Exuberant speculations on cloud formations



Contents and abstract of central ideas1

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Cloud formations in the shape of persons or things is an old and wellaccredited fact in magic.

Whether viewed as warnings, omens, or meaningful symbols, their interpretation by the beholder is wholly subjective, as much as when he beholds and contemplates the invisible Universe.

The conclusions of Captain Serjeant have been already reached by many minds pursuing different paths.

Great changes are approaching, both in the temporal and in the spiritual life of humanity, and these changes presage the dawn of better days and nobler ideas.

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The Kingdom of Heaven must be taken by violence (i.e., must be conquered, for it does not surrender), and an entrance effected in an instant (at the very end). But let us not get ahead of ourselves, the conquest of spirit over matter is an exceedingly long and arduous quest for the brave warrior.

Angels may weep and mourn over the discord now prevailing in the world, but on the principle that there is no truth without a paradox, there must also be a great deal of truth in this article, but its disentanglement is a matter of much labour and thought.

¹ Frontispiece and illustration on page 11, courtesy of Holosomnia.

Appendix. A Marriage made in Heaven.

Suggested reading for students.

From our Down to Earth Series.



Part 1. Introduction by H.P. Blavatsky.

Biblical phraseology is often used to ascribe to natural phenomena meanings, which could have been more clearly conveyed and better explained by the symbols of the ancient Wisdom-Religion.¹

First published in *Lucifer*, Vol. 1 (4), December 1887, pp. 292-95. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, ("GOD SPEAKS FOR LAW AND ORDER") VIII pp. 284-86.

The readers of the curious article which follows are requested to remember that the writers of signed papers in Lucifer, and not the editors, are responsible for their contents. Captain Serjeant's views excite much interest among a large number of earnest people, who use Biblical forms and phraseology to picture to themselves the hidden things of nature and of spirit — things which we, the editors, and also the large majority of Theosophists, believe to be more clearly conveyed under the symbolism of the ancient Wisdom-Religion of the East, and better expressed in its terminology. The article is an attempt to explain the significance of a very curious cloud formation observed by many persons in Scotland, on the 16th of September last, a sketch of which appeared in the St. Stephen's Review on the 24th of the same month. In the centre of the sketch appears a side view of the British Lion rampant, with his paw on the head of a bearded man, who bears a considerable likeness to Mr. Parnell; to the right of the Lion is an excellent likeness of Her Majesty, crowned, as in the Jubilee coinage, and smiling very naturally; and to the left of the picture is an Irish harp. The appearance, by the testimony of many witnesses, must have been remarkably perfect and striking. Cloud-forms of a similar kind have been recorded many times in history, and they are usually connected in the public mind with some important political event. The Cross of Constantine will, no doubt, recur to the readers' mind, but the sword and reversed crescent, which everyone saw in the sky when the Turks were driven out of Vienna, may be less generally known; as also the reversed thistles, with the outline of a Scotchman, armed with claymore² and targe,³ and falling backward, which was observed in the clouds by the King and [285] Court at Windsor on the night before the battle of Culloden.4

The question of what interpretation is to be put upon remarkable cloud appearances, is of little interest to anyone who believes that such phenomena are merely accidental arrangements of the watery vapours of the atmosphere driven by currents of air. Apart, however, from the obvious consideration that this way of regarding the

¹ [Consult "Keys to the Mystery Language," in our Theosophy and Theosophists Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [A large double-edged broadsword used by Scottish Highlanders]

^{3 [}shield]

⁴ [Fought April 16th, 1738, near Inverness, Scotland, when the Jacobites were totally defeated by the Duke of Cumberland. This was the last effort of the Stuarts to regain the throne. — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

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phenomenon only raises the further question of what causes the currents of air to run in these particular ways, it may be safely said that the chances are millions of millions of millions to one, against the appearance in the clouds of any such perfect and complete picture of well-known persons and emblems, as were seen in Scotland on the 16th of September. Of course it may be argued, on the other hand, that the clouds are for ever forming and re-forming in millions of millions of millions different ways, and that the mathematical chances are that one of these ways will occasionally represent an earth scene. But even if the infinite number of continual permutations and transformations of cloud substance be held to account for the occasional appearance of some graphic picture of human things,

It does not in any way explain why these rare pictures, when they do occur, should be perfect and appropriate symbols;

Neither does it account for their appearance at the particular moment when the extraordinary events, to which they are appropriate, are occurring, or about to occur.

