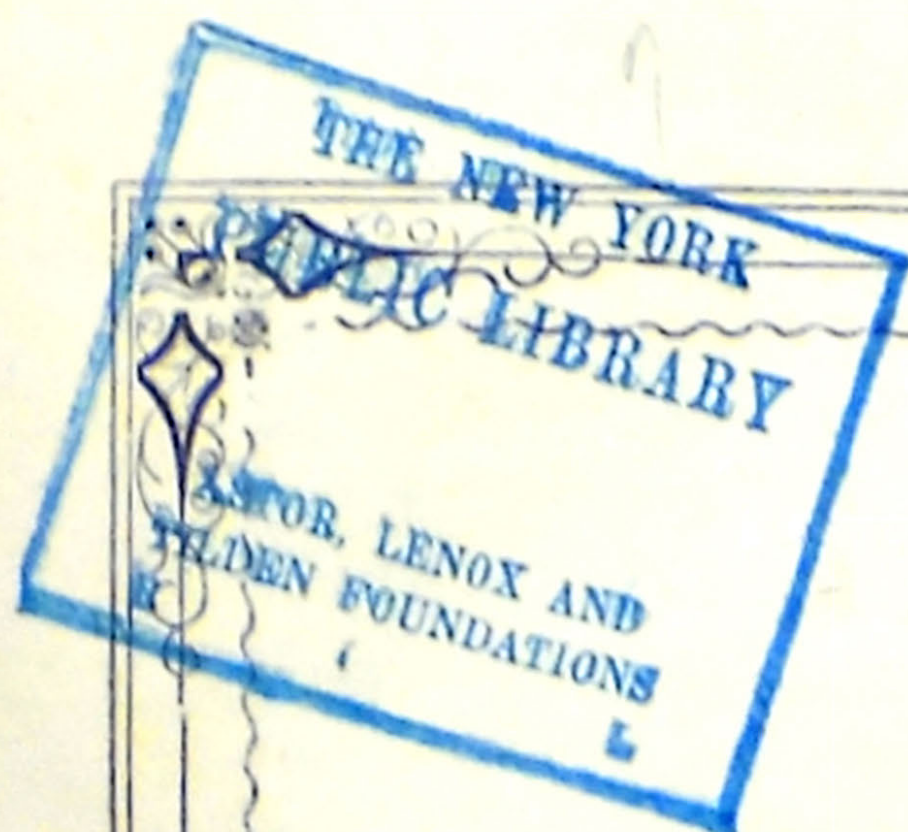


L. Drake



THE

SPIRIT MESSENGER;

A Semi-Monthly Magazine.

DEVOTED TO SPIRITUAL SCIENCE, THE ELUCIDATION OF
TRUTH, AND THE PROGRESS OF MIND.

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"The truth shall make you free." *Jesus.*

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THE TREASURE CELESTIAL.

BY J. K. INGALLS.

All possessions are attainments of the internal principle which is in man. Whatever he produces by personal effort, whatever he discovers by individual search, and whatever he appreciates by mental exertion, that is, discovers a use for, are to him legitimate treasures—life results. He has no other. He who produces nothing, is himself nothing, productively. He who discovers no thing, no truth, is nobody. — He who sees no use in the products of labor, in the discoveries of science, in the great and divine principles of truth, has neither physical, mental, nor moral wealth. Pearls cast before swine will be trod in dust as unconsciously as the rudest pebble. Not without the exercise of spiritual or internal forces can we create comforts or even enjoy them. To the savage, a bow and arrow and a string of beads, are more valuable than the most costly luxuries of the civilized; because his faculties and tastes have been developed precisely up to this point. They are his highest productions and estimations. These may look insignificant to us; but not more so than the attainments of the worldly wise appear to intelligent, spiritual minds. The glittering dust is prized by many, above all social harmony and sacred friendships. The internal forces, being concentrated upon this object, cannot be duly exercised on the promotion of right, peace and fraternal love. That is sensual, and is attainable by the development of the sensual forces aided by an active, but partially developed intellect. Talk to one who gives such aims the supremacy, of the projection of some humanitarian or social reform, and he will listen it may be, but it will be to discover whether *dividends* will be increased by the movement. He may even contribute to some professed benevolent object, yet in the end it will be found under the direction of Mammon. He may aid a missionary fund, calculating chances for the sale of an extra cargo of rum; or he may be president of some popular society for the temporal relief of the poor, rendered destitute by his extortions; for his interior may be sufficiently unfolded to appreciate and seek, if not the real, the external applause of mankind.

