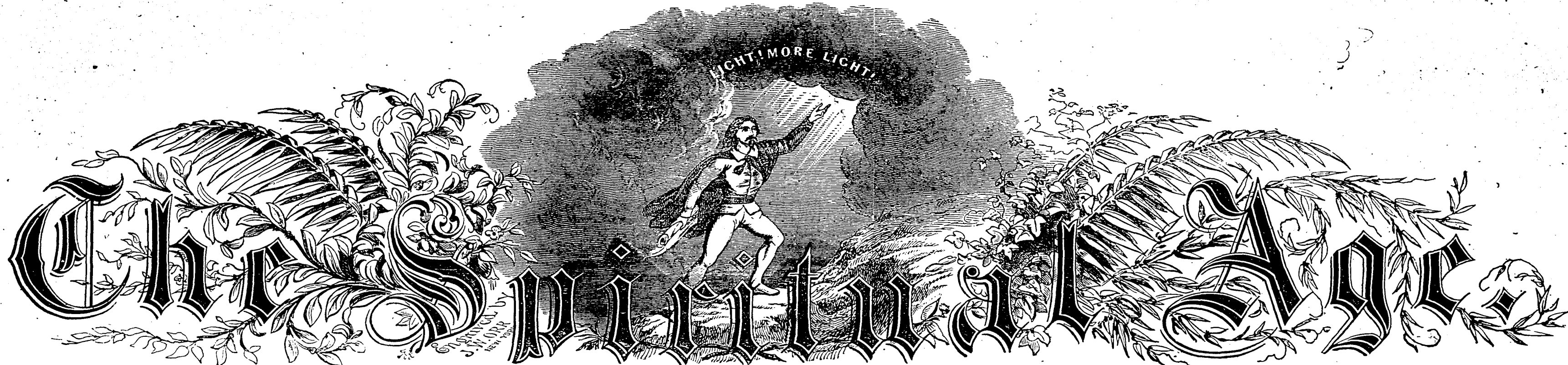




DEVOTED TO RATIONAL SPIRITUALISM AND PRACTICAL REFORM.

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Spiritual Philosophy.

For the Spiritual Age.

VENTILATION OF ANCIENT SPIRITUALISM BY A FAN THAT HAS THOROUGHLY PURGED THE FLOOR.

No. 1.

This work has been most beautifully done by Mrs. L. MARIA CHILD, in her "Progress of Religious Ideas through Successive Ages." Beginning on the farthest step down in the ages, she traces the "Word" from the Indus to the Nile, thence to Greece and Rome, leaving an off-shoot or participle for the Jews by the way of the wilderness and the Dead Sea. Through all the ages she finds the "Word" studiously hidden from the people. Shrouded in mystery of emblems and symbols, it was sacrifice to reveal it. Even our biblical Serpent ante-dates the Garden of Eden by a countless time in India, before Moses, skilled in secret lore, made his acquaintance in Egypt, or Eve dallied with him in Paradise. In one of his phases he symbolized immortality, probably from casting his skin and his resurrection therefrom,—now an emblem of this, now of that, till his trail in the "Word" has been lost for some thousands of years, though he still culminates around our barbers' poles, and appears the buggaboo Satan in our dark churches.

Mrs. Child finds the original of our story of Noah in the Hindoo Sacred Scriptures. Shem, Ham and Japhet are there; Sherma, Charma and Jyapeti. The Hindoo Noah gets drunk—Charma laughs at him; then the father curses him saying, "Thou shalt be the servant of servants." What a heresy this is to be found outside the "pasteboard barriers of the Bible," by which our divines have augmented that this curse was meant for our slaves in this 19th century of Jesus, who, in fullness and beauty of heart declared, "Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these, ye do it unto me!"

Mrs. Child well observes that "a transition state, when society is preparing to cast its old skin, is unpleasant and difficult for timid and reverential temperaments. Sacred laws, appropriate to one age, do not supply the wants of another age. They become inconvenient or impossible of application when progressive centuries have introduced manifold changes."

