

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.

IS MAN A FREE AGENT?

WRITTEN FOR THE SPIRIT MESSENGER,
BY A. J. DAVIS.

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 10.]

It is essential that we should understand the nature and qualifications of the human soul. If we obtain a true knowledge of man, we will proceed forthwith to change our thoughts and actions respecting him. We would change our penal codes, our principles of government, and the character of our religious and moral instructions. For when we once perceive and realize the truth, that man cannot control his belief and opinions, nor all of his actions and character, our souls will expand with compassion and benevolence; and we will combine our labor, our capital and talents, to improve his social, moral and spiritual condition.

How unreasonable and deplorable it is to teach a doctrine so dogmatic and despotic as to be under the necessity of enforcing its adoption by threats and denunciations! And yet our religious teachers, the clergymen, do it perpetually. Surely nothing can be more unphilosophical and despotic than the passage—"He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned;" because no human soul can either believe or disbelieve without a sufficient preponderation of evidence. The wild savage is not to be damned for not believing in the existence, life, and miracles of Jesus; nor is the Christian to be blest for believing them; because neither can manufacture his own convictions—cannot have absolute control over the promptings and inclinations of his own mind. If the reader desires to test the truth of this assertion, let him try this moment to *hate* a much beloved friend—to doubt the existence of any trees, stones, and men on the earth—to *disbelieve* the reality of his own existence.

Swedenborg asserts man's personal and moral freedom, and, at the same time, fixes him in a position between two mighty invisible attractions—one is Hell, the other Heaven! Now, in the face of this statement, the reasonable intellect inquires—How is it possible for man to be "*free*" while pent up between two contending forces—between such positive attractions? Is an object which is *braced* on all sides, in a state of freedom? Reason, the soul's prime minister, replies unequivocally in the negative; because man, materially and spiritually, possesses universal affinities which he did not create, which he cannot control, which he cannot destroy; but he is compelled to *act as he is acted upon*, and to manifest character according to his constitutional capacity and social situation. Thus, even admitting the affirmations of Swedenborg, that man is introduced into this world between two great eternal antagonisms, Heaven and Hell, it is distinctly obvious that man would not, because he could not, be in a state of absolute moral freedom. Yet, there really exists a *species* of freedom, liberty, or independence in human thoughts and actions, and which, though comparative, gives rise to many misapprehensions as to the extent of man's accountability, responsibility, or obligations to the MAGNET of the universe, which, for the presence of a better word, we term Deity.

The character and extent of this independence, which is altogether comparative, I will now proceed to explain.

As is illustrated in the case of the four individuals already mentioned, who were designed to present a measurement of physical capacity and strength, I will now consider the relative powers and actions of the same four men—each born of the same parents, and commencing their manhood in a similar social situation—viz: *in extreme poverty!*

JOHN, the first man, is in the possession of a weak and combative mind; his wisdom principle, or reason, has been called into action but very little; his animal powers and propensities have ruled his better attributes, as barbarians once ruled the nations of the earth; he is vain and ambitious; and, contrasting his social situation and prospects in the world, with the plentifulness and advantages of others, he becomes exceedingly nervous and impatient. Yet, notwithstanding this constitutional susceptibility to the slightest causes of uneasiness and dissatisfaction, he endeavors to struggle along, revealing his nervousness and impatience to no one, and disturbing no individual or community. At length, however, this weak-minded, vain, and ambitious man, is unexpectedly thrown out of employment, and the pangs, the mortifications, and the disadvantages of *poverty*, sting and wound his sensitive and weak intellect into an uncontrollable state of despairing passion. A wild, reckless desperation of mind succeeds this passion, just as a fever succeeds a chill, and he forthwith plans the destruction of his employer. But here the reader inquires—"How can one man 'plan' the destruction of another, unless he be both a *sane* and a *free* agent?" The answer is briefly written: there is a Law, universal and eternal in its nature, which flows and governs unchangeably throughout the entire infinitude of matter and mind—and this law is *Order*. Hence, in obedience to this universal tendency, there is nothing but that gets into something like order and arrangement. The savage marches his tribes, the birds fly, the fishes swim, the seasons come and go, all representing an order and harmony more or less obvious. The affrighted steed, though dashing madly through the crowded streets, preserves an indwelling *order* in the motion of his heart, his muscles, and in the galvanic actions of his brain. There is no insanity so extreme, there is no hallucination, no disorder, so nebulous and chaotic, but that is attended by something resembling a periodicity of movement, and an order of position in the constitution of things. So with *John*. He, like every other man, possesses the *Secretiveness* of the serpent, the *Cautiousness* of the cat, the *Ingenuity* of the beaver, the *Destructiveness* of the tiger, and the *Pride* of the lion. These elements of the human soul, if not tamed and harmoniously exercised by the wisdom principle, may become inflamed and violent as the beasts of the forest; and, yet, there will be in their manifestations of fury, a kind of *order*, which is the indwelling tendency of every thing in being.

Let us not shrink from the legitimate conclusions to which Truth conducts the soul. I am impressed to present no theory; only to write concerning those things which *actually* exist in the constitution of God and Nature; and man is a part of this great living Body. I say, then, that *John* plans the destruction of his employer; he takes advantage of the first opportunity favorable to the accomplishment of this deed; he commits the *murder*, possesses himself of all the available wealth about the person of the fallen man, and hastily leaves the country.

JAMES, the second man, has inherited a similar sensitiveness of mind; is also vain and ambitious; but he is more secretive than combative; he feels more of the disposition of the *serpent* in his nature than that of the *tiger*. Like his brother, the various reflections of indigence upon his character and habits, move him to a corresponding uneasiness and discontent. He sees and feels the advantages which more fortunately situated individuals have over him,—that they can enjoy what, and go where, he cannot; and, reasoning superficially, perhaps *soundly*, he feels that he is not to blame for all this difference; that he had done nothing to merit the unfortunateness of his situation; that others have done nothing to merit their wealth and luxury; that his neighbor was born rich and he was born poor; and, inasmuch as the fortunate classes do nothing toward reconciling him to his

situation — manifesting no disposition to ameliorate his condition, and to divide with him — he does not see but that he is totally justified in the attempt to help himself to the superabundance. But, his combativeness being small, he does not see that he should yield to the slightest impulse to commit murder — in truth, he has never felt any such impulse since his birth, — but, his *secretiveness* being large, he sees that his impulse to plunder, to steal, to appropriate unto himself the property of others, is his immediate and overpowering disposition. He consequently yields, *because the temptation is stronger than his restraining powers*, and becomes a robber!