The internal faculties attach themselves to whatever they are able to produce, or put to uses suggested by wisdom to any extent possessed. And this *must be* the limit of their possessions. Within those limits of course the individual must move and live. Only till he has extended those limits, can he embrace the superior; and though there may be prophetic promptings which remind him that he is really fitted for higher attachments, and which gave rise to the sublime apothegm, that "attraction is proportionate to destiny"; yet that attraction is never, and can never be consummated in destiny, until the soul by toil, by search, and unfolding of wisdom, has created for itself a higher order of possessions. To the physically or mentally blind, there is no world of light. With all its vast possessions they can never, while in that condition, come in contact. Even though the eyes be opened and are confined to near and inferior objects, the great world of beauty is hid, as completely as though they were blind. Never until the determination of the *will power* elevates them, until the interior vision, (for it is not the eye which sees, that being a mere medium of sight,) is qualified to receive impressions, can any truthful conceptions be conveyed.

The mere visual organ is fashioned in all healthy persons nearly alike; we all see the same external form; but what different impressions are conveyed by the same scenes to different minds! The glory of day to one is inexpressible, to another its flowers, and verdure, and light-bathed landscapes—its ever varied hues and prospects, are tedious in detail and altogether unattractive. At night one sees an infinitude of worlds, rolling in undisturbed harmony through endless space—sees the imaginary lines of travel which they pursue, and reads the whole science of Astronomy at a glance, coupled with spiritual suggestions unspeakable and full of glory. Another complains that it is dark, and he can toil or scheme no more; does not listen if you attempt to explain to him any phenomena; or, taking a superstitious turn, like the old lady with Newton, he may contend that they are but *holes* in the drapery of night, through which God permits his glory to shine on the darkened minds of mortals.

The spirit makes its own what it can subdue to itself, what it can comprehend, what it can really *see* and *do*. There is not so much difference between comprehension and production as may be imagined; the one is mental, the other is physical, and yet the mental must precede the physical. No man can produce a thing till he knows the process, until indeed it has first existed in his mind. It is not without toil that this knowledge is acquired. Besides, what we call production is only a change of forms and combinations, not of essences and qualities.

The great store-house of Nature extends in infinite progression. We may make from its materials what we *can* and *will*. They are profusely,

gratuitously bestowed. It is only man's cupidity and injustice which monopolize the lower physical possessions; but through which indeed the higher are often to be sought, and upon which they frequently depend. Aside from this, however, there is no bar to possession, considered in its legitimate light. For that is no treasure, truly, to me, for which I have no need, however its want by a suffering brother—a want artificially created by the unnatural accumulations of avarice—may enhance its value to him. There are most unjust, arbitrary impediments in our present social system, which interfere with man's right to secure possessions, physical and mental, and of course moral and spiritual. These should and must be removed, ere society will be prosperous, in any such sense as to secure peace and safety to the whole, or liberty and the pursuit of happiness to the individual.

It cannot be too deeply impressed upon the minds of men, that all restrictions upon the natural and full attainment of all necessary means for subsistence, the pursuit of happiness, the development of the physical, mental, moral and spiritual powers, and the harmonious unfolding of all the native energies of the soul, are of human origin, misapprehension and wrong. In Nature all things are free and gladsome, it only being in human society, under the reign of Mammon, not of God, that one is doomed to slave out his life-energies, to provide for the luxuries of others.

But aside from social duties, where the same truths hold good and the same results follow, it becomes us to consider the relation the individual sustains to the attainments which properly belong to him, and especially the method of the soul's progress,—and this must ever be from the lower to the higher, as the general rule. Instances of apparent retrogression there may be, yet viewed with a closer scrutiny, it will only prove that the individual at one point has been over-estimated, and at the other has not been given credit for experiences, which are a sort of attainment, very dearly bought often, but then also serviceable. The young man of fortune, of learning, as many say of promise, becomes bankrupt in purse, in health and reputation! But what does all this prove? Not certainly that the order of nature has been reversed; but that with all his outward accomplishments, his heart has been attached to low and groveling objects of desire, and that socially he was then as far misplaced as now; for it seems to be a law that idol-worship only ceases with the destruction of the idol either really or in the estimation. When the former occurs, loneliness, bereavement and desolation are the result. When the latter, there is a forsaking of the lower for the higher; for as the mind is elevated to the conception and production of higher treasures, the hold upon the lower relaxes, and the heart shoots forth a higher order of tendrils which clasp and make their own the higher truth and the higher good. These then become

