

# 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.

### SPIRITUAL VIEWS OF MAN, PROVIDENCE AND IMMORTALITY.

FROM THE GERMAN.

Man is not the mere product of the sensual world, and the whole aim of his existence cannot be attained in it. His high destiny passes time and space, and all that is sensual. What he is, and what he is to make himself, he must know; as his destiny is a lofty one, he must be able to raise his thoughts above all sensual limits; where his true home is, thither must his thoughts necessarily fly, and his real humanity, in which his whole mental power is displayed, appears most when he raises himself above those limits, and all that belongs to the senses vanishes in a mere reflection, to mortal eyes, of what is transcendent and immortal.

Many have raised themselves to this view without any course of intellectual inquiry, merely by nobleness of heart and pure moral instinct. They have denied in practice the reality of the sensual world, and made it of no account in their resolutions and their conduct, although they might never have entertained the question of its real existence, far less have come to any conclusion in the negative. Those who are entitled to say, "Our citizenship is in heaven, we have here no abiding place, we seek it in a world to come," those whose chief principle it was to die to the world, to be born again, and already here below to enter on the kingdom of God, certainly set no value on what is merely sensual, and were, to use the scholastic expression, "transcendental Idealists."

Others, who, with the natural tendency to sensuality common to us all, have strengthened themselves in it by the adoption of a system of thought leading in the same direction, can only rise above it by a thorough and persevering course of investigation; with the purest moral intentions they would be liable to be perpetually drawn down again by their intellectual mistakes, and their whole nature would be involved in inextricable contradiction.

For such as these will the philosophy, which I now first truly understand, be the first power that can enable the imprisoned Psyche to break from the chrysalis and unfold her wings; poised on which, she casts a glance on her abandoned cell, before springing upward to live and move in a higher sphere.

Blessed be the hour in which I was first led to inquire into my own spiritual nature and destination! All my doubts are removed; I know what I can know, and have no fears for what I cannot know. I am satisfied; perfect clearness and harmony reign in my soul, and a new and more glorious existence begins for me.

My entire destiny I cannot comprehend; what I am to become, exceeds my present power of conception. A part, which is concealed from me, is visible to the Father of spirits. I know only that it is secure, everlasting and glorious. That part of it which is confided to me I know, for it is the root of all my other knowledge.

I know, at every moment of my life, what I have to do, and this is the aim of my existence, as far as it depends on myself. Since my knowledge does not reach beyond this, I am not required to go farther. On this central point I take my stand. To this shall all my thoughts and endeavors tend, and my whole power be directed—my whole existence be woven around it.

It is my duty to cultivate my understanding, and to acquire

knowledge, as much as I can, but purely with the intention of enlarging my sphere of duty; I shall desire to gain much, that much may be required of me. It is my duty to exercise my powers and talents in every direction, but merely in order to render myself a more convenient and better qualified instrument for the work I am called to do; for until the law of God in my heart, shall have been fulfilled in practice, I am answerable for it to my conscience. It is my duty to represent in my person, as far as I am able, the most complete and perfect humanity; not for its own sake, but in order that in the form of humanity may be represented the highest perfection of virtue. I shall regard myself, and all that is in me, merely as the means to the fulfillment of duty; and shall have no other anxiety than that I may be able, as far as possible, to fulfill it. When, however, I shall have once resolutely obeyed the law of conscience, conscious of the purest intentions in doing so; when this law shall have been made manifest in practice, I have no further anxiety; for having once become a fact in the world, it has been placed in the hands of an eternal Providence. Further care or anxiety concerning the issue were but idle self-torment;—would exhibit a want of faith and trust in that Infinite Power. I shall not dream of governing the world in His place; of listening to the voice of my own limited understanding, instead of His voice in my conscience, and substituting for His vast and comprehensive plans, those of a narrow and short-sighted individual. I know that to seek to do so, would be to seek to disturb the order of the spiritual world.

As with tranquil resignation I reverence the decrees of a higher Providence, so in my actions do I reverence the freedom of my fellow creatures. The question for me is not what they, according to my conceptions, ought to do, but what I may do to induce them to it. I cannot wish to act on them otherwise than through their own conviction and their own will, and as far as the order of society and their own consent will permit me; by no means however to influence their powers and circumstances, independently of their own convictions. They do what they do on their own responsibility: in this I dare not interfere, and the Eternal Will will dispose of all for the best. All that I have to do is to respect their liberty, and make no attempt to destroy it because it appears to me ill employed.

I raise myself to this point of view, and become a new creature; my whole relations to the present world are changed; the ties by which my mind was closely connected with it, and followed all its movements, are broken forever, and I stand calmly in the center of my own world. My eye only, and not my heart, is occupied with worldly objects, and this eye is "filled with light," and looks through error and deformity, to the True and the Beautiful. My mind is forever closed against perplexity, and embarrassment, and uncertainty, and doubt, and anxiety;—my heart, against grief and repentance, as well as against desire. There is but one thing that I wish to know, and that I infallibly shall know, and I refrain from forming conjectures as to what I am sure I can never with certainty know. No possible event has power to agitate me with joy or sorrow, for I look down calm and unmoved upon all, since I am aware that I am not able to understand events in all their bearings. All that happens belongs to the everlasting plan of Providence, and is good in its place: how much in this plan is pure gain, how much is merely good as means to some further end—for the destruction of some present evil, I know not. I am satisfied with, and stand fast as a rock on the belief that all that happens in God's world, happens for the best; but what in that world is merely germ, what blossom, what fruit, I know not.

The only cause in which I can be deeply concerned, is that of the progress of reason and morality in the minds of rational creatures, and this purely for the sake of this progress. Whether

I am the instrument chosen for this purpose, or another,—whether my endeavors succeed or fail, is of no importance. I regard myself merely as a destined laborer in this field, and respect myself only inasmuch as I execute my task. I look on all the occurrences of the world only in their relation to this object, and it matters not whether I or another have the chief share in them. My breast is steeled against personal insults and vexations, or vain-glorious exultation in personal merit, for my personality has vanished in the contemplation of the great object before me.

