



DEVOTED TO RATIONAL SPIRITUALISM AND PRACTICAL REFORM.

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Spiritual Philosophy.

For the Spiritual Age.

THE BASIC WORD OF THE OLD CHURCH. No. I.

Beforetime in Israel when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake: "Come, let us go to the Seer; for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer."—1st SAMUEL, 9: 9.

The assumption of the old church that Abraham to their father, with Moses, the prophets and the apostles, is of more worthy origin than the light of to-day, challenges criticism. We are told that God would never so manifest himself through the ministry of angels as to let them come through unrespectable vessels—which means vessels outside of fashionable churchdom; for the church seems utterly oblivious that fashionable phariseism is of that blindness that leads the blind to destruction, and that God has most lovingly chosen for his work those whom the church has cast out as unclean—the lowly, the sinful and the foolish—to confound the wise and the prudent, whose vanity and pride go before destruction; while from mouths of babes and sucklings God perfects the highest praise.

Mrs. Child has so well surveyed the field of all religions that but little remains for us to do, save to glean and give sketches of that "Word" which our dying churches claim to be infallible, and by which they augur to the straying of many souls. This Word, however apt and proper for its time and people, is not so apt and proper for us, when infallibility is claimed for it, to the shutting out of modern light. We may excuse the Hebrews for the love of the old clothes they carried out of Egypt; but for their persecution for two thousand years by a church that uses the same garments in their mysteries of augury, we see no excuse. We show the Word for its basis of theological churchdom, and not because it is Judaism. We grant all its worth to the old, and all its worth to the new, for each to receive and employ as shall commend itself to his highest light. We think there is a foolish idolatry of the old as infallible. We hope so to remove some of the veil from this idol, that creed-bound mentality may no longer prostrate itself in the superstitious darkness of its ancestors.

In our articles upon the "Church and Natural Philosophy" we have seen how modern science casts out the Jewish Word. We have seen too how Mrs. Child gave a very capital view of all the ancient "Words" of all the ancient nations in harmonizing whole, showing the various stages and culture of all people. Nor is she any the less scientific in her work than they who are vastly more pretentious, but in their wisdom would be likely to place the whole world upon the back of a turtle, and measure all things from that stand-point. Scientific vision is often very narrow in its views, though not so unseemly as the galvanized death in our theologies. The church has sought an ally in this same fragmental science, to measure the unfolding Word of to-day. We think it is clearly in proof that the circumscribed alliance can neither measure the old aright, nor have open vision to measure the new. Utter denial on the one hand, and a blind credence to an "infallible word" on the other, will be very apt to daub their building with untempered mortar, till temple and tower go down.

We are not reverential of the ancient night, when it is made to flout the modern sun in the name of the living God. We reverence Truth, Wisdom and Love. We adore them. Doubtless we are as fallible in their pursuit as the rest of the children of men. But we have no prejudices that we wish respected. We wear no yoke of ancient or of modern days, nor walk in any furrow the slavish mind has made, but seek our way to the Most High by all the light we can gather into the soul. We do not like the enshrining of ancient darkness at the expense of modern light. We cannot be tender in our surgery to such excrescences, but must apply the actual cautery. If the grim old idols stand in our way, be it ours to hew them to pieces in the sight of all Israel and the sun.

But while we have no beaten track for our way, neither have we anathema maranatha, or curses to bestow on any who go not with us, see not as we see, and whose ways are not our ways. We care nothing for the theological arithmetic of three one or one three, but with Milton, we invoke—

"Chiefly Thine, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all tempers the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou knowest
—what in me is dark
Illuminate; what is low, raise and support!"

Our text from Samuel clearly shows the way to the Spiritualistic "Word" of Old Jewry. The Seers or the Prophets, in greater or lesser gifts, are the same as our Mediums of to-day; and according to the fruits are the spiritual operators to be judged. Through the old media, Jehovah, God, Lord, Angel, are the terms used for a common authoritative source—more frequently, it was God or the Lord for the influx, influence, or familiar spirit.

When angels from the Most High, beautiful in love and wisdom, come "to preach a gospel to the poor,—to heal the

broken-hearted,—to preach deliverance to the captive, and to set at liberty them that are bruised," then we have that bread that cometh down from heaven, that whoso eats thereof, attains to the resurrection and the life; but there are lesser fruits, down to those all ashes, from the lurid flames of night.