its most esteemed wealth. It is a subject of wonder with many good people, that any mortals should be so darkened in mind as to worship the idols they themselves have made. Yet the most credulous worshiper will tell you it is but an outward likeness of the Deity he has mentally conceived. Does not all worship partake of this character? The God you worship, and the *fetish* to which the poor African makes sacrifices, are no more different than your characters. He worships his highest conceptions of the divine; you do, and can do, no more. You are both, perhaps, culpable for sitting indolent, indifferent to the inward promptings to higher attainments and conceptions. Have you not in reality created a God in your own likeness? What is the evil in regard to it is, you have satisfied yourself with a personification of your first and rudest ideal. It is true that the omnipresent Deity resides not in particular forms, while it is through forms alone that we can be impressed with ideas of his perfection, the highest forms of which ever man has attained a conception, being to him a God, all he can know of God. The Polytheism of the Greeks, depraving as it ultimately became through undue attachments to old forms and things, was, in its history, nevertheless, instructive. They were conceived and decreed a place on Olympus, as the ideas of men were quickened by study or experience. Did men build a city?—they readily conceive it will be taken under the care of the deity corresponding to the motives which prompted them, and the mental or moral advancement they had made. They had a God of the field, of the vineyard, of the sea, as they emerged from the pastoral to the commercial life; then deities who presided over learning, the arts, music and all human attainments. Their idea of the perfectness of each and all being a perfect image of their ideal conceptions of perfection itself, to the refined, it was refined; to the gross, rude and undeveloped. It is so with us. Pursue a course which shall call out the internal workings of men's minds, and you will find no two who have precisely the same ideas of any but most obvious propositions, or things. Even external appearances will be pictured differently to them. How much more so the glimpses of the divine things, surrounded as we are by outward clothing, debarred by ancient authority and spiritual indolence from going up to grasp the heavenly treasures, which every advancing step would unfold to our vision. The spiritual and moral worlds are filled, as the physical, with endless resources, unfathomable mines of wealth, an infinite arcana of forces, which the soul who *knows* and *wills*, may make his own. The wonders of the steamboat, the rail car and the magnetic telegraph, are outward expressions of more subtle and powerful agents than steam or metallic electricity, which shall yet transport the spirit, and bring distant nations and peoples into mental communication, and array on harmonious principles a universal brotherhood, with individual purification and insight.

All that we prize as earthly wealth, we should bear in mind, is but the accumulation of evanescent forms, which are to be used, not preserved and embalmed in the human affections. This error and this alone is idolatry. And whether it is a bag of gold, a marble statue, or a traditionary impression cherished in the mind, the heart clinging to it allows no place to truths and elements of happiness, which should be garnered up in those ever higher forms, through which the spiritual essence of things seeks to reveal itself, and which is the only real and substantial riches.

Change irrevocable awaits every external form and thing. We cannot retain them if we would. The very form itself which brings us in contact with these sensual objects, will decay before they will, perhaps, and destroy forever our connection with them. The voice of Wisdom, then, whispers "Let the lower ever give place to the higher; submit to this law of change not as the greatest evil, but as the greatest good; in the place of mourning over the lost mementoes of past attainments, strive for the realization and ever-growing conceptions of more beautiful truth and more enduring good." For struggle as we may, the soul and these earth-idols must be severed. If they will not give place to objects of more exalted interest, the time must come when the idol will be destroyed, or the soul itself severed from its relation with all outward forms, and made to depend on its spiritual forces and attainments; for this is the uniform testimony of reason and intuition, that in reality, at all times, the true plane of enjoyment must correspond to that of thought and action, and that these are consecutively progressive in the history of all life.

A man must grow from infancy to virility as well in mind as in stature of body; as well in mental, moral, and spiritual attainments as in more physical and perishable accumulations. Even the more permanent and desirable physical attainments are gradually approached and appropriated. Should such an anomaly occur, of a child becoming a man in a day, it would speak little for the durability of his manhood. Fortuitous circumstances may place in the hands of one man inordinate stores of wealth. This, however, is no natural transition, often far from being advantageous to the individual himself. Were there a natural and equitable form of society, each individual would have even earthly possessions and wealth, according to what he was, what he knew, and what he did. There is no reasonable ground to believe that in spiritual attainments a similar law, a higher law indeed, does not pervade, which gives to every man according to his works; for though the form change, the spirit does not. It enters on its higher life, with its treasure of hoarded memories and loves; if these are of a spiritual nature, they minister to its happiness and growth, and constitute its everlasting life; if of an earthly, they draw it down to external things, to outer darkness.

