

Light and Life

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"Mysticism, properly understood, represents the Spiritual side of Life."—F. F.

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"Light and Life."

(From Thomas Erskine on "Election.")



HE *Life* was the *light* of men." And we cannot know truly that Life or living God, except through and in that light. It is only by a patient waiting on the light that we shall find the Life. But we are prone to make haste, and to be satisfied with the light as a mere direction, instead of waiting on it till it manifests itself as Life. And we are perhaps still more prone to be satisfied with those conceptions of God which our fear or our wonder, or our faculty of tracing effects to their causes suggest, instead of waiting for the discovery of His real presence

with us, as the Righteous One, in our consciences.

Is it not manifest that all false religions, all mere intellectual theologies, all superstitions and poetical mythologies, arise out of these wrong ways of seeking God? And is it not also manifest that all religions so formed necessarily tend to pervert the conscience and darken the light in it? Do they not subject it to another law than that of a discerned and felt righteousness, which is the only authority to which it ought to bow? For surely there is no *righteousness* in yielding obedience to any authority, except so far as we discern it to be a *righteous* authority. Indeed, obedience to mere power, without discerning righteousness in it, can only be the effect of selfish hope or fear, and must therefore be necessarily opposed to all that is true, both in morals and in religion.

Whenever, therefore, the authority of God is separated from a conscious judgment and choice of righteousness within our own hearts, we have got out of the proper limits of true religion. True religion consists in the conscious perception of the union of these two things, or rather in the discernment of them as one. It does not consist in taking the one for granted because of the other, but in seeing both really as one.

We are thus led to the same conclusions, with regard to religion, as with regard to morality. And as we have seen that morality does not consist in adopting the opinions of any man or any book, however well authenticated, or even however well ascertained to be divinely commissioned, but in the awakening of that inward consciousness which perceives the distinction between right and wrong, and chooses the right; so also we see that true religion in a man's heart cannot consist in any mere submission to authority, however believed to be, or even ascertained to be, the authority of God, but only in the awakening of an inward consciousness which discovers the Life in the light, the Righteous One in the righteous command, and which chooses to do His will, not merely because He is the Sovereign, but because He is the Righteous One, and because it loves the righteousness of His will.

And thus, however true the form of religion which we profess may be, and however sincere and zealous our profession of it may be, it is not in us a true religion whilst we hold it merely on the authority of Scripture, and not on an inward authority; that is, whilst we do not ourselves discern its truth and righteousness, and whilst we do not, in its truth and righteousness, meet with the True and Righteous One within our own hearts.

It may assist our conception of what true religion consists in, if (as we did in our examination of the moral principle) we bring it also into comparison with other changes which might take place in a man, differing from it in principle, and yet somewhat similar in appearance and language. Let us, then, take the case of a man much alive to the importance of possessing the favour and avoiding the displeasure of God as the most powerful Being in the universe, and let us suppose that to him is granted the privilege of having continually with him an inspired person whom he may consult at all times, and who makes it his business, distinctly and definitely, to tell him at every step of his progress through life what the will of God is, thus enabling him to do everything by a special guidance, and in perfect confidence that what he does is well-pleasing to God; and let us farther suppose that he actually makes use of his gifted guide, and follows his counsel at every step, but that he does so simply because he believes that it will please God, without the slightest sympathy with or enjoyment of the righteous character of God manifested in that counsel.

Now, what shall we say of this man's religion? At the first glance we might be tempted to think that the man who was so placed was highly favoured, in a religious point of view, and that he possessed in the guardianship of his inspired companion a greater gift than we, as a race, possess in the gift of conscience. But when we consider that the desire of God, with regard to us, is that we should ourselves possess the mind of Christ, and that we should know His will and be fellow-workers with Him in it, because of the conscious approval and choice of our hearts, we cannot but see that the condition which we have supposed is not only opposed to true religion, but is far below the high calling wherewith the meaneast of the children of men is called, and that the man who walks by such a guidance, instead of being really taught of God, is in fact only relieved, as it were, from the necessity of seeking the true teaching of God, the object of which is, not to point out particular steps, but to lead man into sympathy with the purposes of God, and to enable him to apprehend righteousness and eternal life in all the will of God.

Let us now vary the instance a little, and let us take the case of the inspired person himself—who has an oracle within himself, distinctly and definitely indicating to him what things he ought to do, and what he ought to avoid, so that the business of every hour of the day is fixed for him by a supernatural direction, communicated to him in the way of an inward impression; and let us also suppose that he, in the assurance that this oracle is really of God, obeys it, but still in such a way as that his obedience flows not from any discerned righteousness in the things ordered, or sympathy with their righteousness, but, as in the former instance, from mere submission to the authority of God: would the change of the locality of the oracle from being outside of him to being within make any real difference in the case, so that his obedience to it could now be considered as true religion; or would it not leave him in precisely the same state as before, namely, trained in submission, but untrained in righteousness and in real participation in the mind of God? In truth, such an oracle, although it appears to be an inward authority, is as much outside of the man as if it were lodged in another person, for he is not one with it.