Should it seem to me that truth has been put to silence, and virtue trampled under foot, and that folly and vice will certainly triumph; should it happen, when all hearts were filled with hope for the human race, that the horizon should suddenly darken around them as it had never done before;—should the work well and happily begun, on which all eyes were fixed with joyous expectation, suddenly and unexpectedly be turned into a deed of shame, yet will I not be dismayed: nor if the good cause should appear to grow and flourish, the lights of freedom and civilization be diffused, and peace and good will amongst men be extended, shall yet my efforts be relaxed.

Those apparently melancholy events may, for aught I know, be the means of bringing about a good result; that struggle of folly and vice may be the last that they shall ever maintain, and they may be permitted to put forth all their strength, to lose it in one final defeat. Those events of apparently joyful promise may rest on an uncertain foundation; what I regarded as love of freedom may be but impatience of restraint; what I attributed to gentleness and peacefulness, may originate in feebleness and effeminacy. I do not, indeed, know this, but it might be that I had as little cause to mourn over the one as to rejoice over the other. All that I know is, that the world is in the hands of omnipotent Wisdom and Goodness, who looks through his whole plan, knows all its bearings, and will infallibly be able to execute whatever He intends. On this conviction I repose with a calm and blessed assurance.

They that are free and rational creatures, destined to make progress toward perfect reason and moral purity, who thus exert all their powers in the promotion of folly and vice, need excite no violent indignation. The depravity of hating what is good for its own sake, and choosing evil because it is evil, for the mere love of it, which alone could justly awaken anger, I cannot ascribe to any human creature, for I know that it lies not in human nature to do so. I know that for all who act thus there is generally no good or evil, but merely the agreeable or disagreeable, and that they are not under their own control, but under that of natural appetite, which seeks the former, and flies from the latter with all its strength, without any consideration whether it be in itself good or evil. I know that being what they are, they cannot act otherwise than as they do act, and I am far from the folly of growing angry at what is of necessity, or seeing cause for indignation in blind and brute impulse.

In that, indeed, lies their guilt and their degradation, that they are what they are, instead of having striven to resist the current of passion and animal nature by the force of reason, as free and rational beings.

This alone could justly awaken my displeasure; but here I fall into an absurdity. I cannot blame them for their want of moral freedom, unless I regard them first as free. I wish to be angry with them, and find no object for my anger. What they actually are, does not deserve it—what might deserve it, they are not; and if they were they would not deserve it.

My displeasure strikes a nonentity. I must, indeed, treat them and address them as if they were what I know well they are not, and manifest a noble indignation at their conduct, with a view of arousing a similar feeling in their own breasts against themselves, although I am conscious in my heart that no such feeling can be rationally entertained against them. It is only the acting man of society whose anger is excited by folly and vice: the contemplative man reposes undisturbed in the tranquility of his own spirit.

Corporeal suffering, sorrow and sickness, I must indeed unavoidably feel, for they are occurrences of my nature, and as long

as I remain on earth I am a part of nature; but they shall not overcloud my spirit. They can reach only the nature with which I am in a wonderful manner united, not what is properly myself, the being exalted above nature. The certain end of all pain, and of all susceptibility of pain, is death; and amongst all which the man of mere nature is apt to regard as evils, this is the least.

I shall not die for myself, but only for others; for those who remain behind, from whose connection I am torn: for me the hour of death is the hour of birth to a new, more magnificent life.

Let my heart be once closed against earthly desire, and the universe will appear before me in a glorified form;—the dead, heavy mass, which did but fill up space, has disappeared, and in its place there rushes by the bright, everlasting flood of life and power from its infinite source. All life, O Omnipotent Father, is thy life! and the eye of religion alone penetrates to the realms of truth and beauty.

I am related to Thee, and what I behold around me is related to me; all is full of animation, and looks toward me with bright, spiritual eyes, and speaks with spirit-voices to my heart. In all the forms that surround me, I behold the manifold reflections of my own being, as the morning sun, broken into a thousand dew-drops, sparkles toward itself.

Thy life, as alone the finite mind can conceive it, is self-forming, self-representing Will, which, clothed to the eye of the mortal with multitudinous sensuous forms, flows through me and the whole immeasurable universe, here streaming as self-creative matter through my veins and muscles—there pouring its abundance into the tree, the flower, the grass.

Creative life flows like a continuous stream, drop on drop, into all forms through which my eye can follow it, and into the mysterious darkness where my own frame was formed; dancing and rejoicing in the animal, and presenting itself every moment in a new form; the only principle of motion that, from one end of the universe to the other, conducts the harmonious movement.

But pure and holy, and as near to thine own nature as to the eye of the mortal any thing can be, when it forms the bond which unites spirit with spirit, and encompasses them all, is the breath and atmosphere of the rational world. Incomprehensible, unimaginable, yet visible to the mental sight—hovering over this sea of light, thought passes from soul to soul, and is reflected back purer and brighter from that of a fellow-creature. By this mystery does the individual understand and love himself in another, and every mind develops itself from other minds, and there is no single man, but one humanity. By this mystery does the affinity of spirits in the invisible world pass into their corporeal nature, and manifest itself in two sexes, which, even if the spiritual bond could be broken, would, as creatures of pure nature, be compelled to love. It breathes through the tenderness of parents and children, and brethren, as if the souls were of one blood like the bodies, and their minds but blossoms and branches of the same stem; and from these flows in wider and wider circles, till it embraces the whole sentient world. The thirst after love lies even at the root of hate, and no enmity springs up but from friendship denied.

In that which to others appears a dead mass, my eye beholds this everlasting life and movement throughout the sensual and spiritual world, and sees this life for ever rising and refining itself to more and more spiritual expression. The universe is for me no longer that eternally repeated play, that ever-returning circle, that monster swallowing itself up, to bring itself forth again as it was before; it has become spiritualized to me, it bears the stamp of spirit in a constant progress toward perfection.

The sun rises and sets, and the stars vanish and return again, and all the spheres move in their harmonious circling dance, but they never return exactly what they were before, and in the bright springs of life itself, is life and progress. Every hour which they lead on, every morning and every evening, sinks with new increase upon the world; new life and new love descend like dew-drops from the clouds, and encircle nature as the cool

night the earth. All death in nature is birth, and in death appears visibly the advancement of life. There is no killing principle in nature, for nature throughout is life; it is not death which kills, but the higher life, which, concealed behind the other, begins to develop itself. Death and birth are but the struggle of life with itself to attain a higher form, and how could my death be other—mine—when I bear in myself not merely the form and semblance of life, but the only true, original and essential life? It is not possible that nature could annihilate a life which has not its origin in nature; the nature which exists for me, and not I for her.