Cloud formations in the shape of persons or things is an old and well-accredited fact in magic.

Whether viewed as warnings, omens, or meaningful symbols, their interpretation by the beholder is wholly subjective, as much as when he beholds and contemplates the invisible Universe.

The phenomenon of vapours and fumes taking the shape of persons and things, is one of the oldest and best accredited facts in magic, and these cloud appearances, if they be viewed as having any significance, are merely instances of a similar action on a large scale produced by some conscious or unconscious force in nature.

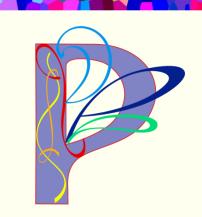
If it be allowed, however, that the occasional assumption by vapours of the shapes and likenesses of terrestrial [286] things is not a "fortuitous concourse of atoms," but occurs in accordance with some obscure law of nature that in itself is the result of the mutual interaction and interdependence of everything in the Universe, the important question still remains — whether these appearances, when they do occur, are "intended" as warnings or omens? Should the lion, the harp, her Majesty, and Mr. Parnell, of the Scottish cloud-picture, be taken as having any more significance in the affairs of the nation, or of the world at large, than chemical phenomena can be supposed to presage disturbances or rejoicings in the world of nature? To answer this question would involve considerations which only an advanced Occultist would be able to comprehend; so we shall merely say, that although there are natural symbols which carry in them a definite meaning for those who can read that secret language, still symbols are generally significant in proportion as people themselves put a significance into them.

The conclusions of Captain Serjeant have been already reached by many minds pursuing different paths.

Great changes are approaching, both in the temporal and in the spiritual life of humanity, and these changes presage the dawn of better days and nobler ideas.

A triangle or a cube is nothing but a triangle or a cube to a yokel, but to an Occultist they contain the philosophy of the Universe. Even so, Captain Serjeant, "the New Dispensationist," and Theosophist, can put the meaning he likes into this or any other symbolical representation. We do not quite agree with either his methods or his results in the case before us, but the conclusions he draws are the same that are now being reached by many minds pursuing very different paths; and these conclusions may be summed up by saying that great changes are approaching, both in the temporal and in the spiritual life of humanity, and that these changes will eventuate in better things and nobler ideas.

H.P. BLAVATSKY



Part 2.

Heavenly formations interpreted by Wm. C. Eldon Serjeant F.T.S., and New Dispensationist.

Annotated by H.P. Blavatsky.

The Lion is the symbol of Wisdom.² But, as it is impossible to single out one element of a Trinity, it is necessary to remember that Wisdom is also Love and Truth.

From Blavatsky Collected Writings, ("GOD SPEAKS FOR LAW AND ORDER") VIII pp. 287-92. The annotations, highlighted in RGB 253-255-194, are by Madame Blavatsky.

Thus may be interpreted the symbolical appearance represented and described in the *St. Ste- phen's Review* of 24th September 1887. The lion³ of the house of Judah⁴ arises with Victoria⁵



[[]Dispensationalists use a literal interpretation of the Bible and believe that divine revelation unfolds throughout the Bible. They believe that there is a distinction between Israel and the Church, and that Christians are not bound by Mosaic law. They maintain beliefs in premillennialism, Christian Zionism, and a rapture of the Church that will happen before the Second Coming of Christ, generally seen as happening before a period of tribulation. Dispensationalism is a theological framework that views history as divided into distinct periods in which God interacts with mankind in specific ways. Each of these periods is known as a dispensation. The defining characteristics of a dispensation are the distinct governing relationship in which God interacts with mankind during that period, and the resulting responsibility placed upon mankind in that period. Cf. Wikipedia.]

² [As well as of humanity's Fourth Race (Atlantean). The serpent, which kills in order to resurrect, and destroys but to rebuild the better, is also the symbol of Wisdom, Eloquence, and Eternity, now regarded as the symbol of the Devil. Kneph, or the triple-crocodile of Egypt, is the symbol of man's Immortal Higher Trinity (Ātma–Buddhi–Manas). Isis is the symbol of Nature. — ED. PHIL.]

