

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

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

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The Principles of Nature.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF THE UNIVERSE.

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,
BY W. M. FERNALD.

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 83.]

Now, it is only the Christianity of the Universe that is applicable to this world of sin and suffering. As well might the planets, supposing them conscious, set about to find some mystery of religion or faith, wherewith to preserve and perpetuate their order, as for man to suppose his highest good connected with any specialty aside from the progress of everlasting law. Planets, plants, and animals, are men in embryo. And what a scene would present itself, in a convocation of animate and inanimate nature, not recognizing gravitation, chemical affinity, capillary attraction, and the electric and magnetic influences, as their supreme laws and highest influences, but setting out to find some higher and sublimer thing wherewith to dignify their nature! So, from a point of view above the church, seemeth human nature, in its attachments to things out of and beyond itself, and to things not naturally connected with it. Our fellow-man is our associate planet. The human family is the higher nature. The laws of our being are *moral gravitation*, and all kinds of finer and spiritual affinities. What we want is, to make men feel their natures. Every attempt to divert them from this end, is fraught with evil. Men will never love one another, associate on terms of justice and harmony, make it their highest aim to seek out and remove the miseries of the world, till they feel this simple attraction. Teach man that he is a part of a connected whole, and that nothing else concerns him, and assuredly he will go about seeking his place. Convince all men so, and the work of their unity and harmony is everywhere commenced. Human charities and little goodnesses would spring up like grass. On the contrary, teach them to rely on some specialty out of and above the race, — some great thing done once, and done forever, of which Nature can render no account, and you strike them with moral paralysis. You bewilder them. They wait, then, for that great thing. They rely on it for unreasonable aid.

We must consider ourselves parts of the Universe. Then, with the human organism for an individual example, and the law of progression for the basis of faith, we may conceive for this world a diviner order than has ever entered into the imagination of man. It is for the want of such a whole faith, — of a Christianity which casts the whole of Judea in the shade, that the world is so miserably divided.

"Jesus, there is no dearer name than thine,
Which Time has blazoned on his mighty scroll;
No wreaths nor garlands ever did entwine
So fair a temple of so vast a soul.

* * * * *
Once on the earth wert thou, before men's eyes,
That did not half thy beauteous brightness see,
E'en as the emmet does not read the skies,
Nor our weak orbs look through immensity."

But before the telescope was invented, Nature was contracted to the visible arch which bounds our human vision. Why should we suppose the Infinite capable of producing no higher results than *individual* suns and stars? It requires a more comprehensive thought, — a vaster and more philosophical mind, — a wisdom, in short, equal to the love which was manifested in Jesus, to embrace the material and spiritual Universe, to found absolute and rigid unity, to connect all spheres here and there, and declare for the human race, as a part of the great harmony and happiness not yet embraced in any thought

A mighty genius has made a near approach to it, but no approximations yet realized can declare for us what the everlasting heavens have in store for us.

The Christianity of the world, in its best estate, is a partial affair; not the wholeness of nature. Our God is set before us as an unphilosophical, chimerical being, to bewilder the imagination and divide the mind; and, in fact, as the foundation of all theoretical confusion. Our religion, for the most part, is mere formalism, while Nature throughout, in all science, society, and all beautiful affections, groans for deliverance. Why is it that we so frequently feel, even in our best estate, with all outward comforts, and all inward advantages which can possibly be derived, — why is it, in short, that the happiest of human kind so frequently feel the sorrows of discontent, and sigh for change and escape? It is a prophecy of the human soul for higher and more perfect harmony. It is, indeed, a great truth, that while a spiritual Christianity, a reciprocity of love among the human family, is the highest and most godlike attainment, yet this can never be attained without the previous and inferior harmonies being established as its basis. It was necessary first, that the fires should cease their raging on the surface of the liquid earth, before the crystal beauties of the mineral world could appear; and through every stage of the upward progress of nature, the higher organisms are only able to manifest themselves by the ruder and previous creations preparing the conditions of the higher harmonies. So, precisely, in this great world of tumultuous humanity. A Christianity, or a divine attraction and law of unity that is most true and systematic, will begin at the lowest first. Christ himself began here, and his sympathy for the "common people," the poor and the despised, gained for him some of the sharpest persecutions which he met with. Now he who would contemplate a true and fundamental reform, must take his lessons from Nature. The lower kingdoms are the foundations of the higher. And how impossible it is to realize a high-toned spirituality and general love among men mutually dependent, while the lower strata of society, — those who are at hard labor and those who produce all the wealth of the higher, have to support this immense burden which our civilization lays upon them? Always the poorest, and always submitted to the mountain loads of monopoly and riches which they have no control of, they are subject to a thousand necessary evils in the shape of want, ignorance, sickness, discontent, hatred of the wealthy classes; and with the same eternal principles implanted in their natures, of aspiration, hope, ambition, and a love of wealth and comfort, they thus exist as an under stratum of fiery and impulsive elements, which makes it impossible for the upper classes to enjoy that peace, and reciprocate that love, which should bless all classes in a true and orderly society. Now, here is a world of interests which need attention and rectification before any very great Christianity can exist among mankind at large. In fact, while in reference to our world, in connection with the central energies of the Infinite Mind, the spiritual exists before the material, in reference to our world alone, the material exists before the spiritual. We have earth before man, and though the germ of the spirit exists before the body, and develops the body, yet how closely connected are the two, and what a basis for spiritual development is the physical organism of every man! Christians generally, upon the assumption of independent spiritual power, there is no such independence, the confusion existing at the material relations, — in destitution, struggle, and despair of the whole world, and prevents heaven amongst us. We cannot, as that of Jesus, Oberlin, in all countries, the object

of which is to elevate the depressed and vindicate the rights of labor, is the spirit of God in Nature more beautifully manifested than in all churches which can only declare what should be and must be, but take no part and know not how to, in helping on this great world-movement.

Let any thoughtful, unprejudiced man, walk about the streets of one of our cities. What spectacles of misery meet him on every hand! What dread inequality and confusion! Here a splendid mansion, there a miserable hovel; here wealth in all its gay attire, there haggard poverty sitting at the corners and on the door-steps, and woman's nature brought to this miserable pitch! Three hundred little vagrant girls in Boston! This the foundation of future generations of humanity! Should one mourn when a child dies in such circumstances, or when whole hundreds of starving emigrants are swept from a hard race who knew not how to appreciate them, and are received into higher spheres where they are cared for by loving angels, instructed, and passed to their proper places in God's orderly heavens?

