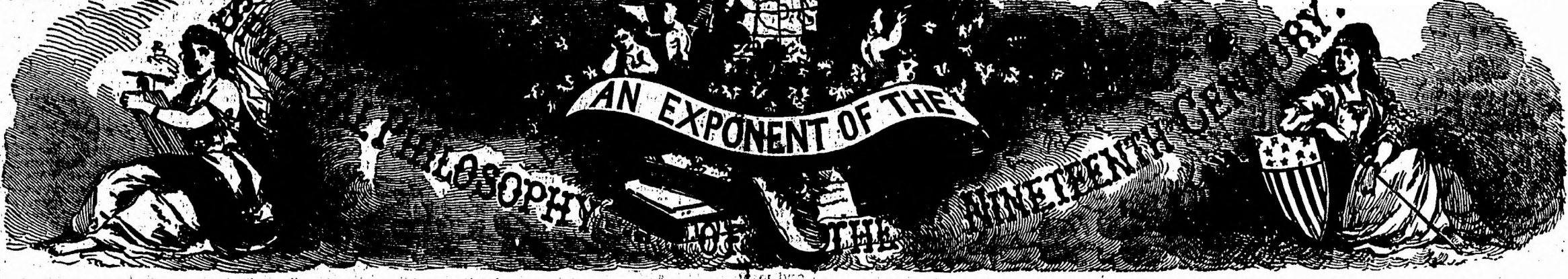


BANNER OF LIGHT.



VOL. LIV.

COLBY & RICH,
Publishers and Proprietors.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1883.

\$3.00 Per Annum,
Postage Free.

NO. 13.

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Now the Spiritual Philosophy establishes these three great facts, their elaboration and application to the necessities of the human soul. In the old theology we have a God divorced from nature—a nature regarded as profane, carnal, corrupt and loathsome, out of which it is the business of the spirit to seek forevermore to strive to free itself—a God who professes justice, but is the incarnation of all iniquity; a God professing to love his creatures, but who tortures them throughout eternity. And who can number the human souls that have been tortured in this world with this horrible fear, and with the sympathy they feel for those who are in agony, in darkness, and in the chains of everlasting hell? How often has reason been dethroned and human hearts been lacerated by a belief so terrible!

Indeed, this belief is incompatible with sanity, and it never takes real possession of the consciousness without leaving the mind a wreck. It is only where it is more assent, without reason or spiritual conviction, that this belief exists, without actual lunacy. For I cannot believe a heart exists so depraved as to contemplate unmoved the pictures of an agony given to us through the word-painting of a Jonathan Edwards, or even a Martin Luther or a Calvin.

We who profess to be their followers, who laud their heroism—and they were heroes—who would celebrate their birthdays and extol what they accomplished—and they accomplished much—are, notwithstanding, not persuaded of the truth of their doctrines; our hearts reject them, our souls loathe them, and in spite of man's imagination we are the children of our blessed Mother Nature still.

Now in place of this demon what does the spiritual philosophy give us? You say it gives us cold, pitiless and soulless law. I say it gives us law that is the expression of the infinite intelligence, an intelligence that absorbs all things to itself, molds and fashions, and the very persistence of truth rests in this nature of the infinite being. Everywhere throughout the material universe the working of this law is beneficent and beautiful to us the moment we get the spiritual meaning of things.

Not cold law, but will, intelligence, expressing itself with tenderness everywhere, and in its ultimates giving us infinite good.

Could you hear the shriek of agony that comes up from the dark ages of the past, born of what men call religion, but which was real ignorance, you would not ask me to-night the utility of this larger and better idea of God, for the best thing that truth does is to set men free. The first thing that error does is to blind man and make him a slave. The first great necessity of the church was to quench man's reason, to prevent thought in certain directions. The first demand of the church was, cease to inquire, do not dare to think. The first invitation of the spiritual philosophy is, come and investigate the truth, stand out free from the dogmas of the past, liberated from the old bondage of error, and look nature in the face. Lift not your eyes in terror and dread, but turn them within, find the divinity these deities. The first thought of the spiritual philosophy is by gentle influence, by love, and by tender ministrations of truth to encourage the growth of the soul, for all of goodness and beauty and joy is possible to the soul; it is enshrined here; we need not search for goodness and beauty elsewhere.