Yet even this, my natural life, even this mere semblance, clothing to mortal sight the inward invisible life, can she not destroy—she who exists for me, and exists not if I am not. My present life disappears only before the higher life developing itself from within; and what mortals call death is the visible appearance of a second animation. Did no rational creature which had ever beheld the light of this world die, there would be no possible ground to anticipate a new heaven and a new earth; the only purpose of nature, to present and to maintain reason, would be fulfilled, and its span would have been complete. But the act by which she appears to destroy a being, free and independent of her, is to the eye of reason the solemn announcement of a transition beyond her sphere. Death is the ladder by which my spiritual vision ascends to new heavenly life.

Every one of my fellow creatures, who leaves this earthly circle, and whom I cannot regard as annihilated, draws my thoughts after him beyond the grave. He is still, and to him belongs a place. Whilst we mourn for him here, as in the dark realm of unconsciousness there might be mourning when a man is to behold the light of the sun, above, there is rejoicing that a man is born into that world, as we citizens of the earth receive with joy and welcome those born to us. When I shall be called on to follow them, there will be but joy for me, for sorrow remains in the sphere which I shall be leaving. The world of nature, on which I now gaze with wonder and admiration, sinks before me. With all its abounding life, and order, and bounteous increase, it is but the curtain which hides one infinitely more perfect—the germ from which that other shall develop itself. My faith pierces through this veil, and broods over and animates this germ. It sees, indeed, nothing distinctly, but it expects more than it can conceive, more than it will ever be able to conceive until time shall be no more.

### Positive Virtue.

The regularities of constitutional goodness, the order of a simple blameless existence, do not reach that pitch of energy which sustains the noblest health of the soul; these may continue their accustomed course, and yet the springs of inward life and strength dry up. In the mere negative virtue which abstains from gross outward wrong, which commits neither theft, nor cruelty, nor excess, and paces the daily round of usage, there is not necessarily any principle of immortal growth. The force requisite to maintain it becomes continually less, as the obstructions are worn down by ceaseless attrition; and the character may hence become simply automatic, performing a series of regularities with the smallest expenditure of soul. To nourish high affections worthy of a nature that hath kindred with the Father of spirits, more than this is needed; positive and creative power, spontaneous and original force, conquering energy of resolve, must be put forth: from the inner soul some central strength must pass upon the active life, to destroy that equilibrium between within and without which makes our days mere self-repetitions, and to give us a progressive history. There is a connexion profound and beautiful between the affectionate and the self-denying character of Christianity. The voluntary sacrifices feed the involuntary sympathies of virtue: and he that will daily suffer for his duty, nor lay his head to rest till he has renounced some ease, embraced some hardship, in the service of others and of God, shall replenish the fountains of his holiest life; and shall find his soul, not settling into the flat and stagnant marsh, but flowing under the most delicious light of heaven above, over the gladdest fields of Providence below.

## Psychological Department.

### VISION AND DREAMS.

The following is from "The Philosophy of Sleep," by Macnish:

"A sufficiently striking instance of such coincidence, occurs in the case of Dr. Donne, the metaphysical poet. Two days after he had arrived in Paris, he was left alone in a room where he had been dining with Sir Robert Drury and a few companions. Sir Robert returned about an hour afterwards. He found his friend in a state of ecstasy, and so altered in his countenance, that he could not look upon him without amazement. The Doctor was not able for some time to answer the question, *what had befallen him?*—but after a long and perplexed pause, at last said, 'I have seen a dreadful vision since I saw you. I have seen my dear wife pass twice by me through this room, with her hair hanging about her shoulders, and a dead child in her arms. This I have seen since I saw you.' To which, Sir Robert answered, 'Sure, Sir, you have slept since I went out; and this is the result of some melancholy dream, which I desire you to forget, for you are now awake.' Donne replied, 'I cannot be more sure that I now live, than that I have not slept since I saw you; and I am as sure, that at her second appearing, she stopped, looked me in the face, and vanished.' It is certainly very curious that Mrs. Donne, who was then in England, was at this time sick in bed, and had been delivered of a dead child, on the same day, and about the same hour, that the vision occurred."

"At Newark, upon Trent, a curious custom, founded upon the preservation of Alderman Clay and his family by a dream, has prevailed since the days of Cromwell. On the eleventh of March, every year, penny loaves are given to those who apply for them, in commemoration of the Alderman's deliverance, during the siege of Newark by the Parliamentary forces. The origin of this bequest is singular. During the bombardment of Newark by Oliver Cromwell's forces, the Alderman dreamed three nights successively, that his house had taken fire, which produced such a vivid impression upon his mind, that he and his family left it; and in a few days the circumstances of his vision actually took place, by the house being burned down by the besiegers."

"Dr. Abercrombie relates the case of a gentleman in Edinburgh, who was affected with aneurism of the popliteal artery, for which he was under the care of two eminent surgeons. About two days before the time appointed for the operation, his wife dreamed that a change had taken place in the disease, in consequence of which an operation would not be required. On examining the tumor in the morning, the gentleman was astonished to find that the pulsation had entirely ceased; and in short, this turned out to be a spontaneous cure. To persons not professional, it may be right to mention that the cure of popliteal aneurism, without an operation, is a very uncommon occurrence, not happening, perhaps, in one out of numerous instances, and never to be looked upon as probable in any individual case."

The same author adds, "The case of Mr. M——, of D——, is one of extraordinary coincidence. This gentleman dreamed one night that he was out riding, when he stopped at an inn by the road-side, for refreshment. Here he saw several people whom he had known several years before, but who were all dead. He was received kindly by them, and desired to sit down and drink, which he accordingly did. On quitting this strange company, they exacted a promise from him that he would visit them six weeks from that day. This he promised faithfully to do; and bidding them farewell, he rode homewards. Such was the substance of his dream, which he related in a jocular way to his friends, and thought no more about it, for he was a person above all kinds of superstition. The event, however, was certainly curious enough, as well as melancholy; for, six weeks from that very day on which he had engaged to meet his friends at the inn, he was killed in endeavoring to spring his horse over a five-barred gate."

## THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

APOLLOS MUNN AND R. P. AMBLER, EDITORS.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., JANUARY 18, 1851.

## EDITORIAL FAREWELL.

With a bosom glowing with affection and swelling with unutterable emotions, I address you, dear readers, for the last time, as one of the editors of the Messenger; and in thus suddenly presenting you with my editorial valediction, I am deeply impressed with a sense of the propriety of briefly stating the prominent causes which have impelled me to the act.

The readers of the Messenger are already aware, from intimations that have appeared in its columns, that I have for several years labored under painful chronic difficulties, which at times have produced great physical prostration and distress. These difficulties have prevented me from contributing my full share to the editorial and business interests of the paper; and hence I have suffered much in mental anxiety, which only tended to aggravate my disease. Consequently it has been with a fevered brain and trembling hand, that I have indited many articles which have appeared in the Messenger. Feeling my inability to properly maintain my true position in the establishment, and my pulmonary difficulties becoming more and more distressing, I sought the advice of some of the truest friends of the philosophy in New England—among whom was that friend and benefactor of the whole brotherhood of man, ANDREW J. DAVIS. It is the opinion of those friends, that unless I at once retire from the cares and responsibilities of business, that my spirit cannot retain its hold upon the flesh through the trying months of the approaching spring. Their decision, therefore, is, that it is my duty to withdraw from all business association with the paper. To this friendly counsel, dear readers, I have yielded; and it gives me pleasure to say, that my associate friend, Mr. AMBLER, cordially acquiesces in the justice and propriety of the movement, and that he is willing to assume all the responsibility relating to the future management of the paper.

In the quiet retirement of my little family, I shall seek mental and physical repose; and I may thus, perhaps, partially regain the health I have lost,—so that when the mild and genial zephyrs of summer shall fan my brow, I may be prepared for further usefulness in my favorite sphere. I love communion with congenial hearts. My spirit is deeply imbued with the truths so richly portrayed in "Nature's Divine Revelations," and the "Great Harmonia," and I cannot enjoy the full measure of happiness which my spirit is capable of receiving, without striving to impart to others the joys of my own inner being. I would comfort the mourner, lift up the down-trodden, and encourage the despairing sons and daughters of humanity, by holding before their minds the sublime truths of the future—the immortality of the soul—its progressive happiness, and the peace and loveliness of the "many mansions" of our Father.

If my health ultimately becomes re-established, or materially improved, I shall be found ready to consecrate all my powers to the diffusion of truth, and thus I may add something to the sum-total of human happiness; but if, on the contrary, the future shall develop the fact that my earthly mission is now nearly finished, I shall be prepared to welcome death, as the messenger that conducts my spirit to its future home. For me it has no terrors, and my spirit will leave its earthly tabernacle with ineffable joy, alloyed only by the reflection that I must part with dependent loved-ones, poorly calculated to meet, without protection, the cold vicissitudes of the world. Yet there are many others of the human family worse-conditioned than they; so I have no reason to murmur. I therefore look upon the change to come, as one of the most interesting and pleasing events that will mark my progress from infancy to the Celestial Spheres. It is truly the gate-way to the spirit-home; it opens to the freed Intelligence a wider, brighter, and more refined field, where all the wrongs of humanity are righted, and where all are sustained by the uni-

versal affection which flows from the Great Fountain of all Love. In short, death enriches the poor, strengthens the feeble, enfranchises the slave, and secures to the least of God's children his undisputed right to all the happiness he can enjoy. What philanthropist, standing on an elevated plane of thought and knowledge, and surveying the sickening scenes of human wretchedness arising from the misdirected action of society, will not occasionally seek encouragement from the fact that there is a GRAVE—and that its gloomy portals open upon a GLORIOUS AND ETERNAL FUTURE?

I fear I have already extended my remarks to a tedious length; but I trust the generous readers of the Messenger will find a ready apology in the fact of my enfeebled physical condition, and the consequently undisciplined state of my mental faculties. It is to this cause—the fact that I am able to sit at the table to write but a few minutes at a time—that my rambling style is justly attributable.

To the editorial fraternity I also extend my valedictory salutation. For the many tokens of their kindly regard and courtesy toward the paper, which, to many of them, appeared as a new and strange light in the editorial firmament, I feel duly grateful; and in return, they have my sincere wish, that in their respective spheres of labor, they may ever be useful and true to humanity; so that, when his earthly mission is drawing to a close, each individual will feel that he has established the "kingdom of heaven" in his own bosom, by having secured the holy consciousness that, to the extent of his knowledge and powers, he has discharged his full duty to himself and his brother man.

To the readers of the Messenger, I again, with overflowing heart, repeat the painful word—FAREWELL! I may not again be permitted to communicate my thoughts to you through the medium of a newspaper; but let me assure you that my memory of the kind patronage and friendly sympathy you have bestowed on the dear little Messenger, will exist forever! It has bound our congenial spirits with an electric chain which the grave will not sever. And now, that you may all progress in knowledge of the truth, and enjoy constantly the highest degree of earthly felicity;—that you may escape poverty, sickness and distress, and finally ascend to advanced stations in the spheres of the angels, is the heartfelt wish of your afflicted, but affectionate friend and brother,

APOLLOS MUNN.

## Human Progress.

By a careful investigation of the nature and constitution of things, it will be found that progress is a universal and essential principle. The visible creation was introduced into being, and became the beautiful and harmonious fabric which it now is, through the agency of this great law. Progress is made the associate and concomitant of motion, to accomplish the ultimate designs of God. Every thing in Nature is subjected to the action of this principle. The forms of life and beauty that adorn the earth, are not perfect at the commencement of their existence, but they spring from the germ—the seed—the plant, and, by the process of a gradual, progressive development, grow, expand, and become perfected. This same prominent law may also be observed in the history of Man. The human race originally occupied a position in the lowest stages of Savagism. From this, in the lapse of centuries, it was impelled to advance to a higher state, in which the chaotic elements of society were arranged in form and order. Progressing still farther, the moral and intellectual faculties were brought into action, the blessings of civilization were gradually diffused, and the dawn of a new light began to break upon the ancient darkness. At a later period, we behold man in a yet more exalted position;—the power and supremacy of mind become known and appreciated, the peerless wealth of the soul begins to be disclosed, the fields of science are blooming with unfading flowers, and new-born thoughts of celestial nature, rise from the depths of the yearning spirit. So the Car of Progress is made to roll along the path of Time. Mankind are ever advancing to higher stages of enlightenment, and each new era brings with it a succession of interesting and



important developments. Constant changes, new discoveries, and brighter truths, are marking the upward progress of the race towards that glorious end, which gleams like a star in the shadowy Future.