Jewish Spiritualism is no exception in its several grades of being, each claiming God as authority for the utterance, though simply representative of the spiritual planes of that time, whether of mundane or trans-mundane flow. If we find in present day the outpouring of the spirit exceeds no breadth or depth of media through which it flows, the law of *now* embraces the law of *then*. However varied may be the series of causation, it has its order of consecutiveness, or mode of being, termed law. The physical, the moral and the spiritual, are alike under its rule. From this law of manifestation we run the line of ancient and modern Spiritualism, confining ourself to that record of manifestations called the Word of God, which appears as a multifold idol in our dark theologies of confusion worse confounded.

It is time to be born from the ancient thrall, to come up to the sunlight of the heavens. It belongs to the living to bury the dead, when the dead persist in rattling their old bones to make a sham of life. Let the old skeleton furnish what lime it has for the forthcoming new wheat crop, since all its uses as a quickening spirit departed with its marrow.

Many and profound students, materialwise, have questioned or denied the spiritual identity of man beyond the plane of his outer organized life. How little other than a sterile, educational faith, have we had to sustain us! Our physical and mental philosophies—theology of our churches—have utterly failed to make sure the conscious individuality of the spirit on the dissolution of its material body. A piece of intangible fog, without form and void, is all they could give us for our yearning hearts; and this formless essence, floating about in some far-off locality—now this, now that—indeinitely wrought, but mostly waiting a trump to sound from out eternity to waken east-off worthless bodies, changed to all the purposes of earth. What huskless fruit is this! What fruit all ashes, or, otherwise, quickened by the lurid flames of a wrathful God, burning his children in hell forever! So the gift of immortality, through our churches, is far more woful than the eternal sleep.

One of the darkest phases of the old church idol—the Old Testament—save what we can infer from spirit-intercourse, can hardly be said to yield the faintest outline of a life beyond the tomb. The dispensation through the mediumship of Moses nowhere directly taught it. His blessings and his cursings were bounded by the earth. His twilight gleams can only find their Redeemer along the horizon of the later dawn. Jesus, to meet the Sadducees from their own light, could only quote from their record, "I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." But unto whom does this suffice to rear the conscious soul, when to dust has gone its body? The light of Moses, as it comes to us, was not enough to take him to the spirit-land, but an earth-land flowing with milk and honey was the paradise of his yearning heart, and down to the grave he went on this side Jordan, nor hoped to rise a spirit on the other side, more beautiful than aught that met his eye from topmost height of Pisgah.

The New Testament does indeed bring us to a much higher light, and Jesus shines a perpetual Sun amid the darkness of all ages. Akin to the poor and lowly, he would feed them with the bread of everlasting life, as worthier far than all king, prince or potentate could give. He would have them rise with upright heart and pure to the resurrection and the life, where treasures in heaven were theirs. Happy were they who were open to receive this light. But O what doubts,—what yearnings,—what prayerful depths of anguish!—"for if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised;" and even the witnesses of that resurrection doubted each other's testimony, and received it "as idle tales which they believed not."

So difficult did Jesus find it to manifest to the yet unopened spiritual sight of his most receptive disciples. If the ignorant and credulous fishermen were thus slow of heart to believe, who, then, shall deliver the wise and prudent from the body of this death? If there be not spiritual unfolding when our dull senses die, what a mockery of mockeries is human existence! Why, even its best conditions can have but little attraction for the love and wisdom aspiring one who waits the brighter birth of the spirit. Flesh and blood in low estate might wish to inherit such continuity of life as supposed to have been decreed in Eden. But as we grow upward to the higher light, how gladly would the soul leave its earth-home for the more beautiful one of the spirit-land! Dark indeed is the religion that cannot prolong identity beyond this house of clay.

But now in the fullness of time do the heavens open, and their treasures come to the humble seekers in their needs. No more in the dark valley and shadow of death shall the mourner sit sorrowful for the departed. The yoke is lifted from the weary and heavy laden—the broken-hearted are healed by the sweet melodies of angel-whispers. The lost loved ones are found, and though separate in time, are gathered on the plane of eternity.