But what can the Christianity of the church do for this? Experience has taught that it can do nothing. Nor can society in its present state do any thing. Small attempts and temporary reliefs only go to augment the evil to future occasions, by postponing the consideration and appliance of the only remedy within the power of Nature. Indeed, I would not say that private charities and institutions for relief are not to be encouraged; but if men were not church-blinded, and I almost said, Christianity-blinded, would they not open their eyes upon grander principles than the Bible contains, and appreciate something of the universal harmonies? Is there not a Christianity of the Universe? The Bible does not pretend to meet this problem. It groans in prophecy of better times, — of a day when righteousness and unity and universal blessing shall prevail, and the Sun of Love shines out from it for all. But our *natural* sun cannot send its rays into darkened enclosures, shut out from the common air of heaven, — into under-ground habitations, and places of misery, dungeons of the poor, where disease is begotten, and crime and ignorance go hand in hand. Nor can heaven's spiritual sun shine into darkened understandings, and warm into life and love souls cased in bodies so wretchedly deformed, and whose very elements are confusion and sin.

And yet it seems a hopeless waiting for any very general and systematic attempt to promote the harmony of the human race. One thing, however, we may say. The renunciation of a religion not at one with the everlasting laws and processes of the universe, is necessary among all nations, in order for them to see more human and wider interests than the prevalent religion will at this day allow them to. For it is too evident that the contemplation of spiritual interests, apart from sound material conditions, is a main obstacle to the realization of a better state. Christ himself, among the lepers, the paralytics, the lame and the blind, is an example for us. He looked after men's physical condition. He was a Physician of both body and soul; while the poorer and lower classes received ever the first of his attention. But popular christianity is a system of spiritual means almost entirely; and with little or no philosophy of spiritual causes and conditions. God forbid that we should disparage spiritual things, which are ever the highest, but when we see that we can never attain to them without good material foundations, and moreover that the only sin we have to encounter is a confusion of human relations, and that a million of worldly interests, chiefly among the laboring classes, need attention as the basis of an entire superstructure of an improved and renovated society, we must say that we have little patience with the religion of Christendom. Grant that it is the highest; still nature is progressive. And there is not enough, truly, of reason and righteousness in the church at this day, to save it from overthrow by the spirit-forces of humanity which are gathering outside of it.

Now, therefore, we say, men must renounce all attachment to a speciality of religion which is set above natural and spiritual law established unchangeably in the universe, before they can expand in thought to the embrace of universal interests. It is not saying too much, to say that the christianity of Christendom is the greatest obstruction to the advancement of Christendom.

For the christianity of Christendom is not the christianity of Christ, nor of the Universe. Men are neglecting the present world for the future, and preaching perfections not possible to be realized only on good outward conditions. Moreover, there is very little legislation, very little preaching for the most oppressed portions of human society. A general disorder reigns among all classes and conditions of men, and that which is accomplished for the benefit of mankind is accomplished through sacrifices and struggles, at an expenditure of means only required by the disunity and opposition of interests, which a non-realization of the divine law of Association perpetuates amongst us.

Now then, the christianity of all worlds is nothing less or more than this great Principle of Association. By it the worlds and all elements, and the spirits of heaven, are circling round the Throne and Center of Infinite Power, and the human races of all earths must be redeemed by this Principle. Wherever it begins, you see it operating like a Christ. It seeks out the lower first. It comes among the poor of Paris, the laborious and most oppressed of the civilized cities of the world, and unites them by a necessary attraction around the principle of co-operative labor. It springs up here in our midst, through much struggle, and commences a work which no human foresight can tell the triumph of, among the most obscure of our people. The country generally, in its freest sections, is awake and moving at this call of co-operative labor. It is the watch-word of glory and success to labor. Soon associations will be formed on wider and more embracing principles. Many interests will be represented in one combination. These combinations will affect the markets of competition and monopoly. Others will be obliged to fall in. Gradually and by nature will this principle penetrate into all business, and in the end, not without much strife and struggle, the balance between labor and capital will be struck, and haggard poverty be marching from the earth. When outward conditions are fulfilled, then spiritual realities will operate of necessity. The highest nature cannot always suffer, or be postponed for the calls of sense; the drags and weights being lifted from humanity, the soul will rise of its own tendencies, and the redemption of the body shall be the redemption of the soul.

What though the grand triumph, all the world round, be far distant in the ages? We commence this kingdom now. And the divine order of earth shall be responded to by the divine order in heaven, and it shall be proved at last that God is the Great Associator of all worlds and all beings upon these worlds, and that christianity was but a germ of the same great movement, to be perfected and systematized by the combined wisdom of mankind.

Outward association is typical of inward association—the gravitation of bodies, of the gravitation of minds. And Love, at last, will have sought and found its own, in all holy marriages, friendships, attachments, and perform its duties with alacrity and delight. Nature will shine with a renewed lustre, reflecting the harmonies of every soul, and a rejoicing earth teeming with luxuriance and plenty for all, chime in with a rejoicing heaven, and the prayers of Christ shall be answered.

“How long, Almighty, oh! how long,
Shall this bright hour delay?”

An eloquent author remarks as follows:—“I cannot believe that earth is man's abiding place. It cannot be that our life is cast upon the ocean of eternity, to float for a moment upon its waves and sink into nothingness! Else why is it that the glorious aspirations which leap like angels from the temple of our heart, are forever wandering about unsatisfied? Why is it that the stars who hold their festival around the midnight throne, are set above the grasp of our limited faculties, forever mocking us with their unapproachable glory! And finally, why is it that bright forms of human beauty are presented to our view, and then taken from us, leaving the thousand streams of our affections to flow back in Alpine torrents upon our hearts! We are born for a higher destiny than that of earth; there is a realm where the rainbow never fades—where the stars will spread out before us, like the islands that slumber in the ocean; and where the beings that pass before us like shadows, will stay in our presence forever!”



Psychological Department.

APPARITIONS.

It is well known that there are numerous instances on record in which the forms of departed friends have appeared to the view of their earthly kindred. Such facts have usually been explained by supposing a derangement of the visual organs, or a spectral illusion produced by the influence of previous impressions. While, however, we are not disposed to question the propriety of this explanation, in certain cases, it seems evident that the phenomenon referred to sometimes occurs under circumstances which appear to preclude any idea of fancy or illusion. A few instances of this character, which we extract from the "Night Side of Nature," may not be uninteresting to our readers.