It is somewhat difficult to follow the argument of this passage, unless the meaning of the words is explained. The Lion of the House of Judah is equivalent to "the Lord" and to "the Victor" mentioned below. In the writer's phraseology "Victor is the symbol of the Trinity of Wisdom, Love, Truth." Now the Lion is symbolical of Wisdom; but, as it is impossible to sever one element of the Trinity from another, it is necessary to remember that whenever the word wisdom is used it carries with it the other two as well. The above sentence would then seem to mean the conjunction of the male and female principles to effect the purposes of the manifestation of the Trinity above mentioned; by which manifestation all ignorance is dispelled. — *H.P. Blavatsky*.

⁴ Judah means *praised*; the true idea being *the Lord be praised*. Too much attention cannot be paid to the meanings of the words used in the sacred writings of all nations and peoples. [Look up Appendix, "A Marriage made in Heaven," on page 12. — ED. PHIL.]

i.e., the Queen, on whose lands the Sun never sets; it must be remembered that — "neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord." — (1 Corinthians xi, 11)

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It is not Her Most Gracious Majesty who is meant, but the unseen Victoria, whose outward manifestation the Queen is supposed to be. It is as though the Queen is the mouth-piece of the Intelligence behind, as the Foreign Secretary is the mouth-piece of the foreign policy of her Government.

the female principle of the victor of this world of ignorance, error, sin, crime and misery. The lion represents that wisdom which is the only true and lasting power on earth. He shall crush out the anarchy and confusion now so manifest in the world which is the state of ignorance existing on this earth. Without a miracle shall all this be accomplished? [288]

As insidious doubt has crept into the hearts of the children of men, so shall insidious truth creep in to dispel all doubt; ignorance developed into wisdom shall be the destruction of the world. Ignorance is the former or lower expression of knowledge, and knowledge is the former or lower expression of wisdom — ignorance is the cross — wisdom is the crown. Ignorance regarded in a true light is really an incentive to knowledge, for no man would try to attain to knowledge were he not ignorant. And no man would strive to attain to wisdom, did he not possess the knowledge which ever silently proclaims to him its crowning happiness. Wisdom is not only the celestial crown which every embodied soul is ultimately destined to possess, but it is also that particular state of Heaven called the "New Jerusalem" which shall descend from the Spirit (i.e., God, see John iv, 24) to earth in these latter days (see Revelation xxi).

Man was created⁴ an ignorant being for a great purpose, which he will ultimately realise and know. Were there no ignorance, there could be no error, without error there could be no sin.



"And no man can say, *Jesus is Lord* [i.e., Victor], but in the Holy Spirit." — (1 Corinthians xi, 3, RV) It is especially necessary to remember that whenever allusion is made to Victoria, it is not Her Most Gracious Majesty who is meant but the unseen Victoria whose outward manifestation the Queen is alleged to be. It is as though the Queen is the mouth-piece of the intelligence behind, as the Foreign Secretary may be the mouth-piece of the Foreign policy of the Government. The language used is purely symbolical and by using words as symbols an esoteric meaning is attached to the most commonplace events in life. It is a truly occult argument, but one which matter-of-fact people will regard as nonsensical. — *H.P. Blavatsky*.

² According to the explanations of the writer (*vide supra*) *The World* signifies a state of ignorance and darkness, Taken in this sense the above sentence becomes a truism. — *H.P. Blavatsky*.

³ Ignorance is the equivalent of the Body, which is the Cross. By this light the Wisdom means the life of the Spirit. — H.P. Blavatsky.

⁴ To say that Man was created ignorant for a great purpose would argue the idea of a creator, according to orthodox ideas. But the writer is known to repudiate this idea entirely. It is difficult, therefore, to see what he means, unless it is that the man of flesh was ushered into existence by an evolution which he has not yet completed — ignorant, to acquire knowledge gradually. — *H.P. Blavatsky*.

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The Kingdom of Heaven must be taken by violence (i.e., must be conquered, for it does not surrender), and an entrance effected in an instant (at the very end). But let us not get ahead of ourselves, the conquest of spirit over matter is an exceedingly long and arduous quest for the brave warrior.