It is charged against us that in the resurrection of to-day, there is much not of the highest estate. We grant it, and find the parallel running through all Jewry. While you laugh at us, do not complain if we sometimes change the laughter to the other side of the mouth. If the new wine in some of our vessels is not what it ought to be, we may also see that much contained in the old bottles is not divinely pure. At the same judgment-seat let us all appear without respect of persons, no matter in what name they come, Jehovah, Jove, or Lord. It is not well to set up an idol in the heart, and veil it at the expense of truth. Let the veil be rent and receive each other's light while casting out the works of darkness. What is true in the old cannot be destroyed, but must be evidence of the truth of to-day. Of the manifestations of the old record, let each receive as may be good and true.

We try the spirits in the flesh or out to see what they are worth. We know them by their fruits. If Satanism avails against the new resurrection, so equally against the old, according to the fruit that each may bear. This is the Christian rule of the good Jesus, and we accept it with all our heart.

It is not well to say, "We have Abraham to our father," to garnish the tombs of the ancient Seers, and to stone the Seers of the modern light. The materialism of death shrouds our churches. Infidelity is there. The fashion of this world governs them. Their creed-yokes are on the necks of all within their fold, and ravening wolves are there, whose tender mercies are cruel. Sums of all villainies are anointed in the odor of sanctity, by making an ancient record stand sponsor for the deeds, even though above all stands the most noble beautiful of truths, the tenderest of loves, that "inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these, ye do it unto me." When and where was the engineering of the church for freedom of thought and act, in physical, moral and spiritual growth, and not for compression and bondage? Noble women and brave men are cast out of the synagogues. When so risen they no longer bow to the base idols, rearing their slimy crests from pulpit, from altar, and from floor. At a sightless distance are our dead churches from the beautiful Head who came to preach deliverance to the captive, to heal the broken-hearted, and let the oppressed go free.

Now it is a Sabbath merchandize of the bodies and souls of men, women and children, by leading captive ignorance and stupidity with superstitious rites and dead formulas. Such are the whited sepulchres of our day; and like the rush of many waters is the suit to Mammon and power to lay up treasures on earth. A multitudinous host outside, athirst for the waters of everlasting life, have sought it at fresh fountains whose streams no longer flow through parched and withered churches.

Now that angels are our cup-bearers from ever-flowing fountains of the deep, and bear its many waters in ministry of love, and show us to fresh pastures of verdure ever new, shall we not rejoice? What though this ministry is yet in its day of small things, as a little child—such is the kingdom of heaven—and better, O how much, is this newness of life than the old church Dead Sea with its fruit all ashes! What but a spirit quenched of all light could turn aside from the sun-shining at noonday to go down to the old ages and wander through its dark valley and shadow of death by a light so dim as to be worthless, could it not borrow from the living light of to-day? Let us take pencil-sketches of these old venerable ages, whose visions, dreams and spirits are the basic worship of our 19th century churches.

Let us open these old graves so that their dead may appear unto many. Call their visions, dreams and spirits, Odio Phantoms, if you please, though in name they come as God, Lord, Angel, Man. They are representative names of that early time, and are no authority for us any farther than they are as one with the laws of the Most High as revealed in the greater fullness of this living age.

But in our outlines, or sketch, which we offer as sufficient in present light to portray the mode of being of the ancient "Word," we do not assume that even the spiritualistic phase of the Jewish record is unquestionably true in all respects. Very far from it. But making allowance for terms and ideas, it might in greater or less extent have been according to the claim, and not violative of the spiritual law. The expression of the "infallible word" in its absolute sense, with reference to its causation, is at fault; but the light of the present unfolding will suffice to lift the ancient clouds. To inquire of God through a Seer, and to receive the "Word" of the familiar spirit as the Word of God, and thus to deify the spirits, was simply to do as has been done in all ages. Hence, theocracies and hierarchies for the subjugation of the people. But now a new heaven is brooding a new earth. Trans-mundane mystical lore is no longer infallible by the old Wilderness and the Dead Sea. The new dayspring from on high disperses its Chaos and old Night. Facts and their science are now cognizant of the consecutive law of the various planes, and the mightier birth of to-day rends the swaddling-clothes of antiquity.