It has ever been an object with me, to dissipate superstitious fears, especially of the future, because where they exist, the mind cannot be free to investigate the truth of things. Fear is timid, cowardly, as well as cruel. It bars the windows of the soul against the very light of heaven. Yet there *may* be an opposite extreme, a complete recklessness, which disregards the natural result and tendency of action. Be it known, then, that our wealth depends entirely on ourselves, whether it shall be little or great, be mere earthly and sensual, or a treasure of knowledge, of loved and holy memories, and interior growth of powers which shall grasp divine elements and control them for noble uses. Be it also remembered, that all forms must change, all earthly wealth fade away from the spirit in its upward destiny; and that however obstinately, blindly, the heart may cling to them, the idol must be thrown down, the silver cord be loosed, the golden bowl be broken. All dust shall return to the earth as it was, while the spirit, severed from its connection with external forms and things, must depend alone on its treasures of wisdom and goodness. The future life must begin where this ends, or there can be no future life. There may be new creations, the veriest sceptic never denied this; but life there cannot be for *you* and *me*, unless our spirits with what mental and moral treasures they may possess, shall pass from this sensuous to the higher condition, with all our identity of memory, thought and feeling.

Then, as now, shall the affections of the heart elevate or drag us downward, according as they have been placed on worthy or unworthy objects. If to the mind of the idolater you impart a higher conception of the divine, he will gladly withdraw his affections, and place them on some higher emblem; but if you break his image in pieces, show at once that it has no power and is only clay, wretchedness and despair would be the result. So, sever at once the sectarian from his creed, the worshiper of the letter of the Bible from his book, and with pitiful wailings they will tell you, you have taken all of hope. Take from the miser his gold, and he complains that you have robbed him of what he values more than life. The distress in each case, is caused by the loss of what was most highly valued by the affections. This being gone they *have* nothing left; and the heart must bleed, the spirit suffer. It is a painful, but necessary ordeal which severs man from his idols, else would his spirit ever be earth-bound, and fail to seek out its divine relations or unfold its celestial qualities. I feel this truth impressed upon my mind in burning characters, that painful is the separation of hearts and idols, and yet useful and salutary as painful. We may suppose, then, that the pious man, departing to the Spirit-world, most devoutly attached to the five points of Calvinism, or any other formulas, and who would not, indeed, be saved on any other plan of salvation, instead of coming into the celestial light will seek there as here,

to the exclusion of heavenly influences, for confirmations of his particular thesis. But he nowhere finds them. Forms, creeds and books have all passed away with his form; the treasures which have enchained the heart, were after all earthly, and he finds himself in a new land without resources, and without any foundation upon which to rest. The miser dies, and having ordered his secret stores to be arrayed before him, in his death-grasp he strives to bring nearer to his heart the glittering metal for which he has sacrificed soul and body. May not his spirit after the body has been decomposed hover still around the bank-vault, and the business-mart, where fortunes are made and lost? With all his affection for gold, he cannot find a grain; the object of his idolatry and worship has disappeared with the fleeting things of time and sense, and that terrible plague, poverty, which had been feared all his life, and had at last become a madness, is now realized. Of all earth's children who have passed this way, none so poor as he; and life must begin anew, the spiritual bankrupt commence, on the borders of another world, to labor for the treasures which should have been realized here.

It is a matter of infinite hope, however, to those who can comprehend, that whenever the soul begins to understand its true relations, and, by sad experience, having learned the futility of attaching itself to decaying and fleeting forms, sends forth aspirations for higher light and a diviner life, blessed influences are ever around the man, infinite treasures near him, *in him*; and that instruction more truthful and kind than any of earth, furnished by a social structure more harmonious, more loving, more just than ours, stands ever ready to usher him in, through those heavenly portals which shroud the divine realities, to celestial truth, and love, and joy.

VOICE OF NATURE.—Nature speaks to the soul which seeks her teachings. The lessons of wisdom flow down from the heights of Heaven, and are received into the bosom of the expanded spirit. It is good to draw near to the Divinity which lives in all the forms of the external world; it is good to hold communion with the Spirit which makes the life and beauty of the surrounding creation; it is good to seek the interior light and peace which descend in never-ceasing streams from the vortex of the Divine Soul. The pure in heart shall see God; because the soul whose essence of purity has been developed, comes into more intimate communion with Him from whom this essence proceeded. Therefore shall the spirits of mortals be truly blessed by being internally developed; and when by this means the inner being has been hallowed by the inspiring breath of the Parent-soul, it shall be the recipient of that joy and peace which are unspeakable and full of glory.

HEAVENLY REALITIES.

A VOICE OF WELCOME.

