of God;" as *sacred* when promulgated by Zoroaster, Confucius, or Mahomet, as when it comes to us in the pages of the "Infallible Revealed Will of the Most High." Let the inquiry ever be, "What is truth?" And in the investigation and apprehension of that truth, we have seen that *Nature* must ever be recognized as the SUPREME AUTHORITY.

Ford du Lac, Wis. Feb. 1851.

C. J. A.

The Free Mind.

There is no more powerful agent operating on the world, than the mind that is free. This has been the presiding genius in all the social and moral revolutions of the earth. It has given weight to the character, energy to the spirit, and power to the voice of the Reformer. It has engaged in the mighty works of philanthropy and love, and has reared the glorious monuments of Truth on the dusty ruins of the Past. What, indeed, may not the free mind ultimately accomplish? As we already view its rapid march and witness the trophies of its power, how joyously may we anticipate that complete victory in which ignorance and error shall fade away!

R. P. A.

NOTES BY THE WAY-SIDE.

NUMBER THREE.

If by religion we mean the study of the laws of the entire universe—of all the laws that govern matter and spirit, then no science can be complete without it is built here upon, and no religion is true that divorces man from it. A true man, then, is one who is in true relations with all the laws by which he is governed—with God, Nature, and Man.

Experience gives us evenness and roundness of character, just as the pebble is rounded by the flowing of the stream.

A man's fall is proportionable to the height to which he may ascend. So the suffering we experience determines the capacity we have to enjoy. Nor is suffering a proof that God sustains any other relation to us than that of love. Rather is it a proof of His love, and the greater the suffering, the greater the proof. It is the consequence of disobedience, or being out of harmony with Him—it is the cord that connects us with Him, and by which we are bound to Him. Instead of suffering being the consequence of God banishing his children from Him, it is the voice by which He calls them back to himself, and the proof that "nothing can pluck us from his hands." It is in this way that He governs all things; but even this government we must look at, not on the small scale to which our thoughts are too frequently directed, but on the infinite scale of the entire universe, and from the center and perfections of His whole being.

Our thoughts are the result of the organization given us at our birth and our after culture. So far the Past is necessitated. Our responsibility consists prospectively. There is between us and God always a continual possibility, but a possibility bounded by law. We may make our Future, but in this way. In proportion as we are attracted to the beauty, the goodness and truth out of ourselves, in that proportion we throw open the door of our wills and put ourselves in a state of receptivity. But as light takes the color of the glass through which it is strained as it enters our dwellings, so does Truth take the hue of the medium through which it passes as it enters the soul. As man's purity and attainments are limited in a degree by his circumstances, it were wiser to have our minds illumined with a conception of what those circumstances should be, and a heart to see them established, rather than to build up a Church and State upon the false basis of unlimited individual responsibility, which is nothing less than divorcing man from God, Nature and every thing else, and consequently from all law—for if man is not governed by bad circumstances, he is not by good. He is the true friend of Progress and Religion, who acknowledges the influence of circumstances, and endeavors to make them subserve the true culture of thought and the divine life of the soul. Nor in what we just say, do we mean to deny the existence of what we call Will, or the spontaneous element of our natures. We only mean to assert the supremacy of Law.

We often long with impatience for our Ideal. Would it not be well if we more frequently asked ourselves if we were worthy of that Ideal, and remembered that we shall yet obtain what we labor for? Sometimes God thwarts us in our endeavors after an object, that when our characters are harmonized, He may give us greater glimpses of Himself and more worthy objects to possess.

We absorb from that which surrounds us, that which is most like ourselves, just as the flower appropriates the aroma to itself upon which it lives, and the reptiles that upon which they subsist. As the earth progresses its aromas improve, and the grosser beings and plants become extinct, and higher and more beautiful plants and beings make their appearance. With this fitness of things should we understand the relation the soul sustains to the body. A pure body always accompanies a beautiful soul. To defile the body with impure food, or otherwise, is to defile the soul. In this do we see the law of universal analogy, and here is the Poem of the Universe constantly repeated.

We must not allow ourselves to be governed by others' habits of thought, or the conventionalities of society, but acting from our own center, after having absorbed all the good we may find in them, to push them away as hindrances to our souls, just as the green shoot in the wood, absorbs all the nutriment of the leaves that cover the ground above them, and then pushes them away so gracefully with its tiny leaves, to make room for its own growth and flowering.