JOSEPH, the third man, has also inherited a structure of mind analogous to his brothers; he is sensitive, vain, and ambitious; he has small combativeness, small secretiveness, but very *large benevolence*. The same combination of influences and circumstances surround and act upon him, as upon his brothers; and he is wounded and goaded by wants in various forms and degrees of severity. He sees precisely what his brothers see, concerning their own situation, and the social position of others; and feels that there is enough for him in the possession of the rich, even after they have built their splendid mansions and churches, and gratified many of their most extravagant desires. But he does not wish to *injure* the better situated individual, nor to take his property *unasked*; yet, it is clear to his mind that the rich man can spare a few pence without inconvenience. Hence, Joseph, having no particular disposition to labor when work could be obtained, nor any success in obtaining an occupation when he had the disposition, he yields to his temptation to *beg* for a subsistence.

HENRY, the fourth man, possesses an organization vastly superior to his three brothers. He has a full share of energy and self-government. His organs, phrenologically speaking, are harmoniously developed. Combativeness, secretiveness, benevolence, and self-esteem, are full, and in constant subordination to the superior faculties of judgment and understanding. And he, too, is extremely poor; he thinks upon the superior advantages and circumstances of the wealthy; he is very industrious to acquire means of personal subsistence and comfort, and is surrounded and affected by every cause, internal and external, which acted upon his brothers; but, notwithstanding all this, he is neither moved to kill, to steal, nor to solicit alms. He is thrown out of employment — is destitute of food — is overcome by prostration and disease, and at last *dies of starvation*.

Here are presented four cases, whose parallelisms are discoverable in many portions of France, England, Ireland, and America, where individual crime is limited to, and measured by, individual capacity. John, being the weakest in his moral constitution, was consequently overcome the quickest; but Henry, having the strongest and most harmonious intellect, was not so affected by those *causes* which moved John, James, and Joseph, to the commission of those crimes and acts, which are termed *murdering, robbing, and begging*.

Thus, it is seen, that *four* different individuals starting from the same place, were caused to tread *four* distinct paths, and to arrive at *four* distinct terminations. The enlightened mind will perceive that these distinct paths and terminations, were the result, not of "Free Will," but of absolute and unconditional necessity. The first man was a *victim* of an inflamed organ of combativeness — the primary cause of which inflammation was *extreme poverty*. The second man was a *victim* of an inflamed organ of secretiveness; the third man was a *victim* of misdirected benevolence; and the fourth man was a *victim* of unmitigated poverty. Society was the *first cause* of these disastrous terminations, because it permits extreme poverty; and parents were the *second cause* of these fates, for they imparted the organizations, which, by being so obviously dissimilar, caused the dissimilar terminations of their four sons.

From the foregoing, the conclusion is certainly legitimate, that an individual is accountable according to his capacity; and by accountability or responsibility, I mean, that an individual is to be measured and estimated according to his actual merit and capacity, and, that corresponding *thoughts* and *deeds* are to be expected to flow from him — provided all external conditions and circumstances are not *very* unfavorable to this legitimate manifestation of his character.

Inasmuch as Man is both an *actor* and a *circumstance* — both a *cause* and an *effect* — he should be treated, not as a being having the *will* and *power* to do what he desires, when and where he pleases, but he should be *born, educated, situated, rewarded* and *punished*, as a *TREE*, which is capable of yielding an abundance of *good fruit*, only when it is properly organized, and correspondingly conditioned in a *good soil*!

The doctrine of the free will, or agency of the soul, is positively contradicted by every thing in nature and man. Every thought, every motive, every deed, and motion that is wrought in the human constitution, arises from the operation of the interior laws and essences, and from the combinations of the physical and mental economy, and these laws of our nature are inevitable and unchangeable. The *comparative* freedom which man seemingly inherits coevally with his individuality, is *exactly* illustrated by all the independence which a gold fish is perceived to enjoy in the globe of water. The fish is *at liberty* to swim in any direction it desires; but it is dependent upon the water, this upon the glass globe, this upon the window of the building, this upon the earth, this upon the sun, and thus *there is one unbroken chain of dependencies from the little fish to the Deity!* So with man. He is *free*, physically, to move about upon this globe of earth, but he cannot live without the perpetual contributions of food, air, light, &c., which flow unto him from Nature; and he is spiritually (or morally,) free to move about *within* the circle described by his capacity, but beyond this circle he has no more freedom than the little fish.

Although Pope, in his "Essay on Man," revealed the true relation which subsists between man and nature, and proves that human Will is subordinate to God's Will, yet he was unfortunately moved to contradict this sublime truth in his "Universal Prayer." I am impressed to regard this as a great departure from the uniform expression of wisdom, visible throughout this author's works. He evidently sacrificed philosophy to theology, when he affirmed that God in

"Binding nature fast in fate,
Left free the Human Will."

It would be as consistent and as true for me to affirm, that an artisan made a watch *complete* and *united* in all its parts, yet,

Left free the middle wheel!

It is not possible for God to bind nature fast and leave uncircumscribed the freedom of the soul; for Man is a *part* of Nature, and he moves as harmoniously in the great whole, as the heart in the human body. The laws of God we cannot alter; and, notwithstanding thousands of clergymen, commentators and magistrates, believe, and teach, and act, and punish, and blame, and praise, upon the *supposed* truth of man's "free agency," yet the stupendous panorama of the universe will move on in its sublime and harmonious order, and TRUTH will live unchanged forever!

The poet was right in affirming that —

"We will, and act, and talk of liberty,
And all our wills, and all our doings, both,
Are (now) limited within this little life;
Free Will is but *NECESSITY* in play, —
The chattering of the golden reins which guide
The purposes of Heaven to their goal."

In conclusion, let me impress the reader, that this philosophy of human motives and movements, develops the religion of distributive justice — the spirit of compassion — the law of love to man — and the glorious morality of universal benevolence; and I may add, that it may open the reader's love and wisdom to a better and higher perception and appreciation of the nature of man, of the goodness and justice of God, and of the beauties of His material and spiritual universe.

Reader, do not complain of thy neighbor, because of his unwillingness to receive thy new ideas; but know thou, and remember that old ones are the best food for him whose function of mental digestion is weak. Have I yet to tell thee that babes and dyspeptics should never overtax their stomachs! s. s. s.