We see with what pertinacity our old fogies cling to the past, and resist the advent of the new unfolding. In old time, as now, there was the same charge by stultified minds of Evil Spirits being the only source of each new heavenly influx; and only through much tribulation does enslaved mentality work itself clear of the meshes of the priesthood.

But there were great truths under all the old religions, though "carefully kept secret from the people, while high spiritual allegories and profound metaphysical inquiries were concealed behind the veil."

Oracles were frequently delivered by women as the spirit gave them utterance, the same as by our trance-mediums or otherwise gifted, as in our manifestations of to-day. St. Paul put a veto on these gifts to women, and the exclusion is manifest in our dreary masculine churches. But "the daughter of Sesostris is said to have been so skilled in divination, that she foretold to her father his future brilliant success. The monarch, being himself a priest, had access to all their secret sciences; nevertheless, his conduct on important occasions was much influenced by her predictions. Her prophecies were noted and respected in the temple itself."

"The end of all the Egyptian rites and mysteries was the knowledge of that First God, who is the Lord of all things, to be discerned only by the mind. Their theology had two meanings—the one holy and symbolical, the other vulgar and literal; consequently, the figures of animals which they had in their temples, and which they seemed to adore, were only so many hieroglyphics to represent the divine attributes."

The Most Holy Trinity is found throughout all antiquity. "Three was a mystical and significant number, consisting of the masculine principle of the universe, the feminine principle, and the offspring, or result, of the two." In both India and Egypt the Serpent "was the symbol of Wisdom and Immortality. The Cross was considered an amulet of great virtue, a protection from Evil Spirits. When this Cross was twined with a Serpent it was the Emblem of Immortal Life."

Our authoress, after showing the manifestation of the spirit in India and Egypt long before the Jewish record, passes into China and Thibet, and gives the oracles of their holy men. Sadduceism was not one of the modes of thought in the earlier days, outside the Jews. "How vast is the power of spirits!" exclaims Confucius. "An ocean of invisible Intelligences surround us everywhere."

The five books of Confucius date four hundred years before Moses, and refer continually to a religion long established at the time they were written. They speak of "a mysterious Garden, where grew a Tree bearing apples of Immortality, guarded by a winged Serpent, called a Dragon." This Tree was probably transplanted to the Garden of Eden, and Eve, when she tested the qualities of its fruit, made a capital God-send to modern theologues.

The Chinese Pentateuch, like the Mosaic, lays all the sins of this world at the door of woman. It says, "Our misery

did not come from Heaven, but from a woman. She lost the human race." These and like Sacred Legends of antiquity, growing on Gentile or Jewish Trees, are made to bind the yoke on woman's neck even unto this day. While such things are wrought into the infallible Word, shall we not rejoice in the Ministry of Angels, who feed us with bread direct from Heaven, without the mold of India, Egypt, or the Dead Sea?

The Chinese, of course, have their Trinity, who is One and Three, and one of these is the "Word."

Alas for our Swedenborgian brethren! who, in their narrow exclusiveness of sect, can trace their "Word" only by the way of the Swedish Seer, who, indeed, did see many things far above the dreary waste of modern theologicdom. But his mediumistic state so colors and transfuses all that passes through him,—he so draws upon imagination for his facts, and upon his facts for his imagination, that he needs most thorough ventilating by the modern heavenly influx. By his infallible "Word," he damns everybody who does not walk over Jordan by his very narrow bridge. By his "Word," he damns the Trinitarians amid regions of thick-fibbed ice. He sees the Unitarians in hell—Luther laughing in the spheres at his dupes on earth for their belief in justification, and Calvin making his abode with some scarlet ladies.

We find all this and much more in his "Word" called the "True Christian Religion." But in the present opening of the heavens, it is refreshing to have him among the first to return through Judge Edmonds, and thus to purge the floor of his many fantasies while a dweller in the tabernacle of clay. His "Word," without flesh, is very much better than his "Word" when he was in the flesh.