"A lady with her child embarked on board a vessel for Jamaica, for the purpose of visiting her friends in England, leaving her husband behind her quite well. It was a sailing packet, and they had been some time at sea, when one evening, while the child was kneeling before her, saying his prayers previous to going to rest, he suddenly said; "Mamma, papa!" "Nonsense, my dear," the mother answered, "you know your papa is not here!"—"He is indeed, mamma," returned the child, "he is looking at us now." Nor could she convince him to the contrary. When she went on deck, she mentioned the circumstance to the captain, who thought it so strange, that he said he would note down the date of the occurrence. The lady begged him not to do so, saying it was attaching a significance to it which would make her miserable. He did it, however; and, shortly after her arrival in England, she learned that her husband had died exactly at that period."

"A Mr. B——, with whom I am acquainted, informed me that some years ago, he lost two children. There was an interval of two years between their deaths; and about as long a period had elapsed since the decease of the second, when the circumstance I am about to relate took place. It may be conceived that at that distance of time, however vivid the impression had been at first, it had considerably faded from the mind of a man engaged in business; and he assures me that, on the night this event occurred, he was not thinking of the children at all; he was, moreover, perfectly well, and had neither eaten nor drunk anything unusual, nor abstained from eating or drinking anything to which he was accustomed. He was therefore in his normal state; when shortly after he had laid down in bed, and before he had fallen asleep, he heard the voice of one of the children say, — 'Papa, — papa!'

"'Do you hear that!' he said to his wife, who lay beside him; 'I hear Archy calling me, as plain as ever I heard him in my life!'

"'Nonsense!' returned the lady; 'you are fancying it.'

"But presently he again heard, — 'Papa, — papa!' and now both voices spoke. Upon which, — exclaiming, 'I can stand this no longer,' — he started up, and, drawing back the curtains, saw both children in their night-dresses, standing near the bed. He immediately jumped out; whereupon they retreated slowly, and with their faces toward him, to the window, where they disappeared."

"A lady, with whom I am acquainted, was on her way to India; when near the end of her voyage, she was one night awakened by a rustling in her cabin, and a consciousness that there was something hovering about her. She sat up, and saw a bluish, cloudy form moving away! but persuading herself it must be fancy, she addressed herself again to sleep; but as soon as she lay down, she both heard and felt the same thing; it seemed to her as if this cloudy form hung over and enveloped her. Overcome with horror, she screamed. The cloud then moved away, assuming distinctly a human shape. The people about her naturally persuaded her that she had been dreaming; and she wished to think so; but when she arrived in India, the first thing she heard was, that a very particular friend had come down to Calcutta to be ready to receive her on her landing, but

that he had been taken ill and died, saying he only wished to live to see his old friend once more. He had expired on the night she saw the shadowy form in her room."

"A remarkable instance of anxiety for the welfare of those left behind, is exhibited in the following story, which I received from a member of the family concerned: Mrs. R——, a lady very well connected, lost her husband when in the prime of life, and found herself with fourteen children, unprovided for. The overwhelming nature of the calamity depressed her energies to such a degree as to render her incapable of those exertions which could alone redeem them from ruin. The flood of misfortune seemed too strong for her, and she yielded to it without resistance. She had thus given way to despondency some time, when one day, as she was sitting alone, the door opened, and her mother, who had been a considerable time dead, entered the room and addressed her, reproving her for this weak indulgence of useless sorrow, and bidding her exert herself for the sake of her children. From that period she threw off the depression, set actively to work to promote the fortunes of her family, and succeeded so well that they ultimately emerged from all their difficulties."

In relation to appearances of this kind which have been usually termed "Apparitions," Mrs. Crowe has the following remarks: —

"If it be true, that, by some law of nature, departed souls occasionally revisit the earth, we may be quite certain that it was intended that we should know it, and that the law is to some good end; for no law of God can be purposeless or mischievous; and is it conceivable that we should say we will not know it, because it is disagreeable to us? Is not this very like saying, 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die!' and yet refusing to inquire what is to become of us when we do die? refusing to avail ourselves of that demonstrative proof which God has mercifully placed within our reach? And with all this obstinacy, people do not get rid of the apprehension; they go on struggling against it, and keeping it down by argument and reason; but there are very few persons indeed, men or women, who, when placed in a situation calculated to suggest the idea, do not feel the intuitive conviction striving within them. In the ordinary circumstances of life, nobody suffers from this terror; in the extraordinary ones, I find the professed disbelievers not much better off than the believers. Not long ago, I heard a lady expressing the great alarm she should have felt, had she been exposed to spend a whole night on Ben Lomond, as Margaret Fuller, the American authoress, did lately; 'for,' said she, 'though I don't believe in ghosts, I should have been dreadfully afraid of seeing one then!'"

A Presentiment Realized.

The Merthyr journals relate an instance of presentiment experienced, in which the measures taken to guard against its realization led indirectly to the unfortunate consummation. A working man at Merthyr three nights experienced dreams in which sorrow was caused by injury to his only child, an interesting boy five years of age. Impressed, he, in order to relieve his forboding, wrote to his wife, then with the child at Newport, desiring her to return, and particularly cautioning her to avoid danger. Accordingly she settled her affairs, packed up her goods, and, when on the point of departure, went to bid her neighbors good bye, accompanied by her little boy. While at the house of one, taking some refreshment, the child stole out and ran off, saying to a woman in the street he was "going to say good bye to Johnny," who had been his playmate. Nothing more was heard or seen of him alive. He was afterwards taken quite dead out of the canal, into which in his haste, he had fallen. The anguish of the mother and the grief of the father can be but faintly imagined.—*Liverpool Mercury*.

Beauty, as the flowering blossom, soon fades; but the divine excellency of the mind, like the medicinal virtues of the plant, remain in it, when all those charms are withered.

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

APULLOS MUNN AND R. P. AMBLER, EDITORS.

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CHARACTER OF THE FUTURE LIFE.