Psychological Department.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DEATH.

AN EXTRACT FROM THE "GREAT HARMONIA."

[CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 11.]

As soon as the spirit, whose departing hour I thus watched, was wholly disengaged from the tenacious physical body, I directed my attention to the movements and emotions of the former; and I saw her begin to breathe the most interior or spiritual portions of the surrounding terrestrial atmosphere. (The reader will find an explanation of what is meant by the "interior portions of the terrestrial atmosphere," by referring to the consideration of "*air as a medium*," to be found in the pathological department of this volume.) At first it seemed with difficulty that she could breathe the new medium; but, in a few seconds, she inhaled and exhaled the spiritual elements of nature, with the greatest possible ease and delight. And now I saw that she was in the possession of exterior and physical proportions, which were identical, in every possible particular—improved and beautified—with those proportions which characterized her earthly organization. That is to say, she possessed a heart, a stomach, a liver, lungs, &c. &c., just as her natural body did previous to (not her, but) *its* death. This is a wonderful and consoling truth! But I saw that the improvements which were wrought upon, and in, her spiritual organization, were not so particular and thorough as to destroy or transcend her personality; nor did they materially alter her natural appearance or earthly characteristics. So much like her former self was she, that, had her friends beheld her (*as I did*), they certainly would have exclaimed—as we often do upon the sudden return of a long absent friend, who leaves us in illness and returns in health—"Why, how well you look! how improved you are!" such were the nature—most beautifying in their extent—of the improvements that were wrought upon her.

I saw her continue to conform, and accustom herself, to the new elements and elevating sensations which belong to the inner life. I did not particularly notice the workings and emotions of her newly awakening and fast unfolding spirit; except, that I was careful to remark her philosophic tranquility throughout the entire process, and her non-participation with the different members of her family, in their unrestrained bewailing of her departure from the earth, to unfold in Love and Wisdom throughout eternal spheres. She understood, at a glance, that they could only gaze upon the cold and lifeless form which she had but just deserted; and she readily comprehended the fact, that it was owing to want of true knowledge upon their parts, that they thus vehemently regretted her merely physical death.

The excessive weeping and lamentation of friends and relatives, over the external form of one departed, are mainly caused by the sensuous and superficial mode by which the majority of mankind view the phenomenon of death. For, with but few exceptions, the race is so conditioned and educated on the earth—not yet having grown into spiritual perceptions—not yet progressed to where "*whatsoever is hid shall be revealed*"—realizing, only through the medium of the natural senses, the nearness of the beloved—watching and comprehending only the external signs and processes of physical dissolution—supposing *this* contortion to indicate pain, and *that* expression to indicate anguish—I say, the race is so situated and educated, that *death* of the body (to the majority of the earth's inhabitants) is equivalent to an annihilation of the personality of the individual. But I would comfort the superficial observer, and I can solemnly assure the inquirer after truth, that, when an individual dies naturally, the spirit experiences no pain; nor, should the material body be dissolved with disease, or crushed by the fearful avalanche, is the individuality of the spirit deformed, or in the least degree obscured. Could you but turn your natural gaze from the lifeless body, which can no longer answer to your look of love; and could your spiritual eyes be opened, you would behold—standing in your midst—a form, the same, but

more beautiful, and living! Hence, there is great cause to rejoice at the *birth* of the spirit from this world into the Inner Sphere of Life—yea, it is far more reasonable and appropriate to weep at the majority of marriages which occur in this world, than to lament when man's immortal spirit escapes from its earthly form, to live and unfold in a higher and better country! You may clothe yourselves with the dark habiliments of wo, when you consign at the altar, a heart to a living grave; or when you chain the soul to breathe in an uncongenial atmosphere; but robe yourselves with garments of light to honor the spirit's birth into a higher life!

The period required to accomplish the entire *change*, which I saw, was not far from two hours and a half; but this furnishes no rule as to the time required for *every* spirit to elevate and reorganize itself above the head of the outer form. Without changing my position, or spiritual perceptions, I continued to observe the movements of her new-born spirit. As soon as she became accustomed to the new elements which surrounded her, she descended from her elevated position, which was immediately over the body, by an effort of the will-power, and directly passed out of the door of the bedroom, in which she had lain (in the material form) prostrated with disease for several weeks. It being in a summer month, the doors were all open, and her egress from the house was attended with no obstructions. I saw her pass through the adjoining room, out of the door, and step from the house into the atmosphere! I was overwhelmed with delight and astonishment, when, for the first time, I realized the universal truth that the spiritual organization can tread the atmosphere, which, while in the coarser, earthly form, we breathe—so much more refined is man's spiritual constitution. She walked in the atmosphere as easily, and in the same manner, as we tread the earth, and ascend an eminence. Immediately upon her emergence from the house, *she was joined by two friendly spirits from the spiritual country*; and, after tenderly recognising and communing with each other, the three, in the most graceful manner, began ascending obliquely through the ethereal envelopment of our globe. They walked so naturally and fraternally together, that I could scarcely realize the fact that they trod the air—they seemed to be walking upon the side of a glorious but familiar mountain! I continued to gaze upon them until the distance shut them from my view; whereupon I returned to my external and ordinary condition.

O, what a contrast! Instead of beholding that beautiful and youthfully unfolded spirit, I now saw, in common with those about me, the lifeless—cold—and shrouded organism of the caterpillar, which the joyous butterfly had so recently abandoned!

SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS.—The subjects of the "rappings" will be fully unfolded and explained to our readers in due time. A letter from the Fox family, dated at Rochester, August 19th, has been received by the editors. The ladies do not receive the visits of the public, as formerly, having fully vindicated themselves, during their recent visit to New York, from the false imputation of collusion and fraud in making the singular sounds and other spiritual manifestations which accompany them. They inform us, that, in the presence of a respectable circle of friends and neighbors, assembled at their house on Friday evening the 16th inst., new and startling demonstrations were made. Similar manifestations were repeated on the Sunday evening following. The sounds were very loud upon the walls, floor, and other parts of the house. Sometimes sounds imitating heavy footsteps were heard, apparently upon the floor of the room in which the company were sitting.—Eds.

SPIRITUAL SENSES.—Beneath our external senses, are spiritual ones. These correspond to the natural senses, but are much more refined and perfect. Each one is complete in itself, but all blend together and form one superior sense, which is *intuition*. These spiritual senses should be cultivated, and when they are so, we shall be better prepared to hold communion with the higher spheres. If we would see the beautiful forms which are now invisible, we must open our interior perceptions, and if we would hear the angel voices that are ever speaking to the soul, we must listen with the spiritual sense.