A traveler in foreign lands beholds with amazement in the conservatories of kings the neglected flowers that grow at his own doorstep. So human nature coming into the vestibule of truth, discovers with astonishment that the ideas, the thoughts, the hopes that were kindled here are blossoming at the very foot of the throne of God, are blazing as jewels in his crown, and that the truth that applies to him in this hour is as divine as the truth that shall set nations at liberty.

The Spiritual Philosophy is rich in ideas that belong and may be applied to our daily lives. And the religion that fills the mind with fear, makes cowards of men, peoples Heaven with hypocrites and hell with heroes, is not a religion for the nineteenth century.

The truths which have been brought to light through the higher spiritual development of mankind, have brought man into closer communion with the actualities of life; have explained to him the mysteries of the material universe, and have suddenly awakened his consciousness to the reality of its relation to the Divine Spirit ruling all things. You ask how this can be. The chief aim of all systems of religion is to establish the government of God on earth and to save men's souls. The way formerly proposed for these ends was to rob man of every natural instinct and deprive him of every natural right, make him an abject slave to an arbitrary will, and provide for the salvation of his soul by his utter obedience, not to its revelation, not to the voice which comes to the soul itself—which is the only true revelation—but to the declared revelation, the accredited voice which came to some other man; establishing one man's idea of God and his government as the criterion for the action and government of all, putting man in the place of God to his fellow-men.

The Spiritual Philosophy reverses this order of things, discovers God in the soul, and its highest aim is to teach every human soul to become a light unto itself; living above all arbitrary mandates, living in the spirit of truth which is manifest in nature, which appeals to us through our senses and ministers through every affection of the heart.

Can you not see the utility of the idea, that God reigns, not in any one soul but in every soul according to its necessity, and manifests himself through every event of human life? Can you not see the utility of destroying the demon of despair in human hearts and enthroning in its place the angel of hope? This is what the Spiritual Philosophy has done for untold thousands.

There are men working to-day upon the principle that unknown millions of human beings are dependent for their salvation upon the penny contributions of your Christian missionary workers, that this is God's method for saving his creatures; and that it will be through the intervention of these zealous men who are sent out with bibles and tracts to foreign lands, that the eternal salvation of countless immortal souls will depend. What a picture is this of the riches of the infinite soul!

There are in every human soul potentialities for good, and the divine spirit reigns in China just as really as in the Presbyterian Church here, in San Francisco. Not alone in yonder heavens, not millions of miles away, but right here, within the reach of every one, lie the remedies for all.

According to the ideas of the Church, the age of faith ought to be the age of purity among men. The age of faith should be the age of all noble action. A history written by the pen of faith should glow only with noble acts.

The world needs consoling, but the arbitrary dogmas of the Church never console a human spirit; if consoled, it was in spite of religious dogmas, and because of the persistence of ideas which have their roots in the soul of humanity. The world needs hope, and these missionaries who are so anxious to carry the doctrine of a vicious atonement to the pagan world

would do better to spend their golden moments in the propagation of scientific and humanitarian truths, than in issuing tracts that picture an imaginary hell and an unreal devil. They would do better to publish lectures on philosophy, giving instruction on the anatomy of man, and to bring the pagans of your own city into schools where the realities of life, the possibilities of joy, the beauty of tenderness, of charity, would be illustrated and taught, instead of vainly trying to overcome the faith of foreign lands, which is often quite as good as their own.

Why not attend to the evils which are festering in souls and bodies next door? The spiritual philosophy presents mankind as one great family. God's care is given to one portion as truly as to another. The divinity is as manifest in one portion of nature as in another. Moreover it claims for nature the right, by virtue of the necessity, of its existence.

And the purity of the system of nature is guarded by our recognition of the presence of the Spirit of God in everything that exists; and the one curative property in the universe, spiritual or physical, lies in a knowledge and the application of natural principles to the wants of man, both as a physical and spiritual being. As I have said, this philosophy establishes the fact of man's immortality; it does more than that; it gives us clear ideas of what that immortality is. I am not much comforted by the fact that I am simply to live on and on, without aim or object, or that I am to live even as I now am, with yearning loves unsatisfied, the years to continue forever, and no fulfillment, no answer even to these hopes, and no splendid realities to meet the hunger for truth. Would not such a state be torture? But the fact that is unveiled by the communion with souls who have realized death and risen triumphant over the shadows and gloom of the grave, is that nature is as real in all her operations which are invisible to us as when they are patent to our external senses, and that the progress lies within the spirit, and is not merely the surface condition of things. In other words, that the grave is not man's finality as a spiritual being, and that you secure here, not by faith, but by another's innocence, but by the truth and purity of your own life, a better condition into which you enter after death.