Leaving China and Thibet, Mrs. Child passes into Chaldea and Persia; and here, too, we find "the Tree of Life, which, both in Hindostan and Egypt, was believed to confer immortality on those who ate of its fruit." Here, too, we find "the Primeval Word, by which creation was produced, and every syllable it contained possessed an inherent virtue." Here, too, we find "the Mediator, who was supposed to mediate between the conflicting powers of good and evil." Here, too, we find the Serpent in other guise than when he sometimes symbolized the destruction of life, or its immortality. Here he is possessed by an evil spirit, and crawls upon his belly to tempt human beings to do likewise; and sorry we are to say that so many are thus tempted to take the downward way through gluttony, rum and tobacco, and all manner of evil courses.

The interpretation of the Jewish "Word" by Philo Judeus, cotemporary of Jesus of Nazareth, is that the Serpent symbolizes these grosser pleasures of the senses. He thinks it also "more incurable folly" to receive the Jewish Scriptures in the literal, instead of the allegorical sense—the literal "Word" for the vulgar, and the allegorical "Word" for the wise and prudent. From this point of view all Jewishdom is symbolized or allegorized, in order that it may shine in the presence of the Platonic "Word."—*Philo Judeus in Bohm's Library.*

In the Sacred Scriptures of the Persians, it is declared that "He who sows the ground with diligence acquires a greater stock of religious merit than he could gain by ten thousand prayers in idleness." This truth is as new and as fresh now as it was 4000 years ago; but prayers in idleness are far more fashionable in this 19th century than the doing of things useful. Yet it is by work, and not by Lord! Lord! that we are to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

In this same Holy Bible of the Persians, it is said, "Be not envious, avaricious, proud, or vain. Envy and jealousy are the works of Evil Spirits. Haughty thoughts and thirst of gold are sins."

"Be very scrupulous to observe truth in all things." "Abstain from thy neighbor's wife. Fornication and immodest looks are sins. Avoid licentiousness, because it is one of the readiest means to give Evil Spirits power over body and soul. Strive, therefore, to keep pure in body and mind, and thus prevent Evil Spirits, who are always trying to gain possession of man. To think evil is sin."

All this, and much more of the same import, are of the most "excellent" Word by which souls pass the luminous and radiant bridge." This "Word," spoken by Ormuzd, through whose agency creation was produced, was called Honover, and invoked as the Great Primal Spirit.

The Persians take cheerful and benevolent views of death. To the good it is only a passage into Paradise. They seem never to have heard of infant damnation, and of other manifold damnable doctrines of modern theologues. Alas! for these benighted heathens.

Greece and Rome are next presented by Mrs. Child. "Gay, imaginative and free, the Grecians received religious ideas from every source. Even a hearty laugh is ascribed to the genial influence of the Gods."

Hurrah for the laughing angels of Greece! They are much better than the gloomy demons of our sepulchral churches.

"In Greece the seventh day was sacred to Saturn, from time immemorial. Homer and Hesiod call it the holy day." Here, too, in Greece, we find re-creations from India, Egypt and Chaldea—Olympian Jupiter, now the Supreme Creator, now

the God of Gods—and guardian angels on every hand to smooth the cheerless ways of earth. Mediums spake their oracles as the spirit gave them utterance—prophecies were fulfilled, and the manifestation of the spirit was given to every one to profit withal.

Numerous miracles are recorded in the annals of Greece and Rome. They were believed by many intelligent and learned persons, and were received as religious truth by the populace. Cicero says, "Time wears away opinions founded on fictions, but confirms the dictates of Nature; whence it is, both among us and other nations, that sacred institutions and divine worship of the Gods have been increased and refined, from time to time. This is not to be imputed to chance or folly, but to the frequent appearance of the Gods themselves. Their voices have been often heard, and they have appeared in forms so visible that he who doubts it must be hardened in stupidity or impiety."