R. P. A.

THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

APOLLOS MUNN AND R. P. AMBLER, EDITORS.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., AUGUST 24, 1850.

THE CHARACTER OF MIRACLES.

The term miracle, traced to its etymon, simply signifies a wonder—an enigma—something not easily understood; and in this sense it should always be considered. The idea of something supernatural in the character of miracles, had its origin in the mists and darkness of heathen ages. It was employed by that ancient and distinguished heathen philosopher, Zoroaster, the author of the Zendavesta, who constantly appealed to the marvellous susceptibilities of the human mind, for credence in relation to his miraculous conversation with the gods. His doctrines, an advanced and reformed system of Magianism, were embodied in the Zend, and now constitute the theology of the modern Persees, who appeal to the miracles recorded by their great heathen prototype, as conclusive evidence that he was inspired by the gods. The same idea of supernaturalism was recognized by Mahomet, who, like Zoroaster, appeals to the authority of miracles to establish a belief in his revelations, as given in the Koran. In the twelfth year of the mission of this ancient prophet, it is historically recorded, that he was actually transfigured; and that he made a night journey from Mecca to Jerusalem, and thence through *ninety heavens*, where he had an interesting conversation with God; thence back to Mecca, where he arrived early on the subsequent morning. The followers of Mahomet devoutly believe in the entire verity of this miraculous transfiguration, and to do them justice, we are constrained to admit, that in support of this, and other cognate miracles of their revered prophet, they do adduce evidence quite as strong as the believers in the Christian religion can produce, in support of the alleged miracles of Christ. It is true that Christians will not admit the supernatural character of Mahomet's mission, or his miracles; they insist there was nothing connected with his alleged transfiguration that cannot be rationally explained, by allowing something for the overheated imaginations of his followers, and by supposing that they were the victims of an artful and cunningly contrived cheat. But while we, as Christians, thus dispose of the character of the miracles of Mahomet, and believe them to be in strict conformity with natural laws, do we not lay too much stress upon the recorded miracles of the New Testament, even claiming them as evidence of the special divinity of Christ, to be considered by impartial judges, either as logical reasoners, or honest discriminators? It is a poor rule that will not operate impartially. If history, tradition, and the honest opinions of many millions of intelligent people, will not prove true the transfiguration of Mahomet in the sixth century, why should the same kind of testimony and *no other*, prove sufficient to establish the belief in the resurrection of the corporeal body of Christ? We do not institute this analysis of the evidence in both cases, with a view to lower the really sublime character of CHRIST, in the estimation of a single human being; we look upon his character, as exhibited in his life and teachings, with no ordinary veneration. Standing up as a GREAT MORAL REFORMER—a PERFECT MAN, like a brilliant light in the midst of a dark and barbarous age, he was most eminently to be regarded by his disciples as a SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD, through the force of his sublime teachings and splendid example. He required no so-called miracles to sustain the purity of his mission; nor was there an event that occurred during his earthly pilgrimage, which, if properly understood, could not be explained upon principles entirely in harmony with nature's universal laws. It should be remembered that all the accounts we have of the miracles of Christ, were written many years after the date of their alleged occurrence, and that the gospel writers make mention of only three periods in the life of Christ—viz: his birth and infancy—his twelfth year, when he entered the temple, and the few last years

of his life, when his miracles were alleged to have been wrought. Thus, as a mere *biography*, the gospel writings are singularly imperfect and deficient, as they leave some twenty-five out of the thirty years of Christ's life, a perfect blank. It is true that many gospels were collected by the Nicene, and other ecclesiastical councils, which collectively furnish an account of the life of Christ; but the Church tribunals have stamped these Scriptures as *apocryphal*, and they have accordingly been stricken out of the New Testament. In these various Gospels, the whole of which form a connected biography of Christ, from the period of his birth to the hour of his death, are recorded many miracles, some of which are so clearly the offspring of the imagination, and so poorly calculated to obtain credence, that, although as well authenticated as are any of the miracles recorded by Mathew, Mark, Luke and John, the Church Councils decided to strike them from their appropriate connection with the Bible, as apocryphal and uncanonical. It is not pretended by Protestant Christians of the present day, that these Church Councils were composed of inspired men, or that they had any special license from God, "to take from or add to," the primitive history of Christ. They used their reason and judgment when they made erasures from the history; and although this fact is well known to every clergyman of education, we have yet to find the first one who has openly censured these *uninspired* Church tribunals, for taking liberties with what they call the *inspired* Scriptures, such as would constitute the highest offense (even *infidelity*), in an intelligent layman. In the Gospel according to St. Thomas, which comes down to us through the Greek, an original copy of which is preserved in the French Government library, No. 2279, and which has been voted uncanonical by the celebrated convocations of Europe, many interesting miracles have been recorded of Jesus. It is said, Chap. 1. verses 4th to 9th, inclusive, that while a mere boy, he took from the bank of a stream some soft clay, out of which he formed twelve sparrows, and then, clapping together the palms of his hands, in the presence of a company of Jews, he ordered the clay birds to fly, and they did so, much to the astonishment of the lookers-on. Now is there any thing more miraculous in this part of Christ's history, written by St. Thomas, than the account of the conception and the resurrection of the corporeal body, written by St. Matthew, which has been voted as special inspiration? Why not give us in one volume all the gospels written by the so-called saints of the early centuries, thirty of which are acknowledged to exist by the orthodox theological lexicographer, Buck, in his standard Theological Dictionary? Will not the Church, who claim to have in their keeping the means of deciding what scriptures are inspired, and what are uninspired, trust the people to judge for themselves, with the whole evidence before them? Why shut out from the scrutiny of the public eye the *original scriptures*, as they were collected together under the reign of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, at the Council of Nice? That council, composed originally of more than two thousand Bishops, inspired with nothing more potent than the juice of the grape, became so tumultuous and antagonistical in their discussions of propositions, relative to the various writings which should constitute the Book of Inspiration, or Bible, that it became necessary for Constantine to interfere personally to secure harmony, and his peremptory order was issued to *seventeen hundred* of the two thousand disagreeing bishops, to absent themselves, forthwith, from the Convention! This order was of course obeyed, for Constantine, although a Christian, was a tyrant, whose sovereign will it would not do to disregard. The large majority of this Convention having been driven out of doors by the fiat of *one man*, the three hundred remaining bishops, as may be supposed, after this striking manifestation of imperial power, were quite harmonious, and agreed most fully with their emperor, as to what portion of the mass of scriptures before them was inspired. They rejected, unqualifiedly, a large part of the manuscripts, including that portion of the New Testament embracing the Revelations of St. John; and it was not until the meeting of another church council, sometime in the seventh century, three hundred years after the meeting of the first Nicene Council, that these Revelations were decided to be divine.