Can any thought measure the consolation which this can be to the thinking man and woman?

Go with me into the dungeons of spiritual darkness where temptations have been triumphant and the life has been dragged down into the slime of evil practices; go with me there, where the heart still throbs with divine impulses, where the soul still catches faint glimpses of the beauty which naturally belongs to it; go with me where the heart is in the gloom of despair, and carry with you the lamp of this precious truth. Child of immortality, despair not! thy weaknesses are not fatal to the soul; there is still a sovereign remedy for thee.

The dull, cruel jargon of the church, cries out, "Stone her! crucify her!" The sweet voice of nature says, "She is my child; wait; I have deep and shining fountains into which, through sorrows, I shall plunge her, and to the time cometh when she shall be white and clean, and receive the seal of my love and the kiss of my joy."

Go with me into that house of mourning; one by one the tendrils of love have been snapped asunder, until the marriage tree is bare of every flower; the voices that made music have been hushed and swallowed in this darkness unknown, and they have vanished into this strange, this insolvable mystery. Go with me into this home, carrying our evidences of the immortality of the soul, and what is more, the changelessness of love and the possibilities of its continued ministrations; lift the veil before the eyes that are running tears of grief and reveal to them the smiling faces of babes, of boys and girls, of father and mother, and behold the blessed utility of the spiritual idea of the future life. Lo! this home that was before like a charnel-house, filled with griefs, has suddenly become the vestibule of heaven, a veritable temple whose altar is decked with fadeless flowers of love.

Need I ask you to whom the ministrations of human love have been so precious; you to whom the kind, sweet voice has many times been the opening of the portal of hope, into whose lives, through sympathy, have flowed silvery and purifying streams, and whose every-day life is made hopeful—need I say to you that the idea of love ministering from these unseen spheres has its uses? That it has a power for good?

Let me ask you who have trodden these streets of your beautiful city, feeling in your hearts that you cared not to live another day, what was the source of your deepest sorrow?—you who are a wanderer from the loved homes; you who have waited in vain for the message recalling the wanderer; you who have seen riches take wings, friendships turn cold, hope quenched as a morning-star, and shadows unutterable? It was this: "None care for me; I were better dead! What can I do now, since friends have failed me? Every effort of my hand has fallen fruitless; every hope of my heart is withered under the touch of time!"

But hearken! hearken! Not a soul standing thus under the shadow of a great sorrow but is ministered to by love; there is some one caring for you. Down through the shadows, like the star-beams that do night travel through the abysses of space, there are drelling and streaming thoughts of love. They come from the dear child that you laid away in the grave years ago, now almost forgotten. Mother is there; but not a mother whose heart is turned to stone, and whose ears hear only the resounding palms, or the jingle of golden harp-strings; but the mother whose ear catches the faintest whisper from her children, and through the darkest hour of human sorrow she will travel by your side, and when all else has passed from you the riches of her love remain.

Tell me, if this could be borne in upon your consciousness as a fact; if, for instance, you could catch a glimpse of that mother's face for a moment, or if the golden curls of the child should glance through upon your griefs, would it not make you strong for every battle in the future? and should you not see the utility of all this suffering? since it may have washed the scales from your eyes, and caused them to be filled with the ineffable glory of the life that is, and not the life yet to come, merely.

Dear friends, when the truth is known—when it is taken home to your hearts—that nature is God's instrument, out of which he brings life's sweetest harmonies, and that life is an eternal gift to all, and that love is the rightful inheritance of every soul, that truth is the power to heal all infirmities—then the things that you fear now will be trifles light as air; the paths that are stony will be carpeted with sweet and beautiful flowers of immortal love; and the burdens that you bear will be upheld by the white wings of sympathy, outstretched from that unseen sphere with such energy, such persistence, that nothing will appeal or turn aside.