R. P. A.

### THE TEST OF DOCTRINE.

While engaging earnestly in the work of mental investigation, and subjecting the doctrines and theories of men to the close scrutiny of Reason, it is well that we should be reminded of our obligation not only to "prove all things," but also to "hold fast to that which is good." This, of course, is the legitimate end and object of all our intellectual searchings. Were we to retain the whole mixture of good and evil which might be presented, without carefully separating the one from the other, our investigations would be evidently useless and unprofitable. Hence it is required that we should dissolve and analyze the elements of human theories, and that, having obtained a discriminating view of their intrinsic character, we should preserve and treasure what seems to be good and true, while we reject and discountenance that of an opposite nature.

This principle should be especially observed in the investigation of theological teachings. From the great mass of creeds and doctrines which prevail in the Church, we are required to select those principles which appear to be truthful and worthy of acceptance, while we discard all those false and gloomy sentiments which have existed to degrade man, dishonor God, and darken the human soul. I am aware that among those who have entered the field of theology, there exists a wide diversity of opinion in regard to that which is good;—each individual finding his own standard of right in the peculiar sentiments which he may chance to entertain. There is, however, a test of doctrine which is independent of all party prejudices and prepossessions, by which in all our investigations we may determine and adhere to that which is good. This may be expressed in the general proposition that that doctrine should be received as good, which accords with the teachings of Reason, is sanctioned by the revelations of Nature, and conforms with the pure desires and sympathies of the Soul.

A few illustrations may be here appropriately introduced, by which we may learn, according to the standard just presented, what doctrines are good. Thus we are instructed that there is but one God—the supreme Intelligence and presiding Soul of the Universe, whose essence pervades the mighty frame of Nature, whose power sustains the rolling worlds, and whose glory is reflected in the beauties of the smiling earth,—and such a sentiment we are induced to believe is good, because it accords with the teachings of Reason, is approved by an enlightened judgment, and corresponds with all that we see, and feel, and know. Again, we have derived the pleasing assurance that God is good; we are taught that in the bosom of the Infinite is the fountain of exhaustless love—that his throne is ever radiant with beams of mercy—that his countenance is ever lighted with a Father's smile, and that in all his wondrous ways and works, He manifests that impartial affection from which neither time nor death shall be able to separate the soul. Now a doctrine of this nature we are impressed to regard as good, because it is not only consistent and beautiful in itself, but is sanctioned by all the revelations of outward Nature;—every thing around us is bearing it to the ear and heart of man—it is proclaimed by the ten thousand voices of Creation—it is seen in the glowing loveliness of earth, and is heard in the silent harmony of the spheres.

"T is love that paints the purple morn,  
And bids the clouds in air upborne,  
Their genial drops distil;  
In every vernal beam it glows,  
And breathes in every gale that blows,  
And glides in every rill."

Once more: we have been instructed in those sublime truths which unfold the destiny of the human spirit. We learn that the outward casing of mortality is to pass away—that the earthly tabernacle is to be dissolved—that this mortal coil is to be

shuffled off, and then that the being within, immortal and invisible—the inward, deathless spirit, freed from the shackles of earth, is to be gently folded in angel-pinions, and wafted upward towards the throne of the Infinite. We learn that the heavenly country—the Father's "house of many mansions"—is to be made the eternal home of man; that there, amid spheres of light and purity, the weary children of earth shall gather, and dwell beneath the smile of celestial love; that there no tears shall flow, no sighs be breathed, no pain be felt; but that, amid joys that grow unwithering, and in transports of delight that angels know, the spirit shall live, bloom, and expand in its perfected glory. Oh, such a doctrine as this we may surely hold fast as good; for it is that which accords with the divine sympathies of the soul—that which answers its most holy desires, and satisfies its deep and irrepressible yearnings. Let us receive it as good, for it is as cooling streams to the thirsting soul; it is as glad tidings from a distant land—as a joyful message from the spirit-home. There is power in a truth like this to still the warring elements within, to cast the gloomy shadow from the soul, and restore light to the hopeless bosom. It has a power to soothe the mourner's grief, to lift the burden from the weary and oppressed, and impart joy, peace, and comfort, to the victims of sorrow and despair.

Having thus observed the prominent characteristics of that which is good, it is important that we carefully separate the chaff from the wheat, and beware that no bitter waters mingle with the pure streams of life and peace. In accordance with the test before mentioned, we should ever adhere to that which accords with Reason, Nature, and the human Soul—that which tends to increase our faith, strengthen our hope, and enliven our joy, and thus live beneath the beamings of eternal Truth, and drink from the fountains of celestial Wisdom.

R. P. A.

### VISIONS OF PROPHECY.

The past history of the world has brought to our view the sublime mission of many individuals, whose aspirations and impressions have reached beyond the contracted sphere of the Present, to the brighter glories of the boundless Future. There have been those in every era, who, by means of an intuitive sense, have looked through the reigning darkness, evils, and inequalities of life, and caught glimpses of the approaching destiny of man. Beautiful dreams of moral and spiritual elevation have inspired the slumbering prophet, and in words of entrancing sweetness have been revealed those golden visions, which bring hope and joy to the longing heart. Amid the prevalence of ignorance, sin, and error, the gifted soul could gaze into the depths of coming time, and rejoice in the glory which there waits for humanity. Thus the seers of every age, surrounded as they were with the shadows of human frailty, have yet unitedly pointed to those sublime results for which the pure heart most earnestly longs. They have entered into the sanctuary of divine wisdom, and transcribed a portion of that sealed book in which the glories of our destiny are written. They have been lifted up to the sphere of spiritual communion, and have received the influx of those divine truths which illumine the pathway of man to its exalted end. Blissful indeed are the visions which are thus unfolded! They teach us that there is light beyond the hovering clouds of evil,—that there is a presiding order amid the confusion of our earthly struggles, and that there is an era of brightness reserved for the human race, when the long night in which we have groped shall have passed away. The glorious period is revealed when man shall have fulfilled the design of his being, and attained the perfection of his nature—when the precious casket of the soul shall be opened, and its gems of peerless worth be scattered over the bosom of earth,—when Truth shall rise in its majesty as a sun in the firmament,—when Peace shall reign triumphant in the hearts of men,—when Harmony shall prevail in every department of society, and Love, with its own silken cords, shall unite all souls in one blissful brotherhood.