You have thought of love, but have you ever meditated upon Infinite Love? We say Infinite, but when we pronounce that word are we aware that we cannot literally even begin to grasp its meaning, or to understand the depth of the riches of that word? And yet we are the children of that Father,—the recipients of that Love.

Through an unbroken chain, link by link, may we trace our origin back to God himself. In this sense, we may say that all the Past has lived for us.

One of the great benefits to be derived from what is now generally called the New or Harmonial Philosophy, is the sympathy it establishes between us and all forms of outward Nature. We find we are a part of a great Whole, and wedded to every thing by a chain that links us to God and the Future, thus giving us and all things an importance in the scale of existence.

A life of mere obedience is far short of a life of attraction. It takes away the element of beauty, and robs us of the spontaneity of our being. It resembles an artificial channel, and not the beds that Nature forms in which for her streams to flow.

S. H. LLOYD.

The Dawn of Spiritual Science.

RANDOLPH, Feb. 7th, 1851.

BROTHER AMBLER:—The refreshing gales of summer, and the cooling drops of the mountain spring, are not now welcome visitors to the weary traveler, than your little "Messenger," to the famishing soul. Since its first appearance on my own table some six months since, I have truly lived a happier and better life;—hope has expanded, a calm joy has sweetened the solitude of my midnight reveries, and pearl-drops of Truth that gladden the spirit, are stirring up the fathomless fountains of Thought.

The world of mind, within the last half century, has been agitated and progressing through the mentality embraced in the several sciences, until it is prepared for a more glorious advent of Truth. Demonstrative Spirituality now, like light from the eternal throne, seeks to lead us onward, upward, and heavenward. The growing realities that make up the constituent elements of the new Philosophy are so vividly revealed, that it needs not that the reformer of this age should bow to the shrine of Biblical authority. Happily the age of martyrdom has passed by, and mankind now can bask in the sunlight of a Philosophy based on the rock of eternal Truth. Silently, though effectually, the seeds of science have been scattered on productive soil, and the gentle dews of heaven are bringing them fast forward into blooming flowers. Physiology teaches many practical facts; Phrenology enlarges the scene, opening to us a wider field and more expansive developments; Magnetism and Psychology overleap the whole, and introduce us to the spirit-home, and our own interior powers reveal to us the fact, that now we tread a holier pathway than sage, poet, or philosopher has ever conceived. Bright and beautiful is the prospect before us, and all may come to the bright abode of the spirit.

Cold and dismal doubts have for long ages harassed the souls of thousands of our race, and Materialism, with its incorporated doctrine of annihilation, has been the only solace of many a death-stricken brother. The pathway of ages past is traceable by its monuments of degrading forms and beliefs that have existed in the world since the time of Moses. Who is there that has traced this history of humanity to the dawn of the last fifty years, that has not reason to rejoice that his lot has been cast in the noonday of the nineteenth century? My own spirit passed

through the doubts, fears, and hopes that belong to all idolatrous worshipers, up to my twenty-second year; since that time it has gradually broken loose from the galling chains of modern Theology, and assimilated itself to the teachings of harmonious Nature.

In the emancipation of the race from error, Spurzheim, Combe and Fowler have done much, and with these, hosts of others might be named, worthy also of grateful remembrance, who have sought not honor, station, or rank, but have chosen rather to tread the humbler walks of life, looking forward with implicit faith to the glories of the spirit-land. These after all are the real benefactors. The mental giants, that rule with eloquence and sophistry millions of human beings, are of but little real advantage. One philanthropic Howard is of more real value to mankind, than the whole combination of talent in our American Congress as now used; and the "Constitution of Man" is priceless, compared with the mass of productions that fill the literary world. Let us have such men and such books—let mankind be rid of the effects of superstitious tradition, and the dawn of spiritual science would expand to a noon-tide glory, and humanity would bud and blossom as the rose.

Yet our present condition, though a sad one, is not without its balm. We have a few bright lights spreading the truth. Your own writings through the Messenger—Bro. Fernald, Brittan, and Davis, are startling all, and glowing prophecies are now ripening into demonstrative realities. The living and Christ-like teachings of to-day are the same that came from lips of the "Nazarene;"—a leaven is truly at work that will anon startle our world in all its length and breadth. My own stay upon the earth is probably short; still my hope and faith are strong that the elements of the Harmonial Philosophy are the ushering in of that "good time," for which mankind have so long hoped. I would like to possess talent and confidence to express some of my thoughts to the world in an audible manner. I know of a truth that the true spirit is encased within me, but feel that the flesh is indeed weak. Before many weeks I hope to see you face to face, and learn from your own lips and others something of the condition of our friends that are engaged in this good work.