The conscience, which God has given to every man, is a much higher gift than either an outward or an inward oracle such as we have been supposing. It is a capacity of entering into the reasons of God's actions and commandments; it is a capacity of a true spiritual union with Him; and thus when we meet the will of God in our consciences, we receive it in the way of participation, or as an infusion, so to speak; whereas when we meet it in an oracle simply, we receive it as an impulsion. That which does not enter by the conscience, but is merely put upon us, or imposed on us, can never really affect our nature; it may elevate us as instruments in the hands of God, but it cannot elevate us into fellowship with Him. And therefore the smallest conscious and sympathetic conformity to the will of God is a much higher thing than the being made the instrument of any great work, such as raising the dead or declaring things to come. In the one case the man's nature is really elevated; in the other, the man is only used for an elevated purpose.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is admirably suited to the nature of conscience, for it teaches us principles, and deals little with particular or definite directions. It contains centres, and not circumferences; it sows seeds without defining the exact form of the tree; and thus it does not relieve us from the continued necessity of consciously entering into the mind of God, but only enables us to do so.

I am sure that there are many who, in the uncertainty and perplexity of their minds as to the steps which they ought to take, have often wished for such an oracle, either inward or outward, as I have described, not considering that by such a wish they are really seeking to escape from the true teaching of God, who would have them learn "of themselves to judge" between good and evil.

BOOK RECEIVED.

"FRUITS OF SOLITUDE, IN REFLECTIONS AND MAXIMS RELATING TO THE CONDUCT OF HUMAN LIFE." By William Penn. London: J. Clarke & Co. Glasgow: R. B. Murdoch, 461 Eglinton Street. 1s. post free.—One will rarely find so much solid wisdom in so little space. A new edition, neat, and very nicely got up.

Our List of Exchanges must lie over till next month.

In next Number we hope to give a Translation from a *most interesting* unpublished French MS, relating to Madame Guion.—EDITOR.

Who was Jacob Boehme?

ONE of the most remarkable cases of spiritual mediumship, in the highest sense; of a man chosen by God for revealing knowledge that he himself had never sought, and did not understand, while at the urgent dictates of an invisible guide he wrote what was communicated to him. The saying of our Lord that as "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit," is true of the *knowledge* born of the Spirit also: it was never more strikingly proved than in the case of Boehme. To this unlearned shoemaker, living more than two centuries ago in an obscure town of Germany, we owe revelations so profound, so various, and so divinely central, that while in nothing do they contradict the Holy Scriptures, in many points they supplement, in many more they explain and emphatically confirm, its teaching. The Bible would not have for me half the depth of meaning it has if this more recent messenger of God had not poured light on some of its most perplexing passages: a light to which human reason could never have won, but for which he had unconsciously made himself ready by intense singleness of purpose in seeking the one only refuge for the soul of man. "I never desired," he says in one of his letters, "to know anything of the divine mystery, much less understood I the way how to seek or find it; I knew nothing of it, as is the condition of poor laymen in their simplicity. I sought only after the heart of Jesus Christ, that I might hide myself from the wrathful anger of God and the violent assaults of the devil; and I besought the Lord earnestly for His holy spirit and His grace that He would be pleased to bless and guide me in Him."—(*Epistle II., par. 6.*) So seeking he found. With that ardent and humble approach to "the Centre"—to which he so often invites others to follow—he won access to the unsearchable riches of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. These were opened to him in such unwonted measure, that to this day they have not been even approximately estimated at their true value; and a future generation will wonder why, when such writings were extant, any one could think that inspiration from on high ended with the writers of the New Testament, or that the promise of guidance into all truth, far more than the immediate followers of Jesus Christ were able to bear, had been broken, and eighteen centuries pass away with no further utterance of the spirit of truth.

But for facts. Born in 1575, Boehme was as a youth apprenticed to a shoemaker at Gorlitz in Saxony; married to a daughter of a butcher in 1594, and had four sons, all of whom he brought up to some trade. While still a lad, alone in his master's shop, busily sweeping it out, we read of his having an interview with a mysterious stranger, who, after buying a pair of shoes, spoke very impressively to him of his duties and his future, and this is supposed by his biographers to have influenced his conduct, making him more zealous in all religious exercises, more studious of the Bible, more earnest in striving to live blamelessly. The natural consequence of such endeavour was a keener sense of sin, with that tumult of conflicting desires and reactionary evil impulse which so often precedes the outburst of victorious light.

Truly it is darkest before the dawning with very many, as Boehme seems to have experienced. But while he tells us of the fierce onsets of the enemies of the soul, he cannot find words glad enough or expressive enough to describe what followed. "I wrestled, in God's assistance, a good space of time for the crown of victory, which I afterwards, with the breaking open of the gate

of the deep in the centre of Nature, attained with very great joy."—(*Apology I., Part I., par. 25.*)