The old Word can be read from three points of view—the natural, the allegorical and the spiritual. This trine view

has become so shortened in its distances as to bring it within the vision of the general reader. The natural and the allegorical "Word" are sufficiently displayed by Mrs. Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas," by Theodore Parker's Translation of DeWette, by the Rev. John McNaught's "Doctrine of Inspiration," and by Philo Judæus. The spiritual "Word," with which we shall have mostly to do, is uncovered and re-deemed at its true worth by the modern unfolding, and in the light of our text from Samuel.

There was a book referred to in Joshua and 2d Samuel by the name of *Jasher*. A This "Word," supposed to have been lost, is claimed to have been preserved by the Jews. There is a republication in 1840 by Noah & Gould, New York. This Word has not yet been received among the canons of the "pasteboard barriers of the Bible." It is even deemed apocryphal or spurious. But on what grounds? Our present canons have had many changes rung upon them according to the militant exigencies of the church. It may be seen by De Wette that it is rather a nice point to decide how much is the true metal and how much the counterfeit. The question in many instances seems to have been settled by the greatest amount of brass. The French claim that their tutelary God is on the side of the many *canons*. Why not then add the Word of *Jasher* to the *canons* of the church. Its original Hebrew and faithful translation is endorsed by Isaac Wordheimer, Professor of Oriental Literature, H. V. Nathan, Minister of the English and German Synagogue, Kingston, Jamaica, Professor Turner, an able Hebrew scholar, of New York, and Professor Geo. Bush, of New York, of the Swedenborgian "Word." Surely such names ought to suffice to canonize the "Word" of *Jasher*. We shall refer to it occasionally as auxiliary to the other "Words." Let there be full play of all the canons, whether in or out of the "pasteboard barriers." We have sound militant prescription for this from a present Church of England divine—McNaught—who, in service of the "thirty-nine," has discovered the ancient canons to be breech-burnt, and otherwise unsafe in practice, and "that inspirational infallibility must rest on some better support than the canonization of Scripture. From Genesis to Malachi we hardly know who wrote one book. Let us look on our position and see that whatever else and however excellent may be the meaning of Inspiration, we are forced by the bearings of truth, as witnessed to by the Bible itself, to the conclusion, that neither with reference, to Science, History, Morality, nor Religion, does the Bible permit us to regard its teachings as infallible or free from all error."

Thus does this brave co-worker and engineer dare to stand at "the imminent deadly breach" and show that the scriptural canons can no longer be maintained in position, however much the various sects may stab and twist them for their desperate service. C. B. P.

THE FAITH FLOWER.

BY T. L. HARRIS.

In the garden of beauty the faith-blossom grows,
In the garden of beauty alone;
With the heart of the grape, and the lips of the rose;
And the song of the spheres in its tone.
And its petals have eyes, and its leaflets have wings;
And its voice is all tender and true;
And an inward delight is the song that it sings;
And its fruits with the seasons are new.
'Tis the flower of the Angels! they pluck it to wear
In the garlands they gather on high;
And the breath of its fragrance is music and prayer;
And its loveliness never may die.
But it grows not where Hate with his north wind is keen;
And the senses look vainly to find;
And the light of its beauty may never be seen
By the wise, who in selfhood are blind.
And it withers from sight when the frust-spirit comes
From the Islands of envy and wrath;
And the proud find it not, where their palace-built homes
Mark the death-miles of poverty's path.
'Tis the flower of the lowly, the poor and the weak,
The children of sorrow and loss;
And they find it alone who are humble and meek,
In the garden that grows by the cross.

GREAT IDEAS AND SMALL DUTIES.—A soul occupied with great ideas best performs small duties. The divinest views of life penetrate most clearly into the meanest emergencies. So far from petty principles being best proportioned to petty trials, a heavenly spirit taking up its abode with us can alone sustain well the daily toils, and tranquilly pass the humiliations, of our condition. Even in intellectual culture, the ripest knowledge is the best qualified to instruct the most complete ignorance. So, the trivial services of social life are the best performed, and the lesser particles of domestic happiness are most skillfully organized, by the deepest and fairest heart.—James Martineau.

THE CUP OF PATIENCE.—What a goblet! It is set round with diamonds from the mines of Eden; it is carved by angelic hands, and filled at the eternal fount of goodness.—Jerold.

THE MORAL LAW.

BY GEORGE STEARNS.