While the idea of a future life has prevailed extensively in almost all ages and among all nations, various and contradictory opinions have been entertained in regard to the *character* of that life. This point, lying beyond the limits of sensuous observation, has been arrived at by the aid of analogical reasonings and the influence of ancient traditions; and it is observable that the different shades of opinion which have existed in respect to this, have usually corresponded with the degrees of intellectual development, and the peculiarities of taste, temperament and constitution. The rude and uncultivated inhabitants of the wilderness, having their thoughts confined chiefly to external objects, and appreciating only the delights of the outward sense, naturally regard the spirit-land as affording the varied pleasures suited to their peculiar taste, presenting to their view wide spread forests, limpid streams, and beautiful hunting grounds, where they may continue to pursue their accustomed avocations. Another class of individuals, in whose constitution the grosser and more sensual faculties predominate, and who have no true conception of the principle of divine justice, imagine that the future life will unfold the lights and shades of their own unbalanced natures, presenting on the one hand a Heaven of slothful ease, whose streets are paved with burnished gold, and on the other a Hell of unceasing misery, where the banished soul shall dwell forever,

"Burning continually, yet unconsumed,
Dying perpetually, yet never dead."

Thus different conceptions have existed respecting the future life, which, as they correspond to the several stages of intellectual development, are usually indicative of the spiritual condition of the people among which they prevail.

These conceptions clearly represent the abortive efforts of the soul to catch a glimpse of the celestial life, and obtain an understanding of its future condition. A veil of darkness has obscured the interior perceptions as they have reached forth to the higher sphere. It is true that poets and philosophers have beheld bright visions of the future, and roamed in fancy over the fields of Elysium, but no satisfactory evidences have been presented to impart a definite and rational faith. Even the volume which is supposed to contain a special and sufficient revelation, furnishes no real elucidation of this subject. Admitting that the Scriptures contain reliable evidence of the fact of immortality, there is little or nothing to be found here which affords any distinct conception of the condition of the departed spirit. But the earnest longing of the soul for knowledge on this great subject, was not to remain entirely ungratified. In the continued progress of the human mind, and especially in the developments of the present age, the world is furnished with more expanded and truthful perceptions relating to the future state. The teachings of reason and intuition are confirmed by the revelations of truth flowing from those who have passed the veil of death. Visions of glory break upon the intellectual view; the gloomy mystery which has so long shrouded the unseen world is now passing away, and the realities which are there experienced by the freed spirit are beginning to be perceived and understood by mortals. We are now not only able to realize the fact of a future existence, but begin to comprehend something of the nature of that existence; and as we gaze upon the beautiful prospect which is here presented, the briny tears of sorrow are dried, the clouds of doubt and anxiety pass away, and the soul is filled with a blissful transport.

In the light of the spiritual teachings which are now enjoyed, and which, I may remark, are more authentic than the musty records which have sprung from the darkness of the past, we may now refer in a more specific manner to the character of the

future life. It is reasonable to presume, then, in the first place, that our existence in the future is merely an extension or continuation of the present. In other words there exists no wide gulf, as has been sometimes imagined, between this and the future state, but on the contrary the spiritual existence begins precisely where the material life ends. On being separated from the body by the process of death, the spirit lives on without any suspension of being, changed only as to the mode of its existence. It enters, therefore, upon its career in the celestial world at a point precisely corresponding with that at which it left the form. The same general laws which have governed here must also govern it there; and the degree of development it will manifest on being introduced into the higher sphere, will be the same as that to which it attained while residing in the body. In the light of this truth, the idea that all spirits reach the same height of perfection and are made equally happy at once, will be seen to be erroneous; while, on the contrary, it will appear that spirits must exist in the future world in as many different degrees of development and perfection as in the present life.

Again I observe that the future existence of the spirit is one of action and progression. The soul, on leaving its earthly temple, does not sink into a state of inglorious rest. It still has important duties to be performed—the mighty work of eternity is before it—the expanded universe, with all its beauties and mysteries, is to be explored, and the illimitable expanse of truth, reaching beyond the loftiest soarings of the human mind, is to be traversed; and hence the internal powers are in constant and unwearied exercise, and the divine aspirations reach forth continually for a more perfect and exalted state. Being freed from the clogs of the material body, the spirit is ever on the wing.

"On! said God to the soul,
As to the earth, forever. On it goes,
A rejoicing native of the infinite—
As a bird of air—an orb of heaven."

Surrounded by influences of purity, and rejoicing in celestial light, it is ever progressing towards the glory of the Divine Presence. The same great law which operates through all nature, and through which spirit itself is generated from lower forms, actuates the soul in its superior sphere; and thus, having reached that sphere, it is moved to the highest spiritual action, is constantly unfolding its heavenly powers, and is gradually drawn upward by the gentle, but all-attractive influence which emanates from the great Positive Mind.

Once more, it will be well to remark that the future existence is one of universal happiness. There all is tranquil, harmonious, and peaceful. The sorrows which oppressed the soul on earth, the disappointments which blighted its hopes, and the heavy woes that crushed its cherished joys, are there removed forever. The soul bathes in the crystal streams of purity, listens to the sweet music of the celestial choir, and roams through the beautiful fields of the spirit-land, drinking in the breath of harmony that flows from still higher spheres, and feeling in its inmost depths the thrilling emotions of joy unspeakable. All are happy there, because there is no source of misery. All are saved, because evil is destroyed, and the blessings of righteous action are universally distributed. It is true that the *degree* of enjoyment is there, as here, proportionate to the development of the moral and spiritual powers. In other words, spirits enjoy as great an amount of happiness as they have the capacity for receiving; so that while those in the higher spheres, being farther advanced, enjoy more than those in the lower, none are permitted to experience positive unhappiness, but all have an appropriate share of enjoyment, precisely suited to the degrees of spiritual advancement.

The world of spiritual existence is thus rendered bright and glorious. There is no night there. The clouds of sin and sorrow are dispersed, and the immortal Source of light reigns triumphant. No dazzling sun, no radiant stars, nor silvery moon is needed, but God, the everlasting Light, diffuses the radiance of his glory through the boundless realms of the spirit, and darkness and mourning are ended forever. That life of the soul, too, is endless in its duration. The mansions of the Father are based on the foundations of Eternity. Time may steal on with

its withering blight; ages may pass away in their ceaseless flow, and yet the glory of the celestial city shall not fade. "When the sun is turned to darkness and the stars to dust," it shall stand in its immortal beauty, unmarred by the blasting sting of death, and unobscured by the shadows of the tomb, ever proclaiming the wisdom and goodness of the Supreme Father, and diffusing the wealth of peace and harmony through the hearts of his spirit-children.