We have thus boldly, in the face of the popular cry of *infidelity*, which will be raised against us from interested sources, penetrated the mock sanctity with which the primitive history has been clothed, and claimed for ourselves and others, the right to examine the foundation of the popular faith in miracles and special inspiration. We have shown that the Bible has come down to us through the hands of ecclesiastical councils, who have decided by *majority votes*, what books are divine, and what apocryphal. We now claim for every intelligent person, the same right of discrimination which the church compilers of the Bible have avowedly exercised, and, in order that no undue reverence may be felt for the supposed superior judgment of these compilers, we quote the following opinion of Rev. Dr. JORTIN, orthodox authority of a high order, which seems to be highly appropriate. The Rev. Dr. says :

"These councils have been too much extolled by Papists and some Protestants. They were a collection of men who were frail and fallible. Some of these councils were not assemblies of pious and learned divines, but *cabals*, the majority of which were quarrelsome, fanatical, domineering, DISHONEST prelates, who wanted to compel men to approve all their opinions, of which they themselves had no clear conceptions, and anathematize and oppress those who would not implicitly submit to their determinations."

This opinion of Dr. Jortin, copied and endorsed by Buck in his Theological Dictionary, Philadelphia edition, page 103, is sufficiently orthodox authority for the position we have taken, in regard to the mutilations of the history of Christ in the New Testament—and to raise the question in every honest mind, whether it is not doing *injustice* to the mission of Jesus, to claim for his acts anything of an irrational, improbable, and supernatural character. As the church councils have stricken out some of these alleged acts as apocryphal, with no authority for doing so but their own judgments, would it not be well for us to pass over the others, seizing only upon those examples and principles which adorned the mission of the "Prince of Peace," and which, from their purity and excellence, stand out in bold relief from the barbarism of the age in which he lived, as a brilliant beacon to guide the human mind in the paths of righteousness and peace? Instead of wrangling about creeds, and vying with the heathen and the Mahometan, in the effort to magnify the supernatural wonders which are related of Christ, upon authority, a large part of which, the Christian church has stamped as apocryphal and unworthy of belief, would it not be better to cultivate a sincere love of TRUTH, and to illustrate the sincerity of our hearts, by living in accordance with the teachings of nature, and those sublime principles of equality, love, and practical holiness, which led Christ to fellowship with publicans and sinners, and which brought down upon him and his disciples, as a natural consequence, the derision, mockery, and vengeance of the aristocratic and self-righteous Jews?

Reader, if you have been educated in the popular theology of the day, the presentation of these facts, and these legitimate inferences, may seem novel and perhaps startling; but remember, that if TRUE, they must stand forever as the natural antagonists of error—for "TRUTH IS IMMORTAL AND CANNOT DIE." God has furnished us with the teachings of universal nature, as a revelation, and with the light of reason, as an interpreter. Let us go forward, then, investigate, and FEAR NOT, for the TRUTH WILL PREVAIL.

A. M.

A poor philosopher, whose sentiment is nevertheless beautiful because we do not know his name, remarks as follows—"When a stranger treats me with want of respect, I comfort myself with the reflection that it is not myself that he slights, but my old coat and hat, which, to say the truth, have no particular claim to adoration. So if my coat and hat choose to fret about it, let them; but it's nothing to me."

☞ We have received two beautiful Poems, written for the Messenger by our fair and gifted contributor, FANNY GREEN. They shall appear in our forthcoming numbers.

Angels love Truth and Harmony. Do you, Reader?

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM.

Man, in distinction from the brute creation, is endowed with powers which enable him to reflect and investigate. These powers constitute one of the noblest characteristics of his nature, and are designed to impart a free, enlarged, and discriminating action to his mind. Hence it is the appropriate office of the human intellect to examine and prove whatever may come within its sphere, to roam thorough the wide field of inquiry that is opened to its vision, and search the mighty mass of facts and theories, that it may attract to itself the pure elements of truth. It is a complete violation of the nature and design of mind, to restrict its discriminating powers, to chain down its soaring thoughts, and deprive it of the rich feast of reason it was formed to enjoy. The noble ends for which it was designed can be alone attained, by removing the shackles which confine its efforts, and by allowing it to act and investigate with that unlimited freedom, which belongs to a representative of the Supreme Mind.

For ages past, the importance of this intellectual independence has been unappreciated by man. While he has struggled mightily for physical and national freedom—while he has waded through seas of blood, and boldly braved the stroke of death to attain this object, he has submitted himself to be a passive slave to spiritual despots. Too dependent to think for himself, he has allowed others to monopolize this privilege; too superstitious to question the authority of his oppressors, he has taken their opinions upon trust. This species of slavery has resulted especially from the influence of ecclesiastical associations. In all denominations of religionists, the controlling power has been vested in certain distinguished leaders, who have assumed the right of determining what others shall believe, and to whose peculiar system of faith, the mass are obliged to conform. Each class, therefore, becomes bound to receive and sustain its distinctive doctrines, the strong walls of sectarianism are reared, and the people, no longer free to investigate for themselves, dare not roam in the limitless field of truth, but grope around, with dwarfed and crippled souls, in the dark enclosure of human creeds.

Thus has humanity been degraded under the influence of a gross superstition; an arbitrary authority has been exercised over the consciences of men, the judgment has been blinded, the reason shackled, and, according to the statement of an ancient prophet, the priests have borne rule, and, which is still worse, the people have loved to have it so. It is now time that a higher and a better principle should prevail. It is time that the rights and dignity of mind should be asserted, and that the native gift of mental liberty should be every where enjoyed. It is time that the dread tyranny of ignorance, and the deep gloom of superstition were removed from the earth. The time has come when man should rise from his degradation, throw off the shackles of his spiritual thralldom, and be restored to the free exercise of his heavenly powers.