Here the inquiry may naturally arise, are such visions but the baseless structures of imagination, or are they the shadows of a

bright reality which yet remains to be enjoyed in the distant Future? The answer to this inquiry may be found by referring to the prominent and universal law of *progression*, which seems to govern the movements of the race. We may observe that humanity, from its birth, has been subjected to an increasing growth; that mankind have been constantly advancing in knowledge and refinement; that the innate faculties of the soul have been gradually developed, and that new eras, marking the degrees of moral and intellectual progress, have been successively introduced. The recognition of this principle will lead us to presume that the race will not stop at its present point of elevation, but that, from the impulse already received, it will continue to progress, ever advancing to some more exalted end, until the beautiful visions that were wrought in the uplifted soul, shall be lost in the divine reality. So we perceive that the events foretold by the inspired seer, were not mere fancy—not mere random thoughts of the future, but rather an ultimate effect produced by the operation of natural, established causes. Even now, from the exalted position already attained, we can almost gaze through the shadows that yet linger over humanity, and descry the glorious end beheld in the dreams of prophecy—the time when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and righteousness shall cover the earth as the waters fill the channels of the great deep.

These visions, which have gladdened the hearts of philanthropists in all ages, have exerted an attractive influence on the race, leading mankind onward towards the sublime end which is here disclosed. Beholding in the distance a bright oasis amid the desert of life—viewing the joyous scenes that are pictured on the veil of the Future, the earnest souls that have cherished a faith in man, move on in the direction of the promised land, seeking the dawn of that brightness which is to illumine the earth, and aspiring to the joys of that millennium which is to be the crowning glory of humanity. This is the influence which the prophetic visions are naturally designed to exert. We are to remember that, in the present condition of society, they are *only* visions; and the use or design for which they are given us, is that we may derive from them an incentive to exertion. The promised destiny of man on earth is not to be attained by any miraculous interposition of divine power, but it is to be *worked out* by earnest and persevering effort—it is to be reached by the gradual, but constant advancement of the race in wisdom and purity. In this view of the subject, it becomes a duty incumbent on every individual, to faithfully perform his allotted part in the great work before us, that the period may the more speedily arrive when the bright visions of prophecy shall become the actual realities of life.

R. P. A.

☞ The following testimonial is given us by a friend residing in New Brighton, Pa. While we are laboring for the diffusion of truth at the sacrifice of pecuniary interests, it affords us satisfaction to know that our efforts are not unappreciated:

"The 'Messenger' is a peerless sheet. I only regret it does not find its way into the habitation of every intelligent person in the land. How pure is its sphere—how radiant its light—how beautiful and elevating its philosophy, compared with nearly every other publication in the wide world! I hope it will be abundantly sustained, and find more and more readers every day, who shall regard it as the 'herald of the dawn of the world's great sabbath of liberty and light.' I hope that this year, of which to-day is the beginning, will witness great progress in the world of thought, and new lights in the spiritual heavens."

WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY, UNABRIDGED.—This noble work contains more words, with their definitions, than any other Dictionary of the English language; and many of the words are traced to their etymon in other languages. We are pleased to learn that it has already been introduced into many of the public schools and other institutions of learning, in Massachusetts. It is almost invaluable to the writer, public speaker, or man of business. The excellent and substantial manner in which it is bound and finished, is highly creditable to the publishers, our enterprising townsmen, Messrs. G. & C. MERRIAM. A. M.

## The Inward Law.

"They are a law unto themselves."

This expression was applied by Paul to such of the Gentile world as had not a knowledge of the principles of Christ, and were left to attain heaven simply by the light of nature and reason. Had he comprehended the fact that this inward law was the *only* one which determines the character of all spirits in the universe, he had uttered a truth which, to angel's wisdom, is immortal. But it was reserved for one to declare the full import of this principle, who had passed from earth to be educated and unfolded in the more perfect and infallible teachings of a heavenly sphere. This was none other than the lovely spirit of JAMES VICTOR WILSON, who, in his second and most interesting communication to Mr. A. J. Davis (which will shortly appear in the second volume of the Great Harmonia), reiterated the expression, that "*all spirits*," whether in the form or residents of the higher spheres, are, as respects their moral and intellectual susceptibilities, "*a law unto themselves*." How beautifully simple and consistent does a correct apprehension of this principle make the moral laws of our being appear. Instead of supposing that the retributive effects of a whole life spent in moral disobedience can be obliterated in a few moments by the efficacy of a half-felt prayer, we learn from this truth that Deity has implanted within us a monitor, whose unceasing watchfulness faithfully accounts for every conscious dereliction we make from the standard of true rectitude, and that the *intention* or *character* of every thought and emotion we cherish, proclaims its *own* sentence of condemnation or acquittal, rebuke or approval, with reference to every act performed in the course of our earthly career. The doctrine, then, that "a belief in a future punishment is *necessary* to restrain the inherent viciousness of man's nature," is hereby rendered wholly unessential. The truths unfolded by the spiritual philosophy show us, that though amenable to no proscriptive or judicial sentence hereafter, in consequence of our short comings while in the body; yet, that there is another judgment, the effect of which, to the mind imbued with the true import of our text, will ever, it is believed, prove sufficient to deter it from the premeditated and intentional commission of overt acts. Any other, or more superficial view which we may take of the divine economy in its practical application to man as its subject, must, to the enlightened understanding, detract from the glorious and eternal perfections of the Father, the immutable harmony and consistency of which must constitute the firm foundation of hope and confidence, on which the human spirit must forever repose. Since, then, we are the arbiters of our own destinies,—since the purity and wisdom which we may here unfold will be as radiant gems in the crown of our immortal glory, let us strive to attain that holiness and perfection, which, when freed from our earthly tenements, will lead us to seek a kindred fellowship in the society of the pure and lovely, in spheres beyond the ken of human vision, or the reach of our most exalted conceptions.