Your brother in progress, T. S. S.

A Lesson of Divine Wisdom.

It is interesting and profitable to observe the perfect adaptation of everything around us to the condition and necessities of man. In the physical world there is a source of gratification for every reasonable desire, and an abundant supply for all the real demands of our being. If we hunger, the wide spread earth is filled with fruits to gratify our taste; or if we thirst, the sparkling streamlets flow in the retreats of Nature, and cooling springs gush up from the invisible depths. Every sense, also, is pleased with an appropriate object. There is light for the eye—in the glorious sun that reigns as monarch of the day, and in the twinkling orbs that spangle the evening sky. There are grateful odors for the smell;—when the morning air is scented with the breath of Nature, and fragrant exhalations from plants and flowers, are borne upon the zephyr's wing. There is music for the ear;—as the tiny songsters warble their notes of joy, as the flowing rivolet murmurs its plaintive song, and the still, low voices of Creation breathe to the soul its blissful harmony. So everything around is fair and attractive. The forms and colors that grace the fabric of Nature—the fresh verdure, the streaming light, and ethereal blue, are all possessed of an inherent beauty and harmony, by which they are adapted to the receptive sense.

This pleasing and beautiful adaptation may be traced still farther. Not only are the objects of the outward universe adapted to the powers of sense, but there is also a glorious beauty for the soul. As the spiritual senses become unfolded, and the interior faculties are brought forth to an appropriate action, it rejoices in the refined and sublimated beauties of the inner world. Each discovered want of the advancing spirit is abundantly supplied. If it hungers for the bread of righteousness, it is filled; if it thirsts for the springs of purity, it may drink and thirst no more. When groping in the gloom of error, the clear sunlight

of Truth bursts through the shadowing clouds; and when wandering in the dark wastes of earth, the true Eden of life is opened to the longing vision, where bloom the flowers of undying beauty. So, as it is also in the material world, every provision of a spiritual nature is precisely suited to the wants and condition of the soul. There is no lack of anything which is really needed on the one hand, nor is there a superabundance of that which is not needed on the other. A perfect correspondence is preserved between the inward desire and the means of its gratification; and the divine promise, founded on this correspondence, is given to all: "Seek and ye shall find."

The natural inference to be derived from this perfect adaptation, is that which would impress upon the mind the lesson of Divine Wisdom. In the wise and beautiful arrangements which are made in Nature for the gratification of human desire, we may see how little Chance can affect the government of the universe, while we may admire the infinite and unerring skill by which all things were created.

R. P. A.

Case of Mr. Gorden.

According to an account given in our last number, Mr. Gorden has been recently thrown by the spirits into a state of trance in which he remained about three days. At the expiration of this time he was restored to the normal condition; and the spirit which had been in the companionship of angels, was again brought to act in connection with the bodily frame. On regaining his outward consciousness, he could scarcely be made to believe that three days had passed, and the visions which had blessed his spirit in the deep sleep of the body, appeared to him only as the mere shadow of a dream. At first his physical system, in which several of the animal functions had been suspended, seemed to be somewhat weak and disordered; but in the course of a few hours he recovered his wonted vivacity and usual health. Though deprived of nourishment for so long a time, his appetite, instead of being inordinate as might be supposed, was even less keen than usual, and increased gradually as his strength returned. The trance of Mr. Gorden seemed to be wholly of a magnetic nature, being different from that produced by the action of disease, in which the vital forces become so greatly weakened as scarcely to retain the struggling soul. In his case, the physical organs were in a comparatively healthy state, and the tie uniting the soul to the body seemed not to be weakened, but extended. Hence while at times his body was thrown into a rigid and deathlike condition, in which the spirit could gain delightful views of the heavenly sphere, he at other times assumed a more natural appearance, and was enabled to give utterance to some of the blissful emotions by which he was moved. It will be interesting for our readers to learn, that the memory of what he saw in trance now comes to him in the magnetic state, and that the result of his interior investigation, will be given to the public.

R. P. A.

Capacity for Enjoyment.