In view, then, of the glories of this brighter sphere, why are we entranced by the dreams of earthly bliss? Why are our thoughts all engrossed and imbedded as it were in the affairs of the present? As we tread the thorny mazes, and grope through the dreary shades of earth, we need the glimpses of the world beyond—we need a vision of the higher and holier life to which this is but the darkened entrance. Let us therefore delight to read, in the wide volume of Nature, the lesson of our immortality, and, gazing through the vista of time and death, look forward to those spheres of endless life, where streams of peace flow from the eternal throne, and holy raptures thrill the adoring spirits that rest upon the bosom of the Infinite. R. P. A.

SIGNS OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

The present is indeed a peculiar and eventful age. The world seems to be undergoing an entire revolution of thought and feeling. Former things are passing away and all things are becoming new. The antiquated ideas and institutions of the past are crumbling with their own weakness, and monuments of truth and wisdom are reared upon the fallen ruins. Men are awakening from the deep slumbers which have long bound the soul, and with progress as the animating watchword, are pressing onward to higher attainments. The "signs of the times" are replete with encouragement. Prophecies of future good are presented in all the movements and developments of the age, proclaiming that the doleful night is rapidly passing away, and that earth is brightening with the rays of a blissful day-spring.

These signs of encouragement are given in the present intellectual condition of the world. The light of knowledge is now becoming generally diffused. An increasing interest is manifested in intellectual culture, and every appropriate means is employed to develop the mind to its full power. Volumes of written thought are scattered, as mental luminaries, through every department of society, and from their silent pages speak the voices of substantial wisdom. Halls of learning and seminaries of instruction are established on every hand, and within their consecrated walls genius finds an impulse, and the soul is adorned with the richest gifts. From every quarter the beams of intelligence flow in upon the opened vision, and man begins to soar beyond the outward and material to dwell among the sublime realities of the ideal world. Behold, the welcome light has at last appeared. Truth has gone forth in its majesty, conquering and to conquer; Science is rapidly revealing the hidden mysteries of nature, and Reason, freed from its stern dominion, goes out on its mission of research, and explores every department of creation.

The signs of encouragement are also manifested in the moral condition of the world. The spiritual degradation and lethargy which have rested like a gloomy cloud over humanity, have now measurably disappeared, and a higher and better state of feeling is exhibited. We cannot fail to perceive, as we observe the movements of the age, that an elevated and refined sensibility is taking the place of the brutish passions which have ruled the world. A moral revolution, bringing light, and liberty and virtue, is moving through every vein of society, and shaking the hearts of nations with its mighty tread. The genius of reform has been raised from its slumber, and has gone to perform its sweet ministrations of peace and good will to men. While the course of intelligence has been rapidly progressive—while the wealth of mind has been exhibited and appreciated, the precious riches of the heart have also been unfolded. Man has begun to feel the tender ties that bind all in one common family; he has begun to realize that his fellow-man, though fallen from his native dignity and greatness, is his brother still—that notwithstanding all

the debasement and degradation of his nature, he still bears the impress of the Creator's hand—that he still retains in the deep recesses of his heart the remnants of noble feeling—the sparks of purity and goodness, which, were they once reached and kindled by the fire of love, might burn with a bright and undying flame. A spirit has thus been born and nourished to plead the cause of humanity. It has burst the icy bonds of selfishness and gone forth upon its heavenly mission; and wherever man has fallen from his high estate—wherever human tears have flowed, or sighs have swelled the heaving bosom—wherever want, and misery, and disgrace have dwelt, there has it found its object. With warm hearts and strong hands the noble band of reformers engage in their work of love. One delivers the poor inebriate from his misery, and gives him again a title to respectability and manhood; another loosens the chain of the slave, and stays the uplifted rod of oppression, while still another speaks in a voice of kindness to the captive, and awakens his soul to repentance and hope and joy. It is pleasing to contemplate this work of moral improvement—to behold the action and progress of reformatory principles in the earth; and as we observe the results which have been already attained, we cannot but feel that the night is far spent, and the day is at hand.

But once more, I observe that the signs of encouragement may be observed in the *spiritual and religious* condition of the world. Here, as in every other department, we may perceive a material improvement. Men have long endeavored, in matters of religion, to retain the soul within an established system—to restrict its advancement by the lines of creed and sect; but we find on observation, that in the present age the landmarks of faith are rapidly advancing from their station, and the bounds of thought and investigation are being constantly enlarged. Every sect now bears upon it the evident marks of progress. The old doctrines and tenets which were once believed and held dear as truth itself, are now either left to pass into oblivion, or exist in greatly modified forms. Reason has now begun to assert its authority and establish its claims, and as its radiant light rises in the soul, the darkness rolls away, and visions of truth and beauty break upon its view. The people are rapidly growing in intelligence. Their religious sensibilities have become greatly softened and refined. They will no longer bear the stern dogmas and fiery denunciations which were once hurled upon them. What then appeared attractive and truthful now appears odious and false; what then seemed like sweet music to the soul, now grates like harsh thunder upon their ears. A deeper, holier want is now experienced than was ever felt before. The human spirit is no longer satisfied to feed on the husks of superstition and mystery, but longs for the living bread of truth—it is no longer content to be bound in chains and darkness, but sighs for the illimitable freedom of thought. This spiritual advancement has extended to a greater degree than is apparent to the superficial view. The outward surface of the religious world, though it is undergoing perceptible changes, is kept as calm, quiet, and undisturbed as possible; but beneath that surface, the inward elements are at work, investigation is going on, thought is searching, and truth is being revealed, and thus under currents, strong and mighty, are flowing through a thousand channels, which shall at last unite to upheave the crumbling pillars of the church, and let in the free light and atmosphere of heaven. Such, then, is the present spiritual and religious condition of the world—such is the increasing progress and enlightenment of the age, from which we may derive the cheering assurance that humanity is successfully struggling for a higher destiny, and is advancing towards a more glorious and exalted end. R. P. A.

From a communication written by Mrs. Fish, of Rochester, N. Y., we learn that spiritual manifestations continue to be made at her residence, in the absence of her two sisters. One peculiarity which she mentions as being connected with the sounds, is that they do not seem to be confined to the vicinity of her own person, but are made freely in different parts of the room, on the walls and ceiling. We are also informed that, so great is the interest in the subject, the house is crowded daily by persons who are anxious to learn something of this singular and mysterious phenomenon.