Sweep from the world those torturing demons of imagination, and place in their stead the sublime reality of a natural world, established in your consciousness; sweep from the world, to-day the altar of your

false religion, and place in their stead the sweet service of a home filled with love, and we need not traverse the skies to find heaven, nor penetrate the abysses of space searching for the throne of God, for its glory fills the world, and its rule is in our hearts.

Oh hearts that mourn! souls that struggle! spirits that are striving for the truth! take courage, for by the revelations that are being made day by day to you—not to some man afar, but to you—the reign of God is established; and the ideas that shall triumph over imagination, over ignorance, are enriching your life from day to day, until the meanest labor of your physical existence becomes a divine service. Every trial, every temptation, becomes a triumph; and every change which comes through the shadow of death, and every sorrow from this great blank misery, holds, as in a womb, the child of joy which shall yet ring in the consciousness of every immortal soul.

The world needed the truth, and the truth has come. Many are sitting in silence and in darkness still, but truth is steadily making her way; but not so painfully as of yore—her feet are being healed by the tears of her disciples, her lips are touched with the flame of divine love, and they are bearing forth consolations; and every instant of time some shackles is broken from the soul of man by the lightning shaft of spiritual truth that darts from the great unseen.

the cabinet in a blaze of what I presume to be court dresses of Indian Princes of a century ago, when the magnificence of these as far transcended those of Christian monarchs as do the latter those of men of only moderate "fortunes" of to-day.

As soon as they reached me these materialized spirits invited my attention to the various descriptions of the wondrously rich embroideries that embossed their gauzy vells, elaborated scarfs, exquisitely composed handkerchiefs, and all this by virtue of a species of magic that seems as inexplicable to mortals as that of the wands of sorcerers whom people of olden times believed to be "scape-goats" from those sulphurous regions that only those of "the only true," and especially "cash paying" faith, could possibly escape; but which to-day are so rapidly declining to utter ruin and decay, and must perish forever unless schools can be extirpated and "divinity" be reestablished.

Such vestments as are above noted were not only presented to my observation, but the spirits wearing them appeared to possess the power of rapidly multiplying and also expanding them at pleasure. A mere cuff—however richly tinted and embroidered it might be—upon being manipulated by the weaver's fingers, would enlarge and expand almost with the facility of merely opening a closed fan. As soon as the cuff attained a breadth that seemed to forbid rapidity of expansion—or for whatever cause—the spirit simply whirled it against the air a moment, then, ceasing for a moment, repeated the same with a quick, flourishing movement; it seemed thereafter to increase by merely gently waving to and fro, representing, as it were, a celestial banner of triumphant glory and beauty. I presume, however, that these apparent creations are simply materializations of spirit-fabrics that these spirits have at hand for the purpose, and which they simply materialize by a process similar to that by which they materialize themselves, and for similar purpose and motive.

Not only were these elaborately embroidered laces and scarfs, shawls, etc., etc., thus expanded and multiplied, but several of these materialized spirits also thus produced not only fabrics of far heavier material, but also of silk, and these not only proportionably more beautiful but in far greater quantity; and this in weight per square yard as well as far greater superfineries. For instance, a piece of various colored silken fabric, not larger than a child's hand, would soon expand into a vast robe about the person of the spirit, and of the most gorgeously colored patterns and figures imaginable. The spirit earnestly called my attention to the beauty thereof not only, but to its thickness, this being more than half an inch, yet as soft and flexible as the finest possible felt.

This invested the wearer as rapidly as it appeared, and in every case its quantity was such that it laid in masses upon the floor, and entirely around about her feet as the most extravagant of "trails" worn by mortals. The lady that last appeared in this rôle carried the power so far, that she not only stood in the midst of such a "trail" as above described, but this was so piled about her that a "harvest-home" freak that would place a feminine hay-maker in the midst of a large hay-cock would represent no larger bulk thereof than that of the silk here indicated.

In one of these cases, a materialized lady having arrayed herself in a succession of varieties of rich embroideries, etc., etc.—all white—was instantaneously enveloped in an apparently silk mantle that was jet black, but was neither shawl, coat, nor cloak, exactly. It covered her entire person, from chin to feet, save that it was open in front from her waist down, and was not quite long enough to conceal the lower portion of her white dress, that glittered in front as well as about her feet.

These materialized spirits manifested earnest desire that I should particularly and carefully observe the phenomena they were so amiably presenting again and again, soliciting such attention to some of the features of their performances that they appeared to regard as most worthy thereof.