Changing things that once were fair,
Pass beneath the dismal shade;
Forms all-lovely perish where
The beautiful is born to fade.

Shadows stealing o'er the light,
Veil the smiles of earth in gloom;
Hopes and joys serenely bright,
Fill the measure of the tomb.

Voiceful streamlets in their flow,
Murmuring sadly to the ear,
Whisper ever, sweet and low,
Lessons of the sigh and tear.

Blooming flowers with gentle breath,
Droop and faint on Nature's breast;
Winds that chant the song of death,
Lull the changing form to rest.

Soul of earth, no longer bow
Where the crumbling altars fall,
Bring no more thy willing vow
Where the syren-voices call.

Angels sing their tuneful lay
In the bright and smiling sky;
Let them bear thy thoughts away,
Where the loved can never die.

Whispers soft as cherub's song —
Visions pure as morning light,
Bear the rising soul along
Far from shades of earthly night.

Streams of life shall bathe the brow,
Flowing through the darkness riven;
Fadeless joy is waiting now,
Tearful eyes are dried in heaven.

USE OF SPIRITUAL TRUTH.

BY R. P. AMBLER

All truth is possessed of a divine use. There is no principle of Nature which is utterly destitute of power; there is no reality in the Universe which is not endowed with a godlike nature, containing in itself the essence of enduring life. And all truth is one, united in all its parts and elements, and having a tendency to accomplish one grand design. The laws which operate in the material creation, are the outward expressions of more interior principles which have relation to the spiritual elements; and all external forms — the embodiments of life and beauty that fill the Universe, are but the representatives of unexplored truths that dwell in the deep heart of Nature. Thus there is manifested to the comprehensive view, a beautiful and unbroken system of truth, which embraces both the material and spiritual creations in its perfect and all-expanding fulness; and this mighty system of truth, in all its length and breadth and depth, has relation to the highest use which mortals can conceive, even as it proceeds from the infinite wisdom which no human thought can grasp.

But there is a special and higher department of truth, which has a direct reference to the end of human development and progress. I allude to the principles of spiritual philosophy which are being unfolded to the perceptions of expansive minds in the present age. In the novelty with which these principles are invested, the bearing and ultimate use of which they are possessed are not at once clearly discerned by the sensual mass; and hence it occurs that the inquiry is often made, of what use are all the truths and phenomena connected with the manifestations of spiritual presence? In replying to this inquiry, I will first remark that spiritual truth has had an influence to remove the false and perverting doctrines of men. For long ages in the past, the world has been the repository of creeds and theories, which are founded on the perversions of human reason and the errors of misdirected minds. These creeds and theories, becoming deeply impressed and rooted in the mind, were ultimately made the standard with which the merit of every thought was compared and tested. The beautiful realities of Nature were forgotten in the reverence for old sayings and dogmas which were allowed to supplant the simple teachings of Reason. Thus the human mind was weakened and restricted in its action; and though the great thoughts of the soul would sometimes break forth as gleams of heavenly light, they were at once crushed and buried beneath the accumulated errors of centuries. In this manner the race was retarded in its

progress, prevented from attaining the results towards which the innate desires of man naturally tend, and depressed with a thousand enslaving and superstitious fancies, that originated in the darkness of ignorance and bigotry. When the world was thus overshadowed with a mantle of gloom—when the noblest powers of the soul were weakened and suppressed, and when the glorious principles of Nature were buried beneath old creeds and theories, the dawn of freedom came to the enslaved spirit, in the flowing light of immortal truth—in the utterances of angelic love.

The blessing of spiritual presence has also inspired the soul with a faith in the endless life and progress of man. Dark and fearful were the thoughts of past generations. Immortality appeared as but a passing dream which the shadows of the grave might forever obscure. There dwelt in the human mind no certain prospect of a continued life, when death had stilled the pulsations of the heart. The speculations that were indulged with respect to the future existence, were all vague and dreamy as the shadows of twilight. No mind may realize the hopeless woe that came as darkness to the souls in which the light of the future was extinguished. The forms around which the most sacred affections were entwined, were borne to their silent rest; and beside the tomb where their dust reposed, there were tearful eyes and aching hearts that knew not the light of the immortal joy. And then beneath the weight of bitter anguish, with life's hopes and joys all crushed and withered, the poor mourners wandered in the paths of earth as amid a dismal waste. But the angels have visited those mourners in their despair. They have lifted up the faint and bleeding heart. They have breathed the inspiration of hope and faith. They have wiped the tears from weeping eyes, and bade the downcast soul look up to Heaven. Immortality has been demonstrated by the spiritual power; and the glorious destiny of man—a destiny whose greatness no earthly thought may embrace—has been thus shadowed to the soul.