The souls, angels or spirits were by the ancients termed Gods. Our seeing mediums see the like spiritual beings, who, when described, we know as our past familiar loved ones in the flesh; and thus do we see present time redeeming the truths of Jewish and Gentile antiquity.

Those deities who were put far away in the past, with only a seeming imaginary origin, were symbolized under present material emblems. "That which to us appears absurd in their mythological legends, they explained satisfactorily to themselves, by regarding them as allegories—a method universally employed by the human intellect when devoutly inclined to discover sacred meaning to incomprehensible traditions." Above all, was the One Unknown Being, prior to all beings, and exalted above all—the uncreated God—and the Universe his beautiful work.

Their moral doctrine was, not to do unto others what you would they should not do unto you. To speak evil of no one, not even of enemies; and whatever good you do ascribe it to the Gods. The Trinity, or Three, was a mystical number, as it had all along been through the past ages. But "there is One Universal Soul diffused through all things—eternal, invisible, unchangeable; in essence like truth, in substance resembling light; not to be represented by any image—to be comprehended only by the mind." It was moreover taught that "Man is perfected by conversing with Gods, which he can only do when he abstains from evil, and strives to resemble divine natures; second, by doing good to others, which is an imitation of the Gods; third, by leaving this mortal body."

"The noblest gifts of heaven to man are, to speak truth, and do good offices. These two things resemble the works of God." "Strength of mind depends on sobriety, for this keeps reason unclouded by passion."

"Every man ought to act and speak with such integrity that no one would have reason to doubt his simple affirmation." "Do what you believe to be right, whatever people think of you; despise alike their censures or their praise."

Leaving Greece and Rome, Mrs. Child takes a survey of the Celtic tribes and finds a "general resemblance between the Celtic and Hindoo religions."

Next in order stand the Jews, and in the same beautiful and impartial spirit does our just authoress measure them. Abraham is banished from Chaldea for his infidelity to the popular Gods. He then resides in the land of Canaan till a famine drives him among the Egyptians, who discover him to be a man of "very great sagacity," but rather untruthful in his word.

"Little is known concerning the religious views of Abraham, except his belief in one Supreme God. Faith in subordinate spirits is implied by the frequent mention of angels."

God is represented as saying unto Moses, "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as Elshaddai; but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them. Elshaddai is translated the Almighty God. From the few fragments of history which have come down to us, it is not possible to ascertain clearly what ideas of the Divine Being were entertained by these wandering patriarchs. Reverence for the supernatural, which covered ancient Hindostan with altars, filled Egypt with temples, and sent up incense from all the Grecian hills, inspired them also with faith in spiritual agencies, prompted them to offer to God the first fruits of their fields and flocks, and mingled religious observances with all the events of life. Their moral perceptions were influenced by the rudeness of the age in which they lived; and the same remark applies to the founders of all ancient nations. Hebrew records describe them as men of God; but they also tell us that they quarreled about their flocks and herds, and resorted to many tricks and falsehoods," &c., &c.

Joseph was a magician in Egypt, as is shown by "the cup whereby he divined." Moses, the adopted son of the king, was educated by the priests in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, while all knowledge was shut up from the common people. The laws of Moses are in many respects obvious copies of what he had learned in Egypt; but he infused some elevated ideas, greatly in advance of his time—ideas which dawned upon his soul by the same divine influence which in all ages and in all nations has guided every human being who has been

enabled to help the world forward even one single step in its slow progress.

Thanks to Moses for this single step forward; but thanks, above all, to Mrs. Child, whose steps are so beautiful upon the mountains, where the light of all the heavens has shone upon her course. The soul thus lighted from above has no room for pride of intellect—no fragmental points of view—no special doctrines or creeds—cannot walk by the feeble fires that glimmer across their night—but must move in steps of archangelic rhythm of the more perfect day, and in symphony of the whole sweep in chords and octaves the universal scale of being.