The amount of enjoyment possessed by any individual, depends not so much on outward circumstances as on the inward capacity. One might be surrounded by all the pure pleasures which earth affords, and yet if the inward being were not suitably developed, he would be as unfitted for their just appreciation, as the blind man to gaze upon the light of heaven. The sordid, contracted soul can in the very nature of things enjoy but little;—it is not sufficiently unfolded to admit in any high degree, the spirit of happiness. On the other hand, the enlarged and expanded mind, in which the great law of progress has been active, is prepared for the reception of superior joys that ever flow from the life springs of the spirit. Thus the philosophers whose soul is enriched and cultivated with the stores of knowledge, may enjoy more than the savage in the wildness of his native home; and, on the same principle, the man whose thoughts and feelings are matured by age, has a greater capacity for enjoyment than the child at the dawning of its reason. We should be induced, therefore, to labor for the improvement and expansion of the spiritual powers, that the measure of happiness, may be correspondingly enlarged.

R. P. A.

Poetry.

GLIMPSSES OF THE SPIRIT LAND.—No. 7.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,
BY S. H. LLOYD.

THE SPIRIT'S WELCOME.

Welcome, sweet dweller from the earth,
Sweet welcome to these gates of Day;
Thy soul now has its second birth
And like a bird may soar away.

Welcome, the night of grief is o'er,
Of pain and strife and wasting care,
We here outlive each scar we bore,
And none have burdens here to bear.

For Thought and Play and Work and Love,
Go gaily walking hand in hand,
And in these fields of light above
They here go rhyming through the Land.

All sin and discord here must end,
And none exist except in dreams,
For here with God our spirits blend,—
And fountains purify their streams.

No night is here to mantle o'er,
Like some dark bird of brooding wing,
For joy here reigns forever more,
And hopes forever blossoming.

'Tis true, we look above and see
The Spheres as they encircling rise,
But then we know in harmony
Each field in sweet progression lies.

Of discontent we cherish none
As here we cast a glance afar,
But 'neath the splendors of our Sun
We journey on from star to star.

LOVE NEVER SLEEPS.

Love never sleeps! The mother's eye
Bends o'er her dying infant's bed;
And as she marks the moments fly,
While death creeps on with noiseless tread,
Faint and distress'd, she sits and weeps,
With beating heart! *Love never sleeps!*

Yet e'en that sad and fragile form
Forgets the tumult of her breast;
Despite the horrors of the storm,
O'erburden'd nature sinks to rest;
But o'er them both *another keeps*
His midnight watch—*Love never sleeps!*

Around—above—the angel bands
Stoop o'er the care-worn sons of men;
With pitying eyes, and eager hands
They raise the soul to hope again;
Free as the air, their pity sweeps
The storms of time! *Love never sleeps!*

And round—beneath—and over all,
O'er men and angels, earth and heaven,
A higher bends! The slightest call
Is answer'd, and relief is given:
In hours of wo, when sorrow steeps
The heart in pain—*He never sleeps!*

Oh! God of love! our eyes to thee,
Tired of the world's false radiance, turn!
And as we view thy purity
We feel our hearts within us burn;
Convinced, that in the lowest deeps
Of human ill—*Love never sleeps!*

Miscellaneous Department.

THE NOCTURNAL VISIT.

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 224.]

"Observe that light glimmering through those curtains from the chamber of the house on our left," said the god, halting for a moment in rapid course through the air, then swiftly descending toward a spacious mansion in a newly built quarter of the city. "In your mind it doubtless causes associations of study and intense application; let us enter and behold the employment of him, who, to so late an hour, prolongs his lucubrations." Hardly were the words uttered before they descended into a richly furnished apartment, with a canopied bed in one corner, and a fire burning brightly in the polished grate. Near it sat a young man, fashionably dressed, with his forehead resting on the palm of his left hand, and busily engaged in writing. Many newspapers and written documents lay scattered around, which from time to time he consulted, with feverish eagerness, then resumed his writing with renewed ardor.

The student watched him with admiration; "some future statesman," whispered he to his guide with enthusiasm, "some master-spirit, that with self-denying diligence and unremitting exertion, is silently but surely accumulating a store of knowledge and fund of deep research, that shall cause the possessor to shine forth, at no distant time, one of the luminaries of wisdom who guide our councils and adorn our land!"