Let us now consider the several aspects in which this intellectual freedom is to be viewed. In the first place, man should be *free to arrive at truth by the influences of his own reason*. It is in this way only that we are able to form a rational and intelligent judgment. No possible advantage can be gained by the use of compulsory measures, in the establishment of any theory or opinion. If the mind be restricted in its action, and the reasoning faculties are deprived of their appropriate exercise, though we may yield an outward assent to a doctrine, we can have no active and living faith. Hence he who is compelled, by threatenings of woe in the future, or with racks and dungeons before his eyes, to profess faith in any sentiment, has no inward conviction of its truthfulness, and a dark falsehood is entamped upon his heart, while the profession yet lingers on his lips. It should be remembered that no coercive power can influence the operations of the judgment, and that no stern authority can effect a sincere reception of the truth. The only medium through which any sentiment can be inwardly and truly received, is the unrestricted exercise of the intellectual powers.

Secondly, I observe that every man should be *free to investigate all subjects* which lie within the sphere of human thought. It is an unwarrantable restriction of the mental faculties to con-

fine their exercise to a *few* of the varied themes of thought which are opened before us. If we may investigate the common laws of nature, if we may examine the structure of the earth and discover its secret treasures, or if we may look upward to the heavens, and learn the motions and distances of the bodies that roll in space, then may we also go forth in the field of spiritual science, learn the mighty plan of divine government, and become persuaded in relation to all those higher truths which serve to elevate and delight the soul. I am aware that there is an interdict placed on our investigations here. "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther," is written in the creeds of the Church. We are allowed to examine the nature of things around us, are permitted to ascertain the common facts which belong to daily life, and even to explore the wide world of intellectual science, but when we come to the subject of religion, our investigations must cease; the ground we approach is too holy (?) for mortal feet to tread, and we are commanded to *believe*, but not to *reason*. But little respect should be paid to such authority as this. If man has the liberty to investigate subjects of a common and trivial character, he has a still higher and more sacred right to investigate those subjects which are possessed of a divine nature, and an unspeakable importance. Nothing should be regarded as too sacred to be examined. It is the office of the free mind to search *all* creeds and sentiments, though they may boast of a birth in the distant ages of the past, or may have been established with the authority of universal credence.

Again, it is worthy of remark that every man should be *free to indulge in his own peculiarities of faith*, without being compelled to conform to an established system. A few reflections will serve to convince the reader of the propriety of this remark. In regard to the physical nature of man, we observe a material difference in the appearance of each individual, as relates to features, form, and color. Though all are possessed of the same general nature and faculties, no two are found to be in all respects precisely similar. The same diversity exists also in the mental constitution of men. While all are endowed with the same general powers of intellect, there is a wide dissimilarity in their mode and degree of action. All do not look through the same medium; all do not see the same truths in the same light, and hence there must be an essential difference in the manifestations of mind—in the thoughts, opinions, and belief of men. With these considerations in view, therefore, we shall see that it is neither natural nor wise that men should be made to conform to one standard of faith, adhere to one system, and be bound down to one creed, but that all are invested with the inherent right, and should enjoy the natural liberty, of indulging in their own peculiarities of opinion, without reference to any standard but that of truth.

But few words need be added by way of application to these remarks. It is the duty of man to be *free*—to throw off the shackles which have bound his soul, and attain that intellectual liberty—that independence of the mind, which is dearer than all physical freedom. Thus shall the cloud of superstition be rolled away from the earth; thus shall the sun of eternal truth shine forth in its brightness, and the pure atmosphere of freedom surround the spirit, as it soars upward, with unshackled wing, to bask in the light of the "excellent glory." R. P. A.

Some ideas possess a great natural power of *locomotion*, which is usually exercised under complicated restraints. When, occasionally, one appears manifesting unusual activity, a number of persons forthwith leave every other pursuit, that they may drive the lawless intruder to the point. If the creature is not absolutely immortal, it is hunted to death. If it survive the ordeal, and, as a special indulgence, is permitted to run at large, it must keep in sight of the old ways, go in disguise, reject all the newly discovered motive powers, and wear the world's chains, lest it get along too fast, or leave this dead body of conservatism behind. S. B. B.

Some heads do not furnish room for great thoughts, and as the heads themselves cannot be expanded without imminent danger, the ideas must, of course, be squeezed into a smaller compass. S. B. B.

THE GRADUAL EVOLUTION OF TRUTH.

The majestic oak, and the tall and graceful pine, are not the work of a single day. From germs invisible to the eye, they have been reared and unfolded through gradual and successive stages of advancement, until their towering forms have become developed, exhibiting symmetry, strength and beauty. God has never wrought the miracle of suspending his laws, for the purpose of creating a full grown oak, or a well developed human intellect, in one day, or in six. Sir ISAAC NEWTON, the deep-thinking philosopher, whose mind was strongly attracted in the direction of its controlling MAGNET, and who was enabled to discover and explain the great law which pervades all nature, and regulates with perfect accuracy the movements of the planetary world, did not reach this exalted point of mental power, until the lapse of many years after his birth. His ability to make such important discoveries in the arcana of the universe, was the natural result of a progressive unfolding of the mind, from the ignorance of a babbling infant, to the comprehensive and gigantic knowledge of a profound mathematician and philosopher. When we are told, then, by the evidences which the new philosophy presents, that the change called death, which has passed over the form of NEWTON, has resulted in the still further unfolding of his spiritual powers, and that he now lives as an intelligent angel, need we feel astonishment or wonder? Before the dissolution of his physical frame, did he not traverse as wide a space between his infancy and manhood—between gross and comparatively refined matter—as separates MAN from ANGEL-SPIRITS?

This great law of progressive expansion, which gradually reveals mysteries, was recognized by SENECA, an orator who flourished in the first century of the Christian era. In an elevated strain he exclaims—"Let us not wonder that what is so deep is brought out so slowly. It is not yet fifteen hundred years since Greece reckoned the stars and gave them names. We have just begun to mark *some* of them. The members of future generations will know many, of which we are ignorant. Many things are reserved for ages to come, when our memory shall have passed away. The world would be small, indeed, if it did not contain matter of inquiry for all. ELEUSIS reserves something for the second visit of her worshipper. So, too, NATURE does not all at once disclose her mysteries. We think ourselves initiated; we are but in the vestibule. This age will see *some* things; that which comes after us, others!"

