

**FROM WHENCE,
WHAT, WHERE?**

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From Whence, What, Where? by James R. Nichols

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JAMES R. NICHOLS

**FROM WHENCE,
WHAT, WHERE?**

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BY

1882
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Journal of Chemistry.*

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PREFACE.

No subjects of thought so earnestly press upon the minds of intelligent readers and thinkers at the present time, as those which relate to the genesis of man, his material and spiritual nature, the event of death, and the life hereafter. I have learned from a wide association with active business men as well as with scholars and thinkers, that none are too busy or too much engaged in life's affairs to fail to read and converse upon these topics. It is due to conversations with business and scientific friends in hours of leisure, that this little book appears. In yielding to their solicitations to put in print thoughts often privately expressed, I do an act not unattended with doubt and hesitation. It contains views well known to many, who, as guests and friends, have by their social and intellectual qualities added much to the pleasures of a rural home. These essays present but the briefest outlines of great themes; themes

which have engaged the attention of cultivated minds in all ages. Whatever may be new in them relates to the independent method of treatment of the topics, and to some opinions of the nature of spirit and the conditions of a future life.

Facts in science have been arranged so as to present whatever testimony it is capable of affording; and the teachings of the founder of the Christian faith have been given that prominence and authority to which they are undeniably entitled. It must be admitted that science has its unwarrantable assumptions and dogmas as well as theology, and those of the one should be as cautiously accepted as the other. The testimony and teachings of science upon the topics considered have been plainly presented and so far as possible, without its formulas and technicalities. As it is now well understood, even by ordinary minds, that theology is not religion, and that creeds are the work of men, but little weight has been given to either in this discussion.

In a former age when an exacting ecclesiasticism dominated over ignorant and servile

populations, men were swayed by fear ; their minds were filled with images, distorted and diabolical, like the gargoyles which looked down upon them from the copings of the old cathedrals. Now, men think, reason, analyze ; and views are held upon religious and spiritual matters, which are formed from independent study of the teachings of the Divine Master.

It is probable that some of the views presented, particularly in the four last chapters, will not be in harmony with those of all readers ; but there is good reason for believing that many Christian laymen and ministers will in private thank me for bringing to view the indefensible nature of the doctrines found in church creeds ; doctrines which they have long wished might be eliminated.

Much embarrassment has been felt in endeavoring to make the essays concise and still preserve continuity and completeness. They are indeed but outline thoughts which may be extended at a future time if it should appear desirable.

J. R. N.

HAVERHILL, MASS.,
November, 1882.

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