Nevertheless, when I asked one of these ladies permission to put a piece from the more than half-inch thick silk dress (as I had often cut pieces from spirit dresses) she took no notice thereof. This was also the case when I asked one of these above mentioned materialized spirits to disappear, by gradually dissolving herself while she stood before and close to me, and commencing the process at her feet; so as to appear to sink through the floor, as spirits often do on these occasions. She made no response whatever to my request.

It seems highly probable that spirits are obliged to make special arrangements in regard to their performances, and therefore they may not be prepared to effect the same performances to-night they presented with ease only the evening previous. We know that such is the case with managers of theatres, etc., etc., and I doubt not their non-compliance with my requests on this occasion was solely by reason of inability to grant them.

No one feature of these manifestations is more apparent than is the earnest desire of spirits to gratify wishes of sincere inquirers, and they know if sincerely be there or not.

So far as my own somewhat wide experience herein goes, I have ever found such to be the case. I therefore entertain no doubt whatever that non-compliance with such propositions to spirits is simply for the reason that to grant is either impossible, or extremely inconvenient under the circumstances.

In regard to cuttings from garments of materialized spirits, there is a very substantial reason for not doing so; inasmuch as—for whatever reason—it is found that such cuttings often

Spiritual Phenomena.

Experiences with Henry C. Gordon.
By the Editor of the Banner of Light.

At a strictly private séance held at Henry C. Gordon's, No. 691 North 13th street, Philadelphia—none other than Mr. G. (the medium) and the writer being present, the following incidents occurred on the evening of Nov. 24th, 1883, and within about an hour and a quarter of time.

Having arranged a lamp so as to afford rose-colored light (Mr. G. deeming this better than white for the purpose in view), and turned the gas down very low, Mr. G., apparently in trance, seated himself at a common parlor organ, from which, at his touch, there flowed a strain of music so transcendently sweet, so tender, so touching, I would gladly have relinquished the especial purpose of my appointment in favor of its continuance throughout the evening.

Mr. Gordon turned from the instrument very soon and saluted me in the name of Monsieur Bonfio. This reminded me of "Madame Bonfio's Hotel" in Paris, that was so famous more than forty years since, at which several members of my family spent several months, nearly half a century ago, and were treated with such motherly kindness by its hostess they rarely referred to that city thereafter without expressing grateful remembrance of her. I therefore inferred that this spirit was probably a member of that family, and questioned him accordingly, but I did not quite understand his reply until he desired his respects to the members of my own.

Americans inherit a portion of England's prejudice against the Franks, but I have met with no people who are more kind or among whom family ties are more sacredly respected, so far as my own limited opportunity for observation has revealed; and the fact that instances of such devotion that have found their way into our literature are so largely French—not English—seems to confirm this view. Probably none better understand the philosophy of human life and its relations than that vivacious race.

Immediately upon Mr. Gordon's entering his cabinet, I heard conversation therein, and soon distinguished three different voices—one of them purporting to be the spirit-guide of the medium. Fully a dozen "materialized spirits" presented themselves on this occasion. All were adults, and all feminine, excepting two—the last male being the only one who did not come outside the cabinet, but called me to him. He purported to be a relative. I think half of the communicants that appeared this evening were Orientals. The light was dim, but most of these spirits seemed to be self-illuminating in an unusually high degree, their faces particularly being especially radiant; one of them seemed to emit light of day, almost.

I sat upon a nice but short sofa, upon which one of these materialized spirits seated herself at my side, but I was unable to identify her, though her doing so would seem to indicate a relative or particular friend—but all of them came close to me.

To another I offered my hand, but she responded only so far as to meet the tips of my fingers with those of her own. One of these ladies, however, was materialized with a degree of firmness, of tissue, and of strength, that enabled her to not only present her hand (voluntarily), but to endure a hearty grasp from mine. It was a small one, but seemed dry, and very like parchment, though her face was fine, full, bright, and beautiful by virtue of features not only, but also of sweetness of expression.

Upon asking her name, she responded by pointing to her forehead, where a purely white tarsi rose from her snowy brow with folds that retreated into a crest at the crown of her head, while a group of several large sized jewels just above her brow glittered like sources of animated light, and probably were brilliants of purest water, as well as lustre.