"Suspend your judgment a while," said his conductor, with the same sarcastic smile which had before chilled the blood of the student. "I am content you should form your opinion from his words and actions; as yet you have seen nothing."

The young man here ceased writing, and seemed intent with reviewing his labors. Then he turned his chair toward the fire, and sat gazing upon its glowing coals with a lack-lustre eye, and countenance jaded by excitement and want of sleep. After remaining a few moments in this attitude, he rose, and going to a side table, filled a glass with wine, tossed it off with a hurried motion and returned to his seat.

"Cursed even chance, after all; no dependence can be put in the pedigrees, and the turn of a die will lose me ten thousand. I cannot hedge at this late hour; and if the news I received to-night of the southern filly be true, I'm dished, unless I can find some way to get out of the scrape. My betting-book is made up, and I was such an infernal flat as to show it to several who by this time have doubtless divided their pigeon among them. But it won't do—I will not be robbed in this barefaced manner. I'll be even with them. An honest man stands a poor chance among black-legs, and I will meet them in their own fashion."

Here he stopped, and the workings of his face showed the violence of the principles contending for mastery in his bosom.

"See," says the god, "what apologies he will offer for the first act of rascality. Hitherto, though addicted to the turf and a great loser, he has been honorable and bled freely, but his means diminish as his passion for the sport increases. You behold him at the crisis of his character. His good and evil genius are now striving for the mastery. A few moments will determine the issue. But listen.

"Is it not known that McGill lost five thousand to Dr. Nabitt through a bribe the doctor gave the groom?—and did not Martin Slip cheat the young Georgian out of a rice swamp on the Savannah, by winking to his jockey to loose his girth at starting, and showing him the face of a thousand dollar bill?—and shall I submit to be the prey of a set of sharpers, who laugh in their sleeves while they pocket my money? No! I'll be—if I do; they shall find their match, and I'll be revenged of them!" Saying this, he pushed his chair from him violently and walked furiously up and down the chamber.

"A burst of virtuous indignation!" muttered the god, "men never pity themselves so much as when on the point of becoming scoundrels. You perceive he fancies himself a much aggrieved and injured man. Now for his revenge."

The contest seemed over. The youth, with a pallid, haggard

face, from which all emotion seemed suddenly to have vanished, resented himself at the table, and opened his betting-book. "If I gain this race, I will never again try my fortune on the turf," he said, with the dogged resolution that is so often the excuse for the committal of the most disgraceful actions. "I will sell my stud, change my stables into barns, and keep but a gig and carriage. But if I lose this heat, I am a beggar for life." Here he rose from the table and hastily swallowed a second glass. "The groom of my adversary was once my servant. I know his character, and that he can be tempted to any thing by money. I'll send for him and induce him to administer a drug to the filly, or at least, to be away from his charge when another obtains admission to the stable and does the business. A hundred dollars, with a promise to take him into my service, will gain the fellow. Now for the letter to him. No! I will not commit myself, I'll see him to-morrow on the course, and then farewell to racing. What! past four o'clock!" cried he, pulling out a gold-chased watch. "The doctrine of chances, and the inspection of pedigrees make a late sitter." And he began to undress.

The god motioned the student to depart, and in company they rose into the clear morning air, where the guide thus addressed him: "That young man has just passed the rubicon; yet how soon, with all his ingenious precautions, will his knavery be discovered, and the world behold a name, which envy's self dared not assail with a breath of suspicion, banded from ear to ear by the trumpet-tongue of infamy! Like the ostrich, he has hid his head, and fancied his whole person concealed, but he will soon awake from his miserable delusion, and writhe beneath the taunts and insulting gibes of the very wretches whom he despised even in his humiliation!"

"We will now," said the god, "visit the dwelling of Mr. W——, the well-known rich merchant, and see if his slumbers be free from anxiety. His house is that spacious mansion to the northward." Hardly were the words uttered, before they alighted within the sleeping apartment of old Mr. W——. The furniture was very plain, without a superfluous article, and bore evidence of being in constant use. The room seemed very bare, from the want of hangings to the windows and bed, whose posts rose naked without curtains, and which was covered with a patch counterpane. But their attention was drawn to the occupant, an aged man with a bald head, except a few silver locks behind, giving him a venerable and prepossessing appearance. After beholding him a short time, the God touched him with his fore-finger.