Were [289] there no ignorance, no sin, there could be no crime, no unhappiness, no misery existing on the earth. When, therefore, general ignorance shall succumb to the disintegrating power of universal intelligence so rapidly developing in these latter days (see *Daniel* xii, 4), and which is the quickening of the Spirit of God in man; then the very conditions responsible for evolving error, sin, crime, unhappiness, and misery will be entirely done away with, and thus the consummation of the age — or, as the old translation of the Bible has it, the end of the world — will be brought about as a necessary consequence of purification by the Fire of the Spirit, *Truth*, which is the Divine Son of the Supreme Spirit, or God. "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth" [*John* xvi, 13]; then shall the princes of the House of David arise from amongst the people to rule the nations in equity and justice, in prosperity and peace, and the reign of the One Almighty Spirit of Wisdom, Love, and Truth shall begin on earth — for the Lion (or wisdom) shall lie down with the Lamb (or innocence), and a little child (or truth, see *Revelation* xii, the coming man-child) shall lead them.

Angels may weep and mourn over the discord now prevailing in the world, but on the principle that there is no truth without a paradox,³ there must also be a great deal of truth in this article, but its disentanglement is a matter of much labour and thought.

The soul-stirring and elevating harp of the sweet and trusting daughters of Judah⁴ is hushed — no crown surmounts it; and the [290] angels weep and mourn over the discord now prevail-

This is a very optimistic view of the case, and we can only hope to see it realised. The article "Signs of the Times" agrees with the views of the writer of this article. There is a development going on, but the forces against which it has to contend are too dense for an early realisation of this dreamlike Golden Age. It is too good to be true; but that it is possible to help it is also true. The Kingdom of Heaven may be taken by violence, and an entrance effected in an instant, but the process of attaining the position whence the attack may be delivered, is one extending over years. No student of occultism needs to be told this. — H.P. Blavatsky.

David means beloved; he was the first King of Israel, chosen of the Spirit. Israel means one who strives with God - i.e., one who strives against ignorance in order that he may be blessed together with his posterity. It was a name given to Jacob when he wrestled with the Angel (Genesis xxxii, 28), and applies to all who contend on the side of the Deity.

³ [Consult "Paradox is the language of Occultism," in our Living the Life Series. — ED. PHIL.]

In the writer's phraseology, Judah is the equivalent of Erin in this case. It becomes exceedingly difficult to follow his meaning, for as everything is the equivalent of everything else, we are landed in a hopeless maze of paradox. On the principle that there is no truth without a paradox, there must be a great truth in this article (as there is), but its disentanglement is a matter of much labour and thought. The line of argument is the Judah meaning "Be praised" — certain people who praised or followed the Lord (or Wisdom) were "oppressed and laid aside *their harps*." There are people unjustly oppressed in Ireland, not by the outer troubles, but by the causes of the undoubted misery which prevails there. Consequently, the daughters of Judah and Erin are equivalent terms and interchangeable as symbols. The fact is that the author uses a peculiar cryptogram, as he himself states. — *H.P. Blavatsky*.

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ing in the world. Where are the harmonious chords which, through their inherent, soft, loving and sympathetic notes once rendered powerless that enemy of man — the serpent? Lost, through the ignorance and sin of the puny-worms of this world! Yet Ireland, in common with the whole earth, shall be freed ere long from the yoke of ignorance which is so sorely oppressing all God's creatures, for the crowned female head symbolically represents the "Sign in Heaven" which has appeared, of the Victoria or the woman clothed with the Sun, the Divine Mother from whom will proceed the Child of Wisdom, Love and Truth, who shall rule all nations with a rod of iron, and who shall be caught up unto God and unto His Throne.

The following quotation from one of the replies to two leading articles, which appeared in the *Manchester Courier* of May 4th and 13th, may also tend to throw some light on the vision of the crowned female head:

"The present year heralds the jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Victoria, on whose glorious Empire the sun never sets."