C. B. F.

THE ANGEL-GUIDE.

There is an angel ever at my side—

A silent, viewless thing;
God gave that spirit for a guide;
And when this heart is sorely tried

And sick with suffering,

She, who was once my earthly guide,

Still comes as she was wont, and flings

Around my path her sheltering wings!

Though I should spurn her gentle prayers,

And in the field of life

Go forth, to struggle with its cares

Or sink beneath its strife;

Her drooping wings with tears all wet,

Still would she not her trust forget,

And speed away to Heaven.

Mournful and grand she stands apart,

'Till backward lies this weary heart,

To bow and be forgiven!

For when, our Father! in its dreams

The soul goes back to Thee,

And brings, from its far home, sweet gleams

Of hallowed light, till the earth seems

A sacred place to me,

My heart forgets life's dark and care,

And soft I breathe a grateful prayer

Of peace and love to Thee!

Then, then the white-winged angel-guide

Comes weeping, trembling to my side,

And mute with every joy;

I know with eyes full of glad tears

She gazeth on me now;

A gentle sadness in her smile,

But light upon her brow!

Father! that angel comes to me

To win me home to Heaven and Thee!

An earthly star went down in night—

It was my all of joy!

Thou didst recall that seraph bright,

And now no holy, cheering light

Illumes my lonely way,

Save the sweet guide who comes to me

To win me home to Heaven and Thee!

THE SIX MODES OF SALVATION.

"The Five Theoretic Modes of Salvation" was the subject of a lecture recently delivered in Boston, under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Union, by the Rev. Mr. ALGER, a Unitarian clergyman. We take the following report from the columns of the Boston Journal. It will be seen that the sixth or true mode, as advocated by the preacher,—namely, salvation by HARMONY—is essentially identical with the prevalent teachings of spirits and belief of Spiritualists, or, as some term it, "Harmonical Philosophy," so much misunderstood and sneered at by the Christian world. No intelligent mind will deny that such a condition of harmony as is described would constitute the highest conceivable state of "salvation." The only dispute is respecting the method of arriving at it. Let each reader carefully compare the diverse modes, and judge for himself which of the six is most likely to attain the end.—ED. AGE.

The lecture exhibited great fineness and thoroughness of thought. The following is a comprehensive summary of the five modes of theoretic Christian salvation considered by the speaker, together with a sketch of what he esteems to be the true or harmonious theory:

First. When, by the fall of man, all men were utterly lost and doomed to hell forever, the vicarious sufferings of Christ canceled sin, and unconditionally purchased and saved all. This was the original development of Universalism. It sprang consistently from Calvinistic grounds. It was taught by a party in the church of the first centuries; was afterwards repeatedly condemned as a heresy by Popes and by Councils, and was revived by Rely, Murray and others. We are not aware that it now has any avowed disciples.

The second conception is, in substance, that God, foreseeing from eternity the fall of Adam and the consequent damnation of his posterity, arbitrarily elected a portion of them to salvation, leaving the rest to their fate; and the vicarious sufferings of Christ were the only possible means of carrying that decree into effect. This is the Augustinian and Calvinistic theology, and has had a very extensive prevalence among Christians. Many church creeds still embody the doctrine, but in its original, uncompromising form, it is rapidly fading from belief. Even now few persons can be found to profess it without essential modifications, so qualifying it as to destroy its identity.

The third plan of delivering souls from the doom supposed to rest on them, attributes to the vicarious sufferings of Christ a conditional efficacy, depending upon personal faith. Every

one who will heartily believe in the substitutional death of Christ, and trust in his atoning merits, shall thereby be saved. This was the system of Pelagius, Arminius, Luther. It prevails now in the so-called Evangelical Churches more generally than any other system.