"Robert, Robert!" cried he, in a querulous voice, "go and see if my broker has sold out the railroad stock—tell him to hold on. And don't say a word about the new will I made yesterday. Give me the key of the desk that contains it. My nephews think they know my will, dissipated dogs—they'll find themselves mistaken. That specie, too, in my closet—it must be taken to the bank to-morrow—dangerous—I'm afraid they suspect it—graceless scoundrels—sha'n't have a shilling."

Here the student's attention was attracted by a strange sound, as of one boring with an auger, and listening he detected voices in low converse without the door. His conductor gazed with a bitter, sardonic smile upon the aged sleeper, then pointing to the door, said, "This trusted Robert has informed the nephews of their uncle's plan, and you hear them in the act of forcing the door to get possession of the will, and murder the old man sleeping."

"Let us waken him and warn him of his danger," said the horrified student, obeying the natural impulse of the heart, as the sounds without became more and more audible, and the light of a lantern began to shine through a newly-made aperture in the door.

"Young man!" said his conductor in a severe tone, and with a look of awful majesty that awed his hearer to the inmost soul, "remember the object of this visit. You can but behold events, not alter or prevent them. Be wise and listen. The end is ordained in the decrees of a just Providence; nor is any deed, however dark and mysterious it may seem to mortal eyes, without its just recompense. And here, justice, though tardy, will be unerring.

"Take me hence," cried the youth, as the ruffians rushed into the chamber. The god seized his arm and they again mounted upward, as the foremost villain struck the old man a violent blow

upon the forehead with a loaded bludgeon, then sprung upon him and grasped his throat as he fell back stunned upon his pillow. A gurgling sound and a few almost inarticulate words were all they heard. "Henry!—spare!—my own!—oh God!"—

"We've done him—now for the will!"

The student trembled from head to foot. "Let me return again to my quiet home," said he, as they left far below them the scene of blood. "I am content with my lot, and no longer will indulge in bitter repinings. I blush for myself that I ever coveted the splendor and misery of the great." As he spoke they reached his home.

The youth turned to his celestial guide, but his garb and appearance were changed. No longer in the disguise he first wore, a radiant halo shone around his head, and a robe of light fell in graceful folds at his feet. The deity stood confessed, severe in awful beauty, and thus addressed the humbled student:

"Fortune is no divinity to the wise and resolute, though fools through her temples, and heap with sacrifices her altars. It is for yourself to determine whether your lot be cast in wealth or poverty; whether you shall be blazoned on the rolls of fame, or sink into the grave an obscure wretch, whose history is comprised in his birth and death. Then cease from unavailing regrets. Rise superior to chance, which afflicts only the timid, and its frowns will change to smiles. Enter with steady purpose upon an honorable pursuit, and you will find riches, and all the gifts I bestow, not meanly acquired or prodigally to be expended. Thus only can you retain an independence of feeling, coupled with decision of character and habits of intellectual exertion. Then will you acquire a mental superiority, and look down with contempt upon the creatures of accident, though their treasures outnumber the sands of the sea, and their names come down honored through a hundred generations."

The celestial visitant vanished, while at his departure a flood of light illuminated the narrow apartment, dazzling the eyes of the student with an excess of splendor, too strong for mortal gaze to endure. The youth started—and awoke—as the rising sun, just emerging above the horizon, shone full upon his face, through the opposite window. It was all a dream. Yet was it not without its power upon the heart of the imaginative sleeper. He arose a calmer and better man; and though but a dream, and unsubstantial as air, still the visions of that eventful night hung long like a spell over the solitary youth, repressing melancholy and inspiring to exertion.

Inordinate Ambition.

Alexander the Great is said to have wept because there were no more worlds for him to conquer. A little self-examination might have convinced him, that there *was* another world to conquer—a world within himself—a world of unhallowed passions, to the meanest of which he finally fell a victim! Yet he, in the zenith of his glory, and

Lord of the world, for other conquests sighed,
Himself the slave of anger, lust and pride.

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TERMS.—The SPIRIT MESSENGER will be issued every Saturday, by R. P. AMBLER, from his office in Elm Street, a few rods west of the Post Office, 2d story in Byers' building, directly under the office of the Hampden Post. Price of subscription \$2 per annum, payable in all cases in advance. For a remittance of \$10, six copies will be forwarded.

Printed for the Publisher, by G. W. WILSON, Book and Job Printer, corner Main and State Streets, Springfield, Mass.