The great TRUTH, that the creation of the world, and the acquisition of knowledge, are the results of the law of progress and the work of time, was thus acknowledged in the 64th year after the birth of Christ, by one of the most distinguished philosophers of the age in which he lived. SENECA, a native of Spain, was preceptor to the tyrant Nero, by whom he was put to death the next year after he uttered the sentiments we have quoted. The generation now upon the stage of life in the material form, can look back through the long vista of eighteen hundred years, and trace in the history of generation after generation, proof after proof, of the existence and operation of the eternal rule of progression. Let us not, then, despise new facts because they were not discovered by the ancients; but hail with delight the unfoldings of the secrets of nature, as exhibited by every development of truth; and let no one vainly imagine, that himself, his church, or his nation, has attained to that mental growth, where they can justly claim that their knowledge is perfected, and their doctrines infallible. A. M.

TALENT AND GENIUS.—Industry is the peculiar characteristic of talent. Intuition belongs to genius. Talent, by the slow and difficult process of careful study, discovers the truth, while before the rapt soul of genius it stands revealed forever. Talent accomplishes its mission by protracted labor; genius reaches the goal as the eagle descends from the loftiest summit, to grasp his legitimate prey. While the one patiently collects materials, out of which to erect a monument of evidence which may awe and almost darken the soul with its massiveness, the other utters its oracular decrees, and secures your acquiescence, by the electrical power of its volition. S. B. B.

THE INFLUENCES OF NATURE.

The varied forms in the outward universe, have a silent but forcible language, addressed to the interior being, and from them proceed pure and sanctifying influences, which serve to elevate and harmonize the soul. Being pervaded by the spirit of the Infinite, nature presents the living fountain of inspiration, from which we may learn the glory and perfection of its Author, and experience the joys of divine communion. A still, small voice which thrills through every sense, comes from the wide expanse of creation, and makes us sensible of the invisible Presence which fills the mighty temple of the universe. Nature is thus endowed with a devotional influence, which appeals to the inmost soul. It is here that the heart first learns to worship. Impressed with the beauty and sublimity of creation, and catching the fervor of devotion that breathes around, it instinctively unites with all things visible, in rendering thanksgiving and praise to the common Source of existence.

This influence is not dependent on previous impressions or educational prejudices. It is felt not merely by those who enjoy the light of science and the knowledge of religious truth, but also by the rude, uncivilized, and ignorant. In the depths of the forest wild, surrounded by the blessed influences of nature, the old warrior kneels in worship to his God, and the Indian mother teaches her infant child to lisp His name, and makes its young-heart bow in reverence. Hence, in the absence of all artificial advantages — prior to the existence of theological institutions — when no consecrated sanctuary reared its dome to heaven, and no outward altar sent up its smoking incense, the flame of true devotion was burning in the soul; the *religion of nature* was impressed on the untutored mind, and though not directed by the dictates of enlightened reason, its incense rose to heaven in the fervor of the heart's native impulses — a sincere and acceptable offering.

There is another influence nature is calculated to exert, which is felt by the sensitive and aspiring soul. It has a power to shadow forth the glories of a spiritual state, and direct our thoughts to the "new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." The very beauties which render this world attractive, and bind the affections to its scenes, serve to awaken deep and heartfelt longings for a higher and brighter sphere. In the spring-time of creation, when nature, aroused from its wintry sleep, is replete with the manifestations of renewed life, our thoughts are turned to that everlasting spring, when the bloom of the soul shall never fade, and the frost of death shall not blast its expanding powers. As we behold the river flowing onward in its free and gladsome course, we are reminded of the crystal stream of life that flows from the immortal throne; and as we rejoice in the golden sunlight of day, or in the silvery radiance of evening, we long to bask in the light of the Eternal City, where neither sun nor moon may shine, but where the glory of God has made an end of night forever. There is a power, too, in every breeze that fans our brows, in every flower that flings its fragrance to the summer air, to make us dream of higher bliss and sweeter joy, than that this earth, all beautiful as it is, can give. Regarding, therefore, every form in nature as an expression of the Divine Mind, and prophecy of the future life, let us breathe forth the devotional spirit and exalted aspirations, which are naturally awakened in the pure heart.

R. P. A.

Patrons of the American People's Journal:

DEAR FRIENDS: Permit me, through this medium, to offer a brief explanation for what may otherwise appear to be an unpardonable neglect. In commencing the publication of the Journal, I was by no means unconscious of the magnitude of the undertaking. I did not begin without counting the cost, nor yet without the appearance of ample assistance from parties whom I had reason to presume were entirely responsible. Before the issue of the second number, however, I had reason to apprehend that my principal outward dependence might fail me, and that I might be left to my own resources in some trying emergency. Subsequently, there followed a succession of events and circum-

stances quite unexpected, and wholly beyond my control, that rendered the temporary suspension of the Journal inevitable. Very soon after this unpleasant crisis, I received a proposition from a gentleman of wealth and literary acquirements, at the South, to join me in my enterprise. Since that time I have been daily anticipating a visit from the gentleman referred to, and a prompt arrangement of the conditions essential to the continuance and prompt issue of the work. I yet expect to prosecute the enterprise, with such increased facilities as will enable me to satisfy the highest hopes which the first appearance of the Journal inspired. Should I find it impossible to consummate my purposes in this respect, I shall neither forget my obligations, nor neglect to discharge them. For your kind indulgence, permit me to tender, for the present, my most grateful acknowledgments.

With sentiments of respect and esteem, I am yours sincerely,
S. B. BRITTAN.

New York, Aug. 15, 1850.

Poetry.

THOUGHTS,

SUGGESTED ON THE ADVENT OF THE SPIRIT MESSENGER.

Welcome, "Spirit Messenger,"

Thou star of light and beauty, welcome!
Long have I waited for thy coming,
To bring tidings from the Spirit-land;
For faith and hope, like kindly angels,
Have taught me, that God has yet in store
Richer blessings far, than man has known.
And now the glorious day appears,
And light and truth are ushering in,
To bless the world, and save from error
And dark despair!

Joy inspiring thought!

Man can soar away to mansions blest,
And view the glories of higher spheres;
Then with the beautiful token of
An "olive leaf," return to cheer our way,
And illumine our path, unto the realms
Of endless peace!