I could not recognize this lady, but have reasons for believing she was a member of the family of an Oriental who was kind to me in India, not many years ago.

All of the ladies whom I saw on this occasion were very richly dressed, but such was the splendor of the apparel of several of them I was absolutely amazed therewith. I never saw the like before, or anything to compare therewith. I have no language wherewith to describe them, much less their effect.

These Aladdin-like spectacles emerged from

The Spiritual Rostrum.

The Utility of Spiritualistic Ideas, and their Application to Every-Day Life.

An Inspirational Lecture delivered by
MRS. E. L. WATSON,
At Metropolitan Temple, San Francisco, Cal.,
Oct. 25th, 1883.

(Reported for the Banner of Light by George H. Hawes.)

It needs no argument of ours to prove that all truth is useful, and that every clear idea of man concerning the universe of matter by which he is surrounded, and in regard to his fellow beings, must of necessity minister to his actual needs and add to the sum total of human happiness; for along the highways of the centuries we see that truth has made her painful journey, oft with bleeding feet, with lacerated bosom; sometimes lodged in noisome dungeons, sometimes stretched upon a rack of torture; often with the seal of silence upon her lips, while human beings languish all around, perishing for want of the virtue that might flow from the hem of her garments, and breathe from the pure depths of her innermost soul.

It needs no word of ours to prove that truth is powerful for good.

We have seen a knowledge of the physical universe, year by year and step by step, relieve the burdens of human misery in its physical aspect; ay, and destroy the hideous monsters of superstition which have stood in the way of its progress. We have seen how knowledge has opened wide the portals, and revealed to man, in the place of noisome shadows that shed poisonous slime upon his path, ministering angels; that where before he beheld malignant powers lurking he now discovers divine energies that are employed for the elaboration of life, for ministering to his necessities.

If we turn to the religious history of mankind we discover this truth, that imaginary evils have been real, and what is more, they have been so emphasized in the life of man that he has peopled the heavens and the earth with demons of darkness, and shrank within himself, hating himself and the world into which he was born—all through ignorance.

You have but to look upon this history to see that the imaginary tyrant of the heavens has made slaves and cowards of men; that this image of man's creation was more potent for evil than all the real obstacles in the way of human progress; therefore we conclude that any light which may be thrown upon the subject of man's relation to his environments, and to his fellow-man, must of necessity be beneficial in its results.

Now the three great propositions of the Spiritual Philosophy, whether enunciated by Socrates and his most illustrious pupil, Plato; by Jesus the Nazarene, by Swedenborg, or by the later revelations of Spiritualism, are these: the supremacy of law, the permanence and persistence of ideas, and the immortality of the soul.

By the supremacy of laws we mean the endless chain of cause and effect, and when this truth is accepted by the mind of man, do you not see that the man who has summoned to his judgment-seat countless millions, predestinated to be damned forever, is unconsciously dismissed from man's consciousness, and from the universe? that there is no longer a place for this whimsical deity, who is one moment represented by popular theology as being a God of love—a God of love who lovingly damns the greater portion of his creatures—and in the next is a tyrant, than whom there never existed one so cruel in the form of man?

By the recognition of the first proposition of what we have spoken, this monster is dismissed from man's imagination, and in its place we behold the succession of events, each century of which is weighted with the potentialities of the life divine, and moved upon by the purpose of a divine nature.

By the recognition of the second, the permanence and persistence of ideas, that is, the eternity of facts which are beyond the influence or possibility of change from any manipulation, from any work or cessation of work on the part of man—when we come to the recognition of this truth, we learn patience and a supreme and tender hope. For if you are in the possession of the truth, if you have recognized a fact in nature, you know that this fact will persist in spite of every argument to the contrary; in spite of all contending fears, in spite of time and space, you are held in a sweet patience, trust and security that cannot be shaken by the temporary success of any error.

And by the acceptance of the third great truth—the immortality of the soul—you are put at your ease in regard to all this hurry and despair; when you reflect upon the little span of life allotted you on earth as a human soul for the accomplishment of your longings, and it becomes to you a fact that your soul's life is to end nevermore, you perceive that he who works in you will accomplish the end for which you came here, and that with him rests the result of all action and the persistence of all methods. Therefore, again I say, you have patience and serenity, hope and

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