A MEMBER OF THE HARTFORD HARMONIAL ASSOCIATION.

## Note to the Reader.

It will be seen by an article in the present number, that owing to a severe and protracted illness, the senior editor of the Messenger has been obliged to retire from the field of labor, and abandon the enterprise in which his heart was so fully enlisted. The necessity which has led to this step cannot but be deeply regretted by those who have perused the productions of his pen. Still, as the weak, enfeebled body can now poorly answer the purposes of the living spirit, it seems better that he should seek rest in the retirement of home, than exhaust his remaining strength in the service of the public. The Messenger will continue to be published by the subscriber—at least during the current year—if health and strength remain to accomplish the task. Arrangements have been made to secure for it a more prompt issue and still neater appearance, while we hope to make the quality of the matter correspond with the external improvements. Let the friends every where, who are interested in the principles of the harmonial faith, lend us their aid and countenance; and

the work shall move gloriously onward to the accomplishment of those grand results, in which we are all so deeply concerned.

R. P. AMBLER.

☞ The Messenger of last week was printed, as our readers may have observed, on an inferior quality of paper. We trust this will be regarded as an unintentional mistake, which is not likely to occur again.

## Poetry.

### GLIMPSES OF THE SPIRIT LAND.—No. 3.

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

#### REALITIES.

I have such thoughts so beautiful and sweet  
I fain embrace as night each nestling star,  
That come as does the morn, with dewy feet,  
And heralding the joy that breaks afar ;—  
And thoughts, to me so simply true and real,  
As real as dew-drops are unto the leaf,  
That I discourse until my fond Ideal  
Is wedded to the form of my Belief.

The Spirit-Land then stands before my eyes  
Not as a city we in fancy make,  
But as a city 'neath the moonlight lies  
With shadows seen reposing on the lake ;—  
And I can clearly see the silver spray  
That sparkles when the boatman lifts his oar,  
As towards the Palace of Immortal Day  
O'er silent waves he plies his passage o'er.

And then a sound comes floating to my ears  
Like rustling leaves the playful winds had fanned,  
Until the Gates I've seen through falling tears,  
I see with Heaven's own rainbow spanned ;—  
And beings here that to my dreams belong,  
With waving palms attend each welcome band,  
And with their starry harps recite in song  
The harmonies that fill the Spirit-Land :—

And there are seen those blooming fields and rills  
That fringe the margin of that peaceful Bay,  
The life, the same, that here our bosoms thrills  
Still finds us pilgrims on our upper way ;—  
And I rejoice so real to find it all,  
As finds the chrysalis the fields and trees,—  
That doubt was but the shadow of the wall,  
My spirit now through its own starlight sees.

#### VICTORY OF TRUTH.

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

Brethren of Progress—ye Cohorts of Right,  
And dauntless defenders of Truth ;  
Not with weapons barbaric go ye to the fight,  
Grey-beard'd age, young manhood, and youth.

But sky-tempered armor, of Reason and Love,  
Christ-proven, successful and sure,  
Unknown yet to bigot, to priest, or to king—  
Consecrated to all that are pure.

Then bravely to battle with error go forth,  
'T is mortal, and cannot survive ;  
But Truth is immortal, in its nature designed  
To triumph, and ever to live.—J. L. B.

Plainfield Gazette.

## Miscellaneous Department.

### THE FLOWER GARDEN.

The delicate, innocent Theresa had been confined to the sick bed during the finest part of the spring. When she grew better, and was gaining strength, she spake of the flowers, and asked whether they bloomed as beautifully as on the preceding year ? She dearly loved the flowers, but was not able to go out and gather them. Then Erich, brother of the sick girl, took a basket, and whispered to his mother : "I will bring her the most beautiful in the fields !" And so, for the first time, he went out to the country : for as long as the beloved sister lay in bed, he was unwilling to leave her. It now seemed to him that the spring had never been so beautiful, for he looked upon it and felt it with an affectionate and benevolent heart.

The joyous boy ran up and down the hills. The nightingales sang around him, the bees hummed, the butterflies fluttered, and the loveliest flowers were blooming at his feet. And he went on, singing and hopping from one hillock to another, from one flower to another. His soul was serene as the blue heavens above him, and his eye sparkled like a pure fountain springing out of the rock.

At length his basket was filled with the most beautiful flowers, and on the top lay a crown of field strawberries, strung like pearls upon a spire of grass. Smiling, the happy boy looked upon his full basket, and laid himself down on the soft moss beneath the shade of an oak. Here he silently gazed upon the scenery so beautiful in the glory of spring, and the thousand varied flowers, and listened to the cheerful song of the nightingale.

But he had rejoiced and sported himself tired. Even the jubilee of the fields, and the song of the nightingale coaxed him to sleep. So he lay down beside his full basket, a lively image of the sensual pleasures, the satiety of which had exhausted him, and of their fading nature.

The gentle boy slumbered peacefully, when lo ! a storm gathered in the heavens. Dark and silent the clouds rolled up ; the lightnings played, and the voice of the thunder roared still nearer and louder. Suddenly the wind rustled in the branches of the oak, and waked the boy affrighted. He looked round on the heavens, covered with threatening clouds. Not a sun-beam illumined the plain. Presently a tremendous clap of thunder fell upon his ear. The poor boy stood as if stunned by this change in the aspect of nature.

Son of mirth, are you more secure in your joyous career ?

Already the heavy drops of rain were falling thickly through the leaves of the oak. Then the affrighted boy snatched up his basket and ran. The storm was now impending over his head. The rain prevailed, and the thunder rolled frightfully ; the water streamed down from his locks and over his shoulders. With difficulty could he proceed on his way. Suddenly a strong blast of wind caught the basket in his hand and scattered all his carefully collected flowers over the field. Then his countenance fell, and with angry displeasure he threw down the basket at his feet. Crying aloud and wet through, he at length reached the home of his parents.

Wise son of earth, is thy displeasure and the nature of thy wrath more becoming and kindly, when thy desire has not been met, or thy plan has failed ?

The storm soon passed away, and the skies became clear again. The birds anew began their songs, the farmer his toil. The atmosphere became pure and cool, and a sweet calm reigned over hill and dale. The ground having just drunk up the rain, emitted a delightful fragrance. Every thing seemed renewed, and wore the semblance of youth, as if nature had just come fresh from the hands of a benevolent Creator, and the inhabitants of the country looked up with thankful joy to the distant clouds, which had brought blessings and prosperity to their fields.