It shall also proclaim the jubilee of another Queen Victoria, well known to the ancients as the Bride of God who awaits the arrival of the [291] Bridegroom. This queen is She of Sheba — the female principle of the one who is the Victor of this world of ignorance and darkness, sin and crime; and He is the Solomon, of or Man of Light, Truth and Life Eternal. On her glorious empire the golden rays of Love and Peace shall shine forth from the Living Sun which nevermore shall set. She is the woman clothed with the Sun, and from her will proceed the promised man-child who shall rule all nations with a rod of iron, and shall be caught up unto God and unto His Throne. Were the English nation but to realise the mighty import of the grand and everlasting truths which I now proclaim, it would, to a man, support us in that work in which we, the New Dispensationists, daily and hourly labour in the interests of a suffering humanity now being slowly ground to powder in the stern mill of social ignorance and degradation. The time has come for the promise to be made known of the fulfilment of the "Saving health of all nations"; the prophecies of the ancients relating to the ultimatum of the written Word of Truth clearly point to the present age; and the Eternal Fiat has gone forth from the Universal King:

"Write, for these words are faithful and true" — "Behold, I make all things new." (*Revelation* xxi, 5)

It is fashionable in the world to covertly sneer at the things of the Spirit, and to regard the Living God in Heaven as a Being either unable or unwilling to manifest His Almighty Power and Presence to the world in this orthodox nineteenth century. To all who may be inclined to ignorantly hold what I have here written to he the outcome of a disordered imagination I would say, in the words of Paul, an apostle: "not of men, neither by men."

"We speak wisdom among the full-grown, yet a wisdom, not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, *which are coming to nought*: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery,

¹ See *The Mother, the Women clothed with the Sun*, Vols. I and II; and also the celebrated picture of "The Woman clothed with the Sun," by Carl Müller.

i.e., the Sceptre that endureth.

³ Davidation -

⁴ The Queen of the South or Zenith (*i.e.*, the most supreme point of the Heavens) who shall rise in judgment with this generation (see Matthew xii, 42), She'ba represents two Hebrew words ($Shebh\bar{a}$ and $Shebh\bar{a}$). The first of these is an obscure term, compared by Gesenius with the Ethiopic for "man"; the second signifies an oath or covenant.

i.e., the Christ, the Messiah.

i.e., the man of "Sol" or the Sun. Hence, Christians worship on Sunday instead of on the Sabbath or on Saturday, as the Jews worship.

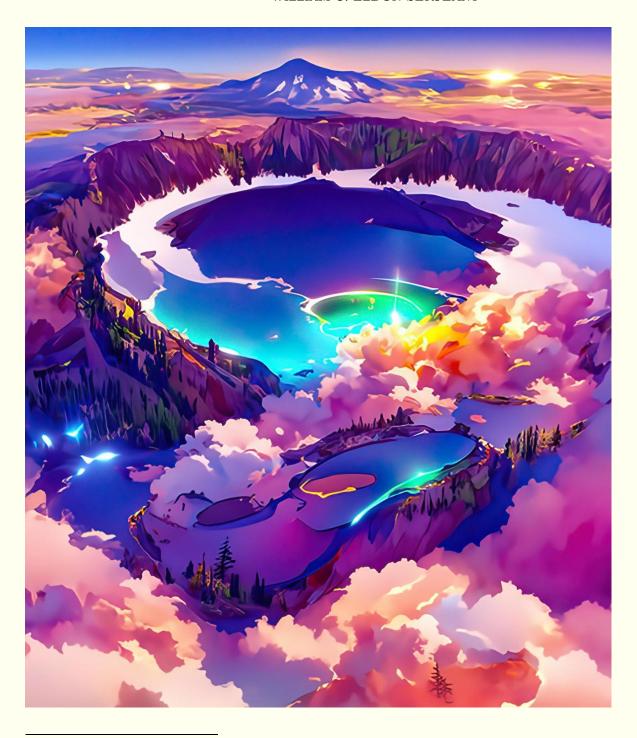
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even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory, which none of the Rulers of this world knoweth." ¹

"Now the natural man [292] receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually examined. But he that is spiritual examineth all things, and he himself is examined of no man." (See 1 Corinthians ii, 14-15.)

The year 1887 heralds the spiritual activity which will eventually culminate in the glorious consummation of the age.

WILLIAM C. ELDON SERJEANT



i.e., Theosophy, or the hidden outcome of the hidden wisdom of the ages.

Appendix. A Marriage made in Heaven.

Excerpted from C.A. Bartzokas (Comp. & Ed.). Compassion: The Spirit of Truth, Gwernymynydd: Philaletheians UK, 2005; v. 100-2023; 398pp. Appendix J pp. 377-78.