My soul rejoice —

And humbly bow, with reverence divine! —
O, how I love the glorious theme
Of fellowship with angels! Likewise
To catch the glimpses of the Spirit-home,
For there are lovely ones, — the objects
Of my heart's affections! and to whom
My spirit reaches with fond desire,
And love's strong ties, which the angel death
Cannot destroy. Ling'ring near are these,
For oft I hear their gentle voices,
Which, in low soft whispers, seem to say
"Weep not, for we, the blest, are with you."
The griefs and sorrows which oft we feel,
Rob life of pleasure, and thus we thirst
For water pure, from a celestial
Source, to calm and cheer the troubled heart.
How sweet to drink this heavenly stream
Of purest bliss, and hold communings
With angel kindred! How sweet to feel
The soft gales from Paradise — laden
With fragrant dew, from flowers which bloom
On an immortal soil! Great Spirit!
Inspire my soul with love divine,
And touch my tongue with living truth —
That I may tell to man, thy goodness
And holy power.

Thus let me live —

Thus may I die — rising, approaching
Nearer to thy Fount of love, of light,
Of beauty, and eternal rest.

SPRINGFIELD, AUG., 1850.

I. S.

Miscellaneous Department.

The Farmer and Beggar.

An old farmer was once travelling with his son on a lonely and unfrequented road. By some mishap, the cart in which they were seated broke down, and they were obliged to dismount and try to remedy the evil. They found, however, that they should require more assistance than they two could render, to set them right.

In this dilemma, a troop of ragged beggars came up, and began to inquire what was the matter. "You may see that plain enough," the farmer said, "our axle-tree is broken, and we need help to mend it."

"Oh! oh!" said one, "he expects to find help ready made to his hands."

"No doubt he would have us mend the cart," said another, "that he might have the pleasure of wishing us good morrow as he drove away."

"Do but wait a while, old ploughman," said a third, "and the axle-tree will grow together again of itself."

"Thank you, good friends," said the farmer, pulling a strong cord out of his pocket, "but it strikes me that I can perhaps, do without your help, as I can certainly dispense with your jokes and counsel."

With that the beggars set up a laugh, and went on. The farmer, by the aid of his cord, soon righted his misfortune, and arrived safely at the end of his journey.

Not long afterwards, as the farmer sat at meat with his servants, before the blazing kitchen fire, the three beggars who had mocked him by the road-side, came up and asked alms. The farmer invited them to come in out of the cold, in loud but hospitable words; and set before them the best provisions his house would afford.

When the beggars were gone, the little boy, who remembered them well enough, said to his father: "Father why did you give these men food? They are the same wicked beggars who laughed at us on the lonely road."

"True, my boy," answered the farmer, taking his hand, and leading him to the door step: "But do you see the great sun in the beautiful blue sky over our heads?"

"Yes," answered the wondering child.

"Well," added the father, "he shines on the evil and the good alike. It never troubles him whether men are deserving, or not deserving of the light and warmth it sends them. It is enough for him that he can diffuse his goodness in his own great way.

"And so it should be with us. If other men are unkind and bad, that is no reason why we should be so. Our course is clear: To do good at all times, both to friends and foes."

A FABLE, BY J. SEARLE.

The Youth of Christ.

A youth appears "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. All that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." He comes into the assembly of venerable sages with a mild and pensive countenance, that seems haunted with earnest thought. He is no favorite of earthly fortune, no scion of aristocratic pride, no pet of exclusive schools, but the simple child of the unsophisticated people, steeped to the lips in suffering; and yet, mightier than the domes that bend above him, he is for the intellect and heart of man a glorious living temple, built with the choicest riches of unnumbered worlds. The first question he propounds startles the attention of all who hear him, and creates the greatest astonishment in the most profound, for his words bear that charm of immaculate wisdom that can neither be defaced nor excelled. Question succeeds to question, and learning, in despair, grows more and more confused in this, the grandest gladiatorship of mind yet witnessed on earth. Sage after sage, swelling with wounded pride, is silenced before that youth ap-

pared in the plain attire of peasant life, radiant with the celestial life that emanates from an aspiring heart, and bent on throwing wide open the gates of instruction to all. The whole park of artillery which power and craft have erected on their contracted citadels he has spiked, and like "a mailed angel on a battle day," he rejoices in triumph, not for himself, but for the sake of the benighted multitudes around. *Free thought and free discussion were then and there born.*—*Western Quarterly Review.*

Death and Sleep.

TRANSLATED FROM VON KRUMMACHER.

The Angel of Death and the Angel of Sleep walked over the whole earth, linked in a fraternal embrace. It was evening, and they laid themselves down on a hill overlooking the dwellings of man. A holy quiet prevailed around, and the evening bell had ceased in the neighboring village. Still and silent as is their wont, sat both the beneficent Spirits in a friendly embrace, and the beautiful night drew on. Then the Angel of Sleep raised himself from his mossy couch, and scattered with light hand the invisible grains of slumber; the evening breeze wafted them to the still abodes of the weary husbandmen. Sweet sleep steals over the inhabitants of the village cot, over the old man who leans upon his staff, and over the young child in its cradle. The sick forget their pain, the mourning their sorrows, the poor their cares. All eyes are closed. But now, his employment ended, the benevolent Angel of Sleep turned toward his more serious brother.

"When the morning light appears," exclaimed he with innocent joy, "men will give thanks to me as a friend and benefactor. Oh, what joy to bestow good in secret and unseen! How happy are we, the invisible messengers of the Good Spirit!"

So spake the friendly Angel of Sleep. The Angel of Death answered with quiet sadness, while tears such as the immortals weep stood in his large dark eyes—"Ah," said he, "would that I, too, like thee, might receive those joyful thanks! The world calls me its enemy, and the destroyer of its gladness."

"Oh, my brother!" replied the Angel of Sleep, "will not the good at their awakening acknowledge thee their friend and benefactor, and gratefully bless thee? Are we not brothers, and the messengers of one Father?"

Thus he spake, and the eyes of the Angel of Death gleamed more brightly as he tenderly embraced his brother Spirit.

The Universal Change.

☞ About twenty-five millions of human beings die every year, two thousand eight hundred and fifty-three every hour, and forty-seven every minute; and at least an equal number during these same periods, are emerging from non-existence into life. So that almost every moment, a human being is ushered into life, and another is transformed to the spiritual world. The relatives and friends of these beings, each have to go through the process of weeping and mourning, and in the contemplation, their little world of interests seems quite clouded. Such contemplations are at least calculated to make us reflect on the greatness of the universal theatre of life, and to compose ourselves with the thought that such is existence, and we alone are not the only sufferers. It moreover points us to the next stage of existence, and to eternity, in comparison with which all this is but momentary.—*Univercalum.*

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