The fourth received method of salvation, assuming the same premises which the three foregoing schemes assume, namely, that through the fall all men are eternally sentenced to hell, declares that, by Christ's vicarious sufferings, power is given to the Church, a priestly hierarchy, to save such as confess her authority and observe her rites. All others must continue lost. This theory early began to be constructed and broached by the Fathers. It is held by the Roman Catholic Church, and by all the consistent portion of the Episcopalian. A part of the Baptist denomination also assert the indispensableness of ritual baptism to salvation.

The fifth view of the problem is that no soul is lost or doomed except so far as it is personally voluntarily depraved and sinful. And even to that extent, and in that sense, it can be called lost only in the present life. Death emancipates the soul from every vestige of evil, and ushers it at once into heaven. This is distinctive modern Universalism. It is disappearing from among its recent earnest advocates, who, as a body, will undoubtedly exchange its arbitrary conceptions for more rational conclusions.

The sixth and final scheme of salvation teaches that by the immutable laws which the Creator has established in and over his works and creatures, a free soul may choose good or evil, truth or falsehood, love or hate, beneficence or iniquity. Just so far and just so long as it partakes of the former it is saved; as it partakes of the latter it is lost; and its attitude toward God, forfeits so much of the benefits of creation, and of the blessings of being. The conditions and means of repentance, reformation, regeneration, are always within its power; the future state being but the unnumbered, intensified experience of the spiritual elements of the present, under the same divine constitution and laws. This is the belief of the Unitarians and Restorationists; and it is, as we think, coincident with pure Christianity and the truth of Nature.

Said the speaker in conclusion:

Of the five theoretical modes of salvation taught in the world—Election, Faith, Works, Knowledge, Harmony—one alone is real and divine, although it contains principles taken from all the rest and blended with its own. There is no salvation by foregone election, for that would dethrone the moral law and deity caprice. There is no salvation by dogmatic faith; because faith is not a matter of will, but of evidence, not within a man's own power, and a thousand varieties of faith are necessitated among men. There is no salvation by determinate works; for works are measurable quantities, whose rewards and punishments are meted, and finally spent; but salvation is qualitative and infinite. There is no salvation by intellectual knowledge; for knowledge is sight, not being an accident, not an essence—an attribute of one faculty, not a right state and ruling force in all. The true salvation is by harmony—harmony of all the forces of the soul with themselves, and with all related forces beyond, harmony of the individual will with the divine will, harmony of personal action with the universal activity. What other negation of perdition is possible; what other definition and affirmation of salvation conceivable? By the Creator's fiat man is first elected to be. By the guiding stimulus of faith he is next animated to spiritual exertion. By the performance of good works he then brings his moral nature into beautiful form and attitude. By knowledge of truth he furthermore sees how to direct, govern and attune himself. And finally, by the accomplishment of all this in the organized harmony of a wise and holy soul, there results that state of being whose passive conditions constitute salvation, and whose active experience is eternal life.

A Firm Religious Belief.

I envy no quality of the mind or intellect in others, said Sir Humphrey Davy, be it genius, power, wit, or fancy; but if I could choose what would be most delightful, and I believe most useful to me, I should prefer a firm religious belief to any other blessing; for it makes life a discipline of goodness, creates new hopes when all earthly hopes vanish, and throws over the decay, the destruction of existence, the most gorgeous of all lights; awakens life even in death, and from destruction and decay calls up beauty and divinity; makes an instrument of torture and shame the ladder of ascent to paradise; and, far above all combinations of earthly hopes, calls up the most delightful visions of palms and amaranths, the gardens of the blessed, the security of everlasting joys, where the sensualist and the skeptic view only gloom, decay, annihilation, and despair.

It is neither the vote nor the laying on of hands that gives men the right to preach. One's own heart is authority. If one wishes to, and can, let him, though all church courts forbid. If he cannot preach to edification, he is not authorized, though all the ministers in Christendom ordain him. Any one who has a bell in him, that, ringing, will ring with "Holiness to the Lord," is a preacher.