With emotions of serene joy, the mortal may stand on the shores of the infinite sea, and look forth on its boundless bosom. Through all the depths of coming time leads the bright pathway of endless life, and up, far up, amid the ever-increasing light, where worlds on worlds of glory rise in their majestic order, the angels ascend to still higher states, forming the unbroken line of being through which the truth and wisdom of the Divinity are caused to flow. It is a great thing to feel the destiny that awaits the soul,—so grand, so exalted, so infinite! Turn thy view, O man, from the altars of earth, and worship in the courts of the celestial temple. Look before thee into the abyss of ages, and see the well-springs of thine exhaustless life; look above thee into the serene heights of Heaven, and read the lines of thine endless progress! What now appears the transient life of earth, compared with that measure of infinity which has no end?

The spirit is more mighty than all changing forms; it is more bright than the stars which shine in heaven; it is more beautiful than the flower that blooms in spring; and though it flickers as a trembling flame on the earthly altar, sending out its feeble scintillations amid the surrounding gloom, yet shall it glow with a new life and thrill with a joy unspeakable, as it ascends to breathe the light and love that fill the inner sanctuary of God.

Such are the revealments from the world of spirits—such the unfolding and influence of angelic thought. Can the soul which realizes its own dignity and destiny as thus revealed, ask again the use of spiritual truth? Rather let it yield to the influence which this truth is designed to exert, that it may thus be elevated in all its thoughts and conceptions—purified in all its motives and feelings. O blessed is the world while it is not yet wholly conscious of the blessing,—as the infant on its mother's bosom knows not the source of the life that swells its own! Yet it is a joy to see on the thirsting minds of earth, some feeble impression of the influence which spirits have long labored to exert. It is a joy to see that the great soul of humanity looks upward when the angels call—that the good, the true and the beautiful are made the objects of human labor, and that the faint gleamings of a more radiant Sphere, are thrilling in the hearts of men.

HYMNS OF NATURE.

BY FANNY GREEN.

EVENING.

Stoop gently down, O beautiful and holy Night! Let me lay my head upon thy bosom, and be still. Cover me with thy soft mantle of mists and shadows, that I may listen undisturbed. Let my spirit flow into thy spirit, and utter itself in the vesper song of Nature.

Day is for work. While the sun is high there is no proper repose for man, animal, or plant; for light excites all life into a constant tendency to action. But when the stimulant has exhausted its energy—when the frame is over-weary, and the soul hungers for a truer nutriment, Evening drops her fleecy curtain to hide the day and its labors, and Night comes to sing the sweet hymn of rest.

See the bright Flowers, like innocent children, that bow their young heads in prayer, and then lay themselves on their couches to rest; they fold up their petals, one by one, bending low on their stalks, to chant with fragrant breath the beautiful story of sleep. The Forest Leaves shake off the spell of Light, and bathe themselves with a thrill of joy, as it were a new sense of freedom, in the serene air.

Now one by one, and now in troops, the Stars appear ; and as they strike their golden wires to the majestic anthem of ages, they are fresh and youthful as when they first sang together, in the early morning of Time. And the responsive Moon, as she treads the clear-obscure, pours out from her full horn the silvery light, whose harmony touches not the ear, but infuses a sweet and pensive sadness into the listening soul.

The hived insects murmur not, for the song of the day is hushed in the impalpable melody of dreams ; and the Minstrel-Birds, while the tired wing is folded to rest, utter the more ethereal music of harmonious silence. The loving Dew, like a thought of prayer, tenderly touches every bending leaf and drooping flower ; and perfume, like an incense of true worship from a thousand altars, pervades the air. Who does not feel in all these a spiritual presence, as if they who have loved and left us were exhaling blessings, or angels were breathing on the world in copious streams of purity and peace.

But hark ! the Wind is up again ! and whatever it salutes catches the inspiration of its voice. It breathes on the acacia trees, and all the stirring leaves trip like the light feet of dancers to the melody that woke them ; and ere they sink down on their delicate foot-stalks, they touch their green lips together, with a good-night kiss. It chants a hymn of repose—of rest for the weary, and the foliage of the cottage-roof tree keeps time to the music that hushes and soothes, with the sweet freshness of its breath, the slumberers below. It walks with a prolonged and sonorous murmur through the green arches of the wood. It whistles with a keen echo over the sedges by the brook-side, and its shrill voice is yet more thrilling, as it runs along the sharp edges of the bending grass. It pours its gurgling melody into the voice of the singing brook, and comes with a greatness of sound that is felt rather than heard, from the swell of the distant sea. And are all these beautiful ministrations of no value, because they cannot be converted into coin ? Listen, O man, to the voice of thy own soul, and know that thy mission here is not alone to develop, and nurture, and pamper the body ; but every voice, and form, and expression, and thought of beauty is given to nourish thy more exalted nature, that it may grow into the character, and ascend into the fellowship of higher spirits, angels, and God.