THE MIRACLES OF THE PRESENT.

It will appear evident to every observing individual that there are wonders unfolded in the present age, fully equal, it would seem, to those which were regarded in ancient times as the operations of supernatural power. These wonders which call for so many expressions of astonishment, should be subjected to the closest intellectual scrutiny. We may read with lingering reverence of the miracles of the olden time; we may see in imagination the man of Nazareth relieving the sufferings of humanity—healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, and causing the lame to walk, but when we discover these things as present and living realities—when, by the operation of the same laws, we see similar miracles performed before our eyes, it is proper, while we gaze with wonder at the effects produced, to investigate such phenomena in a philosophical spirit, and obtain a more expanded perception of the principles operating in Nature. It is important that the public mind should be impressed with the fact, that the mysterious developments which are being made in the science of mind, do not involve any suspension or violation of the laws of the Universe, but rather result from the natural and inevitable operation of those laws, which, though now imperfectly understood, are established in the very constitution of things. How much better will it be, therefore, to patiently investigate the principles of nature, by which all visible effects are produced, than to arrogantly assume a knowledge of all these principles, and then to judge facts by this imperfect standard.

The foregoing reflections have been induced by witnessing the manifestations of clairvoyance in connection with medical treatment, as presented in the case of Mrs. METTLER, of Bridgeport, Conn., who is now spending a short time in this place. The success of this lady in the examination and treatment of disease, is truly remarkable. It would seem, from the many cures performed through her agency, that she has been endowed with a portion of that divine virtue and the gift of that healing power which was manifested by the ancient apostles. Persons suffering with the most aggravated and dangerous diseases, have been in a brief space of time entirely relieved by her treatment, and the multitude who have been placed under her care, will testify to the correctness of her examinations, and the wonderful effects of her therapeutic practice. The world may little realize the blessings which one such instrument is enabled to bestow, but the consciousness of having aided in the relief of human suffering, and the approbation of the good angels that smile on every benevolent effort, will be a richer reward than the fleeting wealth of earth.

R. F. A.

The Divine Glory.

Accustomed as we are to view the qualities of the Supreme Being in a separate and partial manner, we are able to form but a feeble and imperfect conception of the glory of his nature. It is not one quality or attribute alone which constitutes the perfection of God, but the union and concentration of all his attributes. While each characteristic of the divine Mind is beautiful beyond expression, the union of all the qualities belonging to it—the combination of love, power, will and wisdom, forms the Eternal Sun, whose light bursts forth in one overwhelming blaze. This sum of the divine perfections is acknowledged in all the universe, and seems to be imprinted in radiant characters on all which has life or being. It comes up in silent whisperings from all the thousand tongues of nature; it is felt by the enraptured spirit that is lifted up to the sphere of heavenly illumination, and is sung in anthems of unceasing praise by angels that bow before the eternal throne, and veil their faces in the dazzling flame. And yet, while the glory of God is thus clearly written on the wide-spread volume of creation, and is felt by the searching spirit in its aspirations for a noble destiny, the mind of mortals is incapable of obtaining a just conception of its brightness. We are yet too weak—too debased by the gross contaminations of earth to form an adequate idea of the divine perfection. We have seen the all-expanding radiance that lights up the depths of space; we have seen the boundless bosom of the ocean, whose

billows sparkle and glitter in the liquid sunbeams, but this is only an imperfect semblance—a meagre shadow of that glory which fills all the earth and overflows the heavens. Let us beware, therefore, that we change not, in our material conceptions, the glory of the incorruptible God, but remember that though we may behold its manifestations in the earth and heaven—though we may crowd all our highest, noblest, purest thoughts in one—all our conceptions of the good, the great and beautiful, we shall still fall infinitely short of any proper idea of that glory which shall be revealed to the ransomed spirit.

R. F. A.

Friendly Correspondence.

The truths of the harmonial philosophy are gradually, but surely working their way into the hearts of the people, and a growing interest in spiritual phenomena, and whatever relates to the welfare and progress of the race, seems to be widely manifested. This is indicated by the numerous friendly and cheering communications which we continue to receive from almost every part of the Union. The following letter, though not designed for publication, and selected almost at random from a large number, we take pleasure in presenting to our readers:

SALEM, WASHINGTON COUNTY, IA.

BROTHERS:—I have received a few numbers of the "Spirit Messenger," and having read them attentively, I assure you I was happily disappointed. Although I expected to find the "Messenger" worth reading, and worth paying for, yet I did not expect to find it so very acceptable in every particular. There is a deep moral tone in its pages, which irresistibly claims my approbation; and the elements of *truth* are so thoroughly diffused through every number, that it commends itself to my warmest affections.

I admire the freedom of thought and expression exhibited, as well as the talent and energy displayed in the conduct of the "Messenger." Although I have long been an advocate of an exclusive system of religion, yet I have as long been persuaded, and as long taught, that this exclusiveness was subject to many exceptions. And although I have long been an advocate of the religion of the *Bible*, yet have I as long taught that the most essential features of *my* religion are contained in the Book of Nature. Indeed, I prefer to search the broad volume of creation for the essential truths of a religious system, rather than to trust to any written book; for Nature I *know* is true, while I can at best only *believe* any human production to be so. Moreover, I like the *character* which Nature sets forth of its Divine Author, much better than that which is given of the God which is presented by some of the writers of the "Old Testament." In short, I am a devoted admirer of the sublime revelations of Nature, and a firm believer in its comprehensive truths.

With these views you will not be surprised that I hail with a hearty welcome, such an auxiliary as the "Spirit Messenger." I bid you God speed in your undertaking. You will of course meet with opposition; but what of this? such has been the fate of every Reformer and Benefactor who have opposed the prejudices and bigotry of the world.

Yours fraternally, T. B.

W. M. FERNALD is in readiness to lecture on all subjects pertaining to the Harmonial and Spiritual Philosophy. He has, in particular, two courses, of four lectures each; one on *Psychology*, embracing the phenomena of the Spiritual Senses, as manifest in dreaming, somnambulism, trance, presentiments, premonitions, warnings, impressions, magnetism, clairvoyance (natural and artificial), spiritual communication, and vision. — Another course on Philosophical Theism; Nature and Spirituality; Man, materially and spiritually; and Human Society.