"Love is the fulfilling of the law."—PAUL.

Self-love is the first law of moral being. The Creator loves himself and breathes this motive into all conscious existence. Hence, Individual Happiness is the rule of Rectitude; but inasmuch as Society effects the same end, this becomes the reason, and self-love the measure, of social love. God, having premeditated the whole rationale of morals, has endowed Man with organs of social as well as self-love, according to which we ought instinctively to love our neighbor as ourself; but the accidents of development have caused the self to greatly predominate over the social, in nearly all specimens of Human Nature. A general ignorance, too, of the benefits to be derived from a true Society—a desideratum never as yet exemplified on Earth—has prevented hitherto the maturity of that rational motive to a universal benevolence which, with more information, men are destined to conceive. The immediate result of this general misconception of human interest, has been to bring mankind into mutual suspicion and hostility, and to turn the social world into such a theatre of antagonism as "to the eye of a philosopher," as Mackenzie says, "appears like a great madhouse." Man, however, cannot but learn by experience, and in time he will forsake his error. To know is to prize whatever avails for Happiness. Already do we see the signs of Progressive Wisdom in the general decline of the war-spirit, in the desuetude of ecclesiastical persecution,—in the rational tendency of religious impulse,—in the various philanthropic movements of the age,—in the growing forbearance of civil powers, and in the kindly intercourse of citizens in every department and grade of society. The redemption of the Race—the complete exorcism of Man from the infernal spirit of antagonism, may yet be a work of time; but the means are now in operation which are certain in the upshot to bind the myriad hearts of mankind in one bundle of undissenting Love. It is a minikin soul that can house its affections in one body. To own a single friend, is to live two lives. How happy then were the philanthropist, if every-one he meets were his equal in Benevolence!

Yes; and the sage is happy to cherish this thought as a prophecy; for it predicts a day of universal philanthropy. "The mystery of iniquity" only intervenes; but "that which now letteth will let, until it be taken out of the way." "The Day of Judgment," which is the future predicate of mature Reason, and must be the harbinger of "the Kingdom of Heaven" on Earth, can never come so long as we keep the barbarous sentiment of blame. Error there is, and who can help it? Wrong is to be got rid of, but never by calling it crime and paying it back with vengeance. We must learn to love our enemies, which we cannot do so long as we think them criminals deserving punishment. Rather we must learn that we have no enemies—that the wights we call such are only crazy friends.

Character never makes itself. Every individual is a creature mostly of parentage and education. It is no fault of a fool that one is born such, nor of a knave to have been misguided by erring or faithless teachers, and thus blinded to his own best good. Thrust into a World of strangers, what does a helpless infant deserve, but the commiseration of Benevolence and the nurture of Philosophy? What, in fact, does it often find, but the heritage of vice and ignominy, and the harsh pupillage of intolerance? Why wonder that such a brat of wretchedness grows up to a life of turpitude? Really, the greatest of all misfortunes is depravity; and the most absurd and cruel of all abuses, is that prejudice which condemns the wicked while it tolerates all that is concerned in breeding the monstrous fry. The rascal plagues society, it is true; but pre-eminently his unsought and uncovered propensities curse himself. How barbarous, how inhuman, to hang the victim of ill-birth and bad training! A sage benevolence would pity "the sinner;" and a wise guardian of human interest, instead of killing the patient, would aim to cure the disease. Let retaliation cease, and villainy will assume a less frightful phase and a less formidable attitude. When want may no longer beg unheeded, when Virtue shall have learned to teach by example, then will cupidity and perfidy quit their repugnant calling; guilt will die out, and innocence may repose in the midst of wealth without fear and without danger. Let Mercy supercede revenge; let Love propitiate malignity; let Philosophy, as the guide of civil policy, forestall all misdevelvements of Human Nature, and Universal Weal shall wipe away the tears of suffering Humanity. The Happiness of each *must* follow the Mutual Love of all.

BENEFITS OF ADVERSITY.—No man is more miserable than he that hath no adversity; that man is not tried whether he be good or bad; and God never crowns those virtues which are only faculties and dispositions; but every act of virtue is an ingredient into reward—God so dresses us for heaven.—Jeremy Taylor.

Æsop the Physician said that when Prometheus took the clay to form man, he tempered it with tears.