Ere Morning shone on the gloom of chaos, or the perfection of the Universe became manifest in outward forms, an angel, born in the heart of Deity, breathed on the great deep. And lo ! beneath that breath, the gloom dissolved—light was diffused amid the darkness ; Beauty leaped forth to embrace its kindred Life, and Order shaped the rising forms of Nature. That angel was Love. It is still breathing on the wastes of life, and pours its blessing in the human heart.

PROGRESS OF RELIGION.

The annexed communication has been kindly furnished by Hon. J. W. Edmonds, this having been received by him through an interesting and reliable medium, by whom he has obtained numerous teachings from his spirit-friends of an elevated and truthful nature. As will be seen, the present message is designed to illustrate the spiritual and religious progress of the race, and will doubtless be perused with interest by the inquiring reader.

R. P. A.

Of the transmigratory period of man's existence we have no history at present. The development of mankind on the globe would be interesting to us, if we could understand it.

Men were originally of much greater size than at present, attaining to fifteen or nineteen feet; which will hereafter be proved by skeletons, and has in fact been already partially proved, although there are but few now in existence,—the period intervening having been so long that they have decayed and undergone many chemical changes.

And as the inhabitants were much larger and coarser, so the earth was much more rough and coarse. Fifteen hundred or two thousand years was the common period of life with them. All the animals as well as men which then inhabited the earth, lived much longer than at the present day, and were generally of much larger frame.

This is called the migratory period, for the reason that men were but a step above the beasts; reason did not have as much sway as the senses.

Near the time of which history gives no account, there were great organic changes in all that appertained to the earth, mankind and animals. There seemed to be a leveling of the surface, fitting it for beings of higher capacities and higher natures.

Our history, which is handed down to us in the bible, commences shortly after this period of the primitive age of reason, when reason began to assume a superior relation to the senses.

If we will reflect a moment on the past, we will at once perceive why Adam was thought to be perfect. Distance lends enchantment. The past is wrapped in mystery and ever apt to be magnified. It is not in the case of Adam that we perceive the only instance, but through all ages mankind are prone to revere the past—those who have been men like themselves, and deify them. Even to the present day not more than a hundred years will lend a glory which is not merited. And in the ages of ignorance and

superstition, men were wont more than at the present to deify that which they had not seen, but whose good qualities they had heard of. They seemed, as a matter of course, a matter of pride, to claim to have descended from those who had been perfect, and this is why almost every nation, which has a religion of its own, claims to have descended from the gods. Some are descendants of children on earth, some of children in the skies—all of some perfect Adam of beings.

Adam and Eve are represented as being the sole proprietors and inhabitants of the Eden of pleasure, and nothing was for them to do, but eat, drink and live, which, we know, is contragenial to the nature of man. The beasts eat, drink and die, and should man do no more than they while he claims a higher station, a superior intellect, what would be his use?

When the age of primitive reason began, then men began to understand a higher feeling. They began to feel there was a superior being who brought them into existence, who guided their ways, and who was to preside over them throughout their existence; and as they were not far progressed and were material in their views, gods which they could not see and feel were no gods to them. Therefore Fetishism arose. Men made to themselves idols—gods to worship. And yet they had a feeling that these were not the gods. They supposed there was something inhabiting their made gods who heard their prayers.

Their perceptions becoming greater, they perceived the absurdity of making gods of small blocks, and began to worship extended Nature—trees, rocks, and oceans, idols still pertaining to earth—terrestrial gods.

These were superseded by a still higher order of Fetishism, that of worshipping the sun, moon and stars, and this led men gradually into Polytheism or the state of ethics where laws and human rights began to be regarded.

The perceptions still became opened so that they perceived that there must be a God greater than the sun, moon, and stars, who was invisible. But it was incomprehensible, and not understanding the human mind, they supposed that there must be many different gods,—a god to preside over each different feeling, passion and occupation. Phoebus and Apollo were the gods of the bards, poets and artists; Neptune watched over the mariner. And different nations had their different gods presiding over the same occupations and arts, that were therefore to be at war with the gods of other nations. The constellations which we now behold as the work of one Positive Principle, were then worshiped as the god of the seasons. Then began the age of Priestdom.