He would be pleased to answer any calls for these Lectures, or others pertaining to the New Order of Things, in any town or city within convenient distance from Boston, Mass.

He may be addressed at *Cambridge, Mass.*

The pressing cares of business prevent us at present from responding to many private communications to which we would otherwise gladly attend.

☞ The recovery of Mr. Davis, which is now regarded as almost complete, will enable him soon to furnish our columns with the productions of his illuminated mind. In the meantime, we trust that our friends who are accustomed to express their thoughts in writing, will have the kindness to supply us with communications; and that our patrons generally will make due allowances for any lack of variety or interest in the paper.

☞ The health of the senior editor, though still much impaired, appears to be gradually improving. We trust that he will soon be able to communicate again with our readers through the Messenger.

Poetry.

SONNETS

TO ANDREW JACKSON DAVIS, THE SEER.

BY S. H. LLOYD.

I.

We welcome thee, the World shall welcome thee,
For unto us thy soul has been a bird
Returning from the far and distant sea,
And bringing strains before to us unheard;—
And unto thee, the Palace gates are open'd,
And thou canst talk at will with spirits there
And bleeding hearts that had in darkness groped
Now bear an answer to their long spent prayer.
Thou bringest in thy speech such melody
And in thy thoughts such words of Truth disclose,
That what before was Doubt and Mystery,
The angel-soul unfoldeth like a rose;—
And Wisdom, now, that long in cells was bound
Is unto Love, in holy wedlock found.

II.

And thou hast seen the Harp to which all things
Are tuned, that makes the music of the spheres,
Thy prophet hand has swept its mystic strings
And brought such ravishment unto our ears,
That unto thee our waiting hearts now look
As leaves and flowers unto the new-born-day—
Wild flowers that slept beside a tinkling brook,
And knowing not how near the waters play.
For while a world of Doubt, of Pain and Strife
Hast chilled the heart and dimmed our inner sight,
Thy hand to us has borne the torch of life
And scattered all the darkness of the night;—
And we, who vainly roved from star to star,
Now see how near the Spirit-Land we are.

III.

How like the flowers that drink the rain-drops in
Does my fond heart now listen to thy speech,
And smile to see how Discord, Grief, and Sin,
Vanish, with all the falsities they teach.
No more may Sects the upturned Soul enchain,
Nor Parties rule with undisputed sway,
No longer King or Priests or Bigots reign,
Nor darkling clouds obscure the coming day.
Within its garden gates, the Tree of Life,
Whose spreading roots in Wisdom's soul had birth,
And nursed by Love, outlives the night of strife,
And bears a Flower whose fragrance fills the earth;—
'T is Reason's Flower to those whose minds may err,
To tuneful hearts, "THE GREAT HARMONIA."

God's worship is

That only He inspires; and His bright words,
Writ in the red-leaved volume of the heart,
Return to Him in prayer, as dew to Heaven.
Our proper good we rarely seek or make;
Mindless of our immortal powers and their
Immortal end, as is the pearl of its worth,
The rose its scent, the wave its purity.—*Festus.*

Miscellaneous Department.

MEMORY AND HOPE.

Hope is the leading-string of youth—memory the staff of age. Yet for a long time they were at variance, and scarcely ever associated together. Memory was almost always grave, nay, sad and melancholy. She delighted in silence and repose, amid rocks and waterfalls; and whenever she raised her eyes from the ground, it was only to look back over her shoulder. Hope was a smiling, dancing, rosy boy, with sparkling eyes, and it was impossible to look upon him without being inspired by his gay and sprightly buoyancy. Wherever he went he diffused around him gladness and joy; the eyes of the young sparkled brighter than ever at his approach; old age, as it cast its dim glances at the blue vault of heaven, seemed inspired with new vigor; the flowers looked more gay, the grass more green, the birds sung more cheerily, and all nature seemed to sympathize in his gladness. Memory was of mortal birth, but Hope partook of immortality.

One day they chanced to meet, and Memory reproached Hope with being a deceiver. She charged him with deluding mankind with visionary, impracticable schemes, and exciting expectations that only led to disappointment and regret; with being the *ignis fatuus* of youth and the scourge of old age. But Hope cast back upon her the charge of deceit, and maintained that the pictures of the past were as much exaggerated by Memory, as were the anticipations of Hope. He declared that she looked at objects at a great distance in the past, he in the future, and that this distance magnified every thing. "Let us make the circuit of the world," said he, "and try the experiment." Memory consented, reluctantly, and they went their way together.

The first person they met was a school-boy, lounging lazily along, and stopping every moment to gaze around, as if unwilling to proceed on his way. By and by he sat down and burst into tears.

"Whither so fast, my good lad," asked Hope, jeeringly.

"I am going to school," replied the lad, "to study, when I had rather a thousand times be at play; and sit on a bench, with a book in my hand, while I long to be sporting in the fields. But never mind, I shall be a man soon, and then I shall be free as the air." Saying this, he skipped away merrily, in the hope of soon being a man.

"It is thus you play upon the inexperience of youth," said Memory, reproachfully.

Passing onward, they met a beautiful girl, pacing slow and melancholy behind a party of gay young men and maidens, who walked arm in arm with each other, and were flirting and exchanging all those little harmless courtesies, which nature prompts on such occasions. They were all gayly dressed in silks and ribbons; but the little girl had on a simple frock, a homely apron, and clumsy thick-soled shoes.

"Why don't you join yonder group," asked Hope, "and partake in their gayety, my pretty little girl?"

"Alas!" replied she, "they take no notice of me. They call me a child. But I shall soon be a woman, and then I shall be so happy!" Inspired by this hope, she quickened her pace, and soon was seen dancing along merrily with the rest.

In this manner they wended their way from nation to nation, and clime to clime, until they had made the circuit of the universe. Wherever they came, they found the human race, which at this time was all young—it being not many years since the first creation of mankind—reining at the present, and looking forward to a riper age for happiness. All anticipated some future good, and Memory had scarce any thing to do but cast looks of reproach at her young companion. "Let us return home," said she, "to that delightful spot where I first drew my breath. I long to repose among its beautiful bowers; to listen to the brooks that murmured a thousand times more musically; to the birds that sung a thousand times sweeter; and to the echoes that were softer than any I have since heard. Ah! there is nothing on earth so enchanting as the scenes of my earliest youth."