Storms purify and sweeten the atmosphere ; out of the dark cloud comes down the blessing of heaven—sufferings and trials

tend to the ennobling and improvement of the sons of earth.

The serene sky soon allured the frightened boy again into the field. Ashamed of his indignation, he went quietly back to look for his thrown away basket, and fill it with flowers. He felt his own life, too, renovated. The breath of the cool air, the odor of the field, the leaves of the trees, the songs of the forest, all seemed to him doubly beautiful after the storm and the refreshing rain. And the shame resulting from the consciousness of his foolish and unrighteous displeasure, rendered his joy more modest and softened.

The joys of earth need the spice of bitter vicissitude in order to their preservation and enhancement—a proof of their earthly nature.

The basket was still lying on the slope of the hill. A black-berry bush had caught it and protected it from the violence of the wind. Gratefully did the boy look upon the bush, and loosen the basket. But, how ecstatic was his joy and wonder, when he looked around him. The field glistened like the starry heavens. The rain had allured out a thousand fresh flowers, had opened a thousand buds, and pearled the dew-drops on the leaves. Erich strolled about, like a busy bee, and plucked the flowers.

The sun was now near going down, and the gladsome boy hastened home with his basket filled. How his flower-treasure, and the pearly-crown of his freshly gathered strawberries delighted his soul! The setting sun threw around him the beams of his friendly face, while he hid away homeward. But yet more joyously beamed his eye, when he perceived the thankfulness and joyousness of his gentle sister.

Verily, said the mother, the joys we impart to others are still the most delightful.—*Krummacher*.

### Music of Winter.

I love to listen to the falling of the snow. It is an inobtrusive and sweet music. You may temper your heart to the serenest mood by its low murmur. It is that kind of music that only intrudes upon your ear when your thoughts come languidly. You need not hear it if your mind is not idle. It realizes my dream of another world, where music is intuitive, like a thought, and comes only when it is remembered.

And the frost, too, has a melodious "minstrelsy." You will hear its crystal shoot, in the dead of a clear night, as if the moonbeams were splintering like arrows on the ground; and you listen to it the more earnestly, that it is the going on of one of the most beautiful of Nature's deep mysteries. I know nothing so wonderful as the shooting of a crystal. Heaven has hidden its principles as yet from the inquisitive eye of the philosopher, and we must be content to gaze on its exquisite beauty, and listen in mute wonder to the noise of its invisible workmanship. It is to find a knowledge for us. We shall comprehend it when we know how the "morning stars sang together."

You would hardly look for music in the dreariness of the early winter. But before the keener frosts set in, and while the warm winds are yet stealing back occasionally, like regrets of the departed summer, there will come a soft rain or a heavy mist; and when the north wind returns, there will be drops suspended, like ear-ring jewels, between the filaments of the silver tassels, and in the feathery edges of the dark green hemlocks, and if the clearing up is not followed by a heavy wind, they will all be frozen in their places like well-set gems. The next morning, the warm sun comes out, and by the middle of the calm, dazzling forenoon, they are all loosened from the close touch which sustained them, and will drop at the slightest motion. If you go along upon the south side of the wood at that hour, you will hear music. The dry foliage of the summer's shedding is scattered over the ground, and the hard round drops ring out clearly and distinctly as they are shaken down with the stirring of the breeze. It is something like the running of deep and rapid water, only more fitful and merrier; but to one who goes out in nature with his heart open, it is a pleasant music, and in contrast with the stern character of the season, delightful.

Winter has many other sounds that give pleasure to the seeker for hidden sweetness; but they are too rare and accidental to be

described distinctly. The brooks have a sullen and muffled murmur, under the frozen surface; the ice in the distant river heaves up with the swell of the current and falls again to the bank with a prolonged echo, and the woodman's axe rings cheerfully out from the bosom of the unrobed forest. These are, at best however, but melancholly sounds, and like that cheerless season, they but drive in the heart upon itself. I believe it is so ordered in Heaven's wisdom. We forget ourselves in the excitement of the sweet summer. Its music and its loveliness win away to the scenes that link up the affections, and need a hand to turn us back tenderly, and hide from us the outward idols in whose worship we are forgetting the higher and more spiritual altars.—*N. P. Willis*.

### Snow Crystals.

Snow, examined with the aid of a microscope, exhibits structures of exquisite beauty, regularity, and endless variety, though it sometimes presents no peculiarity of form, but falls in very minute globular particles. Commonly a snow-flake consists of a series of crystals, formed independently in the upper regions of the air. These are united in groups while descending through the atmosphere, by agitations striking them against each other. The flickering and gradual descent of the flakes is owing to their great extent of surface in comparison with their volume. A number of brilliant icy speculæ, or points diverging from a common center, resembling stars having so many rays, apparently wrought with the nicest art, is the usual form of the crystals, which are for the most part hexagonal, presenting a nucleus with six divergences. This stelliform shape is the ordinary appearance of snow.

### The Heart.

The little I have seen of the world, teaches me to look upon the errors of others in sorrow, not in anger. When I take the history of one poor heart that has sinned and suffered, and represent to myself the struggles and temptations it has passed through; the brief pulsations of joy; the feverish inquietude of hope and fear; the pressure of want; the desertions of friends; the scorn of the world that has little charity; the desolation of the soul's sanctuary, and threatening vices within—health gone—happiness gone—even hope that remains the longest, gone—I would fain leave the erring soul of my fellow man with Him from whose hand it came.—*Longfellow*.

### Love.

The following exquisite passage occurs in Tupper's *Crock of Gold*:—"Love is the weapon which Omnipotence reserved to conquer rebel man when all else had failed. Reason he parries; fear he answers blow to blow; but Love,—that sun against whose melting beams winter cannot stand, that soft, subduing slumber which wrestles down the giant,—there is not one human creature in a million, not a thousand men in all earth's large quintillion, whose clay heart is hardened against love."

☞ 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.

We have also for sale an interesting pamphlet, entitled "Philosophy of Modern Miracles, or the Relations of Spiritual Causes to Physical Effects." By "a Dweller in the Temple." Price 25 cents.

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