Before the age of Fetishism, men had their conjurors and jugglers to interrogate their gods. Then they had their priests set apart to direct the state of ethics. For the mass having a feeling of unworthiness, perceiv-

ing their ignorance of the laws of nature, the most progressed among them gained the ascendancy and held the most despotic sway over other minds, because they understood more of the laws of nature than their fellows, and still had not enough of the spiritual principle about them to impart their knowledge, but as gained from the gods,—this being the strongest authority recognized by the human mind. For nothing is more eagerly sought for, than to ascertain whence we came and what shall be our future destiny. That, from the primitive age of reason, has been man's main inquiry.

Those priests knew that their power lay in the ignorance of their fellow beings, and their enlightenment in the laws of nature was warred against and violently opposed by them. But there were those among them who were friends to humanity, true philosophers, free inquirers, who in spite of bitter anathemas and horrid denunciations which would make the weak quail, and fear, and close their mouths, spoke out manfully.

TRUST OF THE SOUL.

The being which has its home in the depths of the human frame, loves the truth that there is no source of trust which is infallible but God and Nature. This truth has been received into the bosom of the spirit, because it is adapted to satisfy its wants, and conveys a sense of security and protection which is not felt in a reliance upon any human authority. There has been the victorious sword of conquerors—the powerful arm of the warrior—the strong magnetism of sparkling gold, and the love of fond and trusting hearts;—yet these have been no sources of a firm reliance which can be resorted to in the extremity of human weakness,—for the sword is brittle—the arm is frail—the gold is deceptive—the love is transient, when honor and fame have given place to poverty and seclusion. The trust of the soul is the trust which the soul feels when it realizes the perfection of God and the eternity of Nature. It is not a reliance on any thing external; it is not a faith in the monuments of human pride; it is not a blind and irrational confidence in the doctrines of any earthly book or teacher. But the true trust which is alone worthy of the spirit, is that which results from an appreciation and acknowledgment of those truths which have their birth in the bosom of the Eternal, and flow up from the deep well-springs of the Universe.

The soul should rely only on that which is eternal as itself. It should not repose confidence in the weak and fading things of the lower world—in the books which are written by human wisdom—in the sermons which are preached by the ministers of the sanctuary, or in the authority which is claimed by the established Church. Let the soul lean upon nothing which will serve to dampen its energies or destroy its powers; let it not be so de-

sirous of rest as to trust to a broken reed, but let it put confidence in the right, the true and the good, believing that the internal is the real and that wisdom is not born of earth.

R. P. A.

GEMS OF SPIRIT-THOUGHT.

Time has no beginning and no end. Infinity on infinity bears the soul back into the depths of the past, while eternity on eternity, in an interminable series, carries it far away into the bosom of the future. Hence there is no time when God began to exist; and there shall be no time when his dominion shall pass away; for He is an inhabitant of that soul-lit infinity which fills the expanse of unending ages. It is well that the soul can reverence what it cannot conceive, else would the boundlessness of endless time fail to make its impress there; but it is better that the soul should become inwardly expanded, that while it wonders and adores, the great immensity of creative Life may be mirrored in its depths.

The human soul may be likened to a flower. It contains the germ of inward life which unfolds beneath the gentle breath of Heaven. The flower should not be placed in the cold and dark where it would be chilled and withered, but it should be caused to unfold with the aid of the congenial influences which are seen in the sunlight and the dew. So the soul should not be confined in the dreary prison-house of Materialism where all its noblest powers are suppressed and stunted, but it should be placed beneath the light of truth and the still breathings of wisdom, whose power is felt by immortal beings in the development and expansion of their inner nature.

The Divinity is related to every spirit in the Universe. There is a direct and unbroken line of being which extends from the feeblest soul-spark in the human form to the Vortex of infinite and all-pervading light. As to locality the Deity is near to his most humble child; as to essence He is related to every soul by an indestructible affinity; but as to degree of perfection, He stands alone amid the infinitude of beings that throng his Temple, breathing down the influences of love and wisdom through the unnumbered spheres of celestial life.

The beautiful of earth decays, and mortals weep. Yet the tear-drops which fall as the offering of affection, rise invisibly to Heaven as a libation unto God. For sorrow cleanses and purifies the heart by the very tears which she causes to flow, and from the depths of humiliation and despair she elevates the soul unto a communion with angels.

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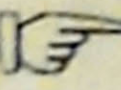
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