Hope indulged himself in a sly, significant smile, and they

proceeded on their return home. As they journeyed but slowly, many years elapsed ere they approached the spot whence they had departed. It so happened one day they met an old man, bending under the weight of years, and walking with trembling steps, leaning on his staff. Memory at once recognized him as the youth they had seen going to school, on their first outset in the tour of the world. As they came nearer, the old man reclined on his staff, and looking at Hope, who, being immortal, was still a blithe young boy, sighed as if his heart was breaking.

"What aileth thee, old man?" asked the youth.

"What aileth me," he replied, in a feeble, faltering voice—"what should ail me but old age. I have outlived my health and strength; I have survived all that was near and dear; I have seen all I loved, or that loved me, struck down to the earth like dead leaves in autumn, and now I stand like an old tree withering alone in the world, without roots, without branches, and without verdure. I have only just enough of sensation to know that I am miserable, and the recollection of the happiness of my youthful days, when careless and full of blissful anticipations, I was a laughing merry boy, only adds to the miseries I now endure."

"Behold!" said Memory, "the consequence of thy deceptions," and she looked reproachfully at her companion.

"Behold!" replied Hope, "the deception practised by thyself. Thou persuadest him that he was happy in his youth. Dost thou remember the boy we met when we first set out together, who was weeping on his way to school, and sighing to be a man?"

Memory cast down her eyes, and was silent.

A little way onward they came to a miserable cottage, at the door of which was an aged woman, meanly clad, and shaking with palsy. She sat all alone, her head resting on her bosom, and as the pair approached, vainly tried to raise it up to look at them.

"Good-morrow, old lady, and all happiness to you," cried Hope, gayly, and the old woman thought it was a long time since she had heard such a cheering salutation.

"Happiness!" said she, in a voice that quivered with weakness and infirmity. "Happiness! I have not known it since I was a little girl, without care or sorrow. O, I remember those delightful days, when I thought of nothing but the present moment, nor cared for the future or the past. When I laughed, and played, and sung, from morning till night, and envied no one, or wished to be any other than I was. But those happy times are past, never to return. O, if I could only once more return to the days of my childhood!"

The old woman sunk back on her seat, and the tears flowed from her hollow eyes.

Memory again reproached her companion, but he only asked her if she recollected the little girl they had met a long time ago, who was so miserable because she was so young? Memory knew it well enough, and said not another word.

They now approached their home, and Memory was on tiptoe with the thought of once more enjoying the unequalled beauties of those scenes from which she had been so long separated. But, some how or other, it seemed they were sadly changed. Neither the grass was so green, the flowers so sweet and lovely, nor did the brooks murmur, the echoes answer, or the birds sing half so enchantingly, as she remembered them in long time past.

"Alas!" she exclaimed, "how changed is every thing! I alone am the same."

"Every thing is the same, and thou alone art changed," answered Hope. "Thou hast deceived thyself in the past just as much as I deceive others in the future."

"What is it you are disputing about?" asked an old man, whom they had not observed before, though he was standing close by them. "I have lived almost four-score and ten years, and my experience may, perhaps, enable me to decide between you."

They told him the occasion of their disagreement, and related the history of their journey round the earth. The old man smiled, and for a few moments sat buried in thought. He then said to them:

"I, too, have lived to see all the hopes of my youth turn into shadows, clouds, and darkness, and vanish into nothing. I, too, have survived my fortune, my friends, my children—the hilarity of youth and the blessing of health."

"And dost thou not despair?" said Memory.

"No, I have still one hope left me."

"And what is that?"

"The hope of heaven!"

Memory turned toward Hope, threw herself into his arms, which opened to receive her, and burst into tears, exclaiming—

"Forgive me; I have done thee injustice. Let us never again separate from each other."

"With all my heart," said Hope, and they continued forever after to travel together, hand in hand through the world.

German Parables.

SALOME.—Salome, the mother of John, stood one evening at the sea of Genesareth, in silent meditation. The sun had set, and the purple of twilight irradiated the heavens, and a blue vapor rested on the mountain. But Salome looked upon the smooth sea. Then Zabbai, the father, came out and saw his wife, and said, "Why do you stand here alone, musing, Salome, and why are your eyes filled with tears?" Salome then answered, "I behold the splendor of twilight in the still water." "Why then do you not rather look towards heaven?" asked Zabbai. To this Salome answered and said, "I have seen before this the glorious light of heaven. But now it appears to me more beautiful in the calm water of the bright sea. Look how peacefully it flows, without being conscious that the splendor and glory of heaven are reflected from its surface. Hence I thought, with feelings of maternal solicitude, of our beloved son. O there is nothing more beautiful than the splendor of heaven, when it surrounds with its light pure simplicity and innocence, that they may wander in silence and humility. Is not John, as he always has been, our beloved child, and at the same time the friend of the divine man of Nazareth?"

THE DEFENSE.—When nature had formed, with her all-creating breath, the loveliest of flowers, the rose, the spirit of the rose-bush thus addressed the flower angel: "Will you not give to the gentle plant a defense which will protect it against injury and insult? And yet nature has given the thorn-bush large and pointed thorns." "The thorn-bush," answered the angel, "does not belong to the noble, but is ranked low in the kingdom of creation. Its office is to defend the slender plants from the irrational brute, and for this purpose nature has given it the pointed thorns. But your wish shall be gratified!" He spake, and surrounded the rose-bush with tender thorns. Then the spirit of the rose-bush said, "Why these weak weapons? They will not shelter the beautiful flower." The angel of the flowers answered him, "They shall only keep off the hand of the inconsiderate child! Resistance will be a strong allurements to the offender. That which is holy and beautiful has its defense within itself, therefore nature has given the rose the most tender weapon, which admonishes, but does not wound; for the tender unites with the beautiful." Thus innocence possesses modesty and retirement.

☞ The BOOKS and CHART of Mr. DAVIS, comprising all the works on the HARMONIAL PHILOSOPHY that have been published, can be had at our office, and forwarded by express or otherwise, to any part of the Union. PRICE—REVELATIONS \$2; GREAT HARMONIA, Vol. 1, \$1.25; CHART, exhibiting an outline of the Progressive History and approaching destiny of the Race, \$1.50; PHILOSOPHY OF SPECIAL PROVIDENCES, \$0.15.

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