" . . . man and woman are verily soul and body, inseparable ever. Then shall they realise, in the words of the $\emph{Vishnu-Pur\bar{a}na}$ [i, 8] and the $\emph{Vishnu-Bh\bar{a}gavata}$ [vi, 19] that:

He is Vishnu, She is Shri.

She is language, He is thought.

She is prudence, He is law.

He is reason, She is sense.

She is duty, He is right.

He is author, She is work.

He is patience, She is peace.

He is will, and She is wish.

He is pity, She is gift.

He is chant and She is note.

She is fuel, He is fire.

She is glory, He is sun.

She is orbs, He is space.

She is motion, He is wind.

He is ocean, She is shore.

He is owner, She is wealth.

He is battle, She is might.

He is lamp, and She is light.

He is day, and She is night.

He is tree, and She is vine.

He is music, She is words.

He is justice, She is truth.

He is channel, She is stream.

For the esoteric significance of marriage, see "Blavatsky on Marriage, Divorce, and Celibacy," in our Blavatsky Speaks Series, and "Marriage made in Heaven," in our Secret Doctrine's Third Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

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He is flag-staff, She is flag.

She is beauty, He is strength.

She is body, He is soul.

[She is soil, He is seed.]

Then shall they see that both are equally important and indispensable and inseparable; that each has distinct psycho-physical attributes and functions which supplement each other; that both are present in each individualised life; but that, in certain epochs, one, with its set of characteristics, is more prominent in one set of forms, and the other, with its *differentia* and *propria*, in another set of forms."²

Endless are the pairs of opposites.

Here are Simon's three Syzygies, or dual Logoic emanations, expressed in Gnostic terms after Heraclitus' Universal Principle ($\tau\omega\nu$ $a\pi a\nu\tau\omega\nu$ $a\rho x\eta$), or Intellectual Fire ($\tau\omega\nu$ $\nu o\varepsilon\rho o\nu$):

He is Mind (Nous), She is Thought (Epinoia).

He is Voice (Phone), She is Name (Onoma).

He is Reason (Logismos), She is Reflection (Enthumesis).



1

¹ [Cf. Manu, Bk. 9, shl. 33]

Modified after Das B. The Science of Social Organisation (or the Laws of Manu) in the Light of Theosophy. Benares: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1910; pp. 221-22.

³ Cf. "From the Potency of Thought, Divine Ideation . . . passed to *Action*. Hence the series of primordial emanations through Thought begetting the Act, the objective side of Fire being the Mother, the secret side of it being the Father. Simon [Magus] called these emanations Syzygies (a united pair or couple), for they emanated two-bytwo, one as an active and the other as a passive Æon. Three couples thus emanated (or six in all, the Fire being the seventh), to which Simon gave the following names: Mind (vovg, Nous) and Thought (επινοια, Epinoia), Voice (φωνη, Phone) and Name (ονομα, Onoma), Reason (λογισμος, Logismos), and Reflection (ενθυμησις, Enthumesis), the first in each pair being male, the last female. From these primordial six emanated the six Æons of the Middle World." Blavatsky Collected Writings, (E.S. INSTRUCTION No. II) XII p. 553

Suggested reading for students.



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- THE OCCULT CAUSES OF EPIDEMIC DISEASES
- THE RELIGIO-PHILOSOPHICAL JOURNAL IS NEITHER RELIGIOUS NOR PHILOSOPHICAL
- THE RUSSIAN MOTE AND THE BRITISH BEAM
- THE SEWER OF DOGMATIC CREEDS AND BLIND FAITH
- THE SPARKLE OF "LIGHT ON THE PATH" HAS BEEN DIMMED BY A DARK STAIN
- THE SPIRIT OF LIFE ISSUES FROM THE EARTH'S NORTH POLE
- THE UNGRATEFUL MAN
- THE VELVETEEN RABBIT
- TRUTH IS EXILED FROM THE PRESS BECAUSE IT IS NOT AS BEGUILING AS FALSE-HOOD
- VIRGIL'S GEORGICS TR. RHOADES
- WESTERN RELIGION ALONE IS TO BLAME FOR THE CRUELTY TO ANIMALS
- WHAT IS MUSIC? BY ISAAC RICE
- WHEN THE DOORS OF THE WORLD CLOSED ON THEM
- WHY DO ANIMALS SUFFER
- WHY THE MISERY OF ILL-BEING CANNOT BE RELIEVED