At the age of twenty-five he was first consciously overtaken by "*the Spirit of the Light, which loved him exceedingly.*"—(*Ibid., par. 33.*) Walking one day in the fields, the mystery of creation was opened to him suddenly, and, as he narrates, "in one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at an university, at which I did exceedingly admire, and I knew not how it happened to me; and thereupon I turned my heart to praise God for it. For I saw and knew the Being of all beings, the *Byss* and *Abyss*,* also the birth or eternal generation of the Holy Trinity; the descent and original of this world, and of all creatures through the divine wisdom; I knew and saw in myself all the three worlds; namely, the divine, angelical, and paradisaical world; and then the dark world, being the original of nature to fire;† and then, thirdly, the external and visible world, being a procreation or external birth; or as a substance spoken forth from *both* the internal and spiritual worlds; and I saw and knew the whole being (or working essence) in the evil and in the good, and the mutual original and existence of each of them." . . . "I saw it (as in a great deep) in the internal, for I had a thorough view of the universe, as in a CHAOS, where all things are couched and wrapped up, but it was impossible for me to explicate and unfold the same."—(*Epistle II., par. 8.*)

But it was ten years later, when, finding these unsought riches of revelation come to him more and more, that he first tried to record their purport. He wrote the "*Aurora*"—his first work—for a help to his own memory in 1612. After a while he lent the manuscript to a friend, by whose agency it got into the hands of a gentleman who was so much impressed with its unique value that he had it unstitched and copied from end to end by many different hands before it was returned; and this transcript, getting abroad, fell under the eyes of the *authorities* of Gorlitz. As a matter of course it was vehemently condemned, chiefly by its Primate, Gregory Richter.

A religious writer who presumes to teach more than contemporaneous religious teachers know, and to understand what they deem an impenetrable mystery, is sure to be denounced as a heretic, a heretic all the more dangerous if, as in this case, the bringer of new things is evidently devout, and impugns, not the words of Scripture, but the wisdom of its interpreters, in supposing current meanings to be all that are contained, or that are to be found in it. This—and an unsparing rebuke of evil wherever it was, high or low, decent or gross—was the unpardonable sin of Boehme: to this day unpardoned by every reader who is not in good earnest fighting against self with Christ and for Christ. To those who are not, his writings may be interesting; to every thinker they *would* be, for "if a man would satisfy the human mind so that it may give itself up into the eternal rest, then a man must show him the root of the tree out of which spirit and flesh hath its origin."—(*Considerations of Threefold Life, par. 23.*) And Boehme alone offers to show it,—but for this repulsive severity of reprobation, this obnoxious thoroughness of unconventional Christianity, which lays bare the cunning of self-deception under every kind of "devout shows," and presses on unwilling minds the "rude uncouth message" that in all the world there is no such cruel evil beast as that har-

* "God," Boehme has told us, "*is in Himself the Abyss without any will at all.*" . . . "*He maketh Himself a ground or Byss.*"

† "*Original to fire*" is a translation which proves either imperfect grasp of the meaning of the writer, or want of sympathy with the reader's mind. Dionysius Freher only could *adequately* explain the justice of those words, exchanging *to for of*, which evidently it was meant to be, the *original becoming of fire* caused by the intense friction of astringency and mobility in the darkness which *precedes* its outburst.

boured in the breast of every man and woman,—self-love. In saying this, I by no means assert the converse. The most sincere conversion of the will from self-seeking to the obedience of Christ does not secure a liking for books so obscure as his. They bristle with terms so unusual, and thoughts so unlike the accepted coin of the religious world, that for a large majority of readers repulse *must* at first be far stronger than attraction. A little patience, a little passing over what has no meaning at first, and dwelling on the sublime intensity of clearest utterance which is to be found in almost every page, and vigorous intellects will be more stimulated than baffled. But all minds are not vigorous, neither have all leisure for such exercise.

What embitters ordinary Christians more than anything else in this old teacher, is that he takes ignorance as to spiritual mysteries for proof positive of arrest in Christian life. Again and again he meets the charge of speculating beyond bounds of holy awe, with the counter charge that if we were led by the Spirit more and more would be revealed to us of the deep things of God, and that the going on unto perfection to which St. Paul exhorts would include increase of knowledge as well as greater holiness of life. In his *Apology* or defence against Gregory Richter he justly says: "You say that I will search out the Deity, and call it devilish; thereby you show your ignorance to the daylight, that you understand nothing of the Book of Nature, and also do not read the New Testament, for St. Paul saith, '*The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*' It is not of man's ability, but God's Spirit performeth that searching through man's spirit."—(*4th Apology, Part I., pars. 44, 45.*)

Recognition of this was at once his own safeguard and his credential as a man sent by God. Speaking of his own writing, he said: "I cannot say that I have comprehended it, but so long as the hand of God stayeth upon me, I understand it; but if it hides itself, then I know not my own labour, and am made a stranger to the work of my own hands. Whereby I may see how altogether impossible a thing it is to search out and apprehend the mysteries of God without God's Spirit." . . . "If it be His will for me to know anything, then I will know it; but if He willeth it not, then do I so also. *I will be nothing and dead*, that He may live and work in me *what He pleaseth*. I have cast myself wholly into Him that so I may be safe."—(*3rd Epistle, pars. 23 and 24.*)

It is doubtless owing to this attitude of deepest humility and self-abnegation that he was so absolutely free from all the unbalanced excitement of visionaries; and were it not for his strong sense of the sublime uses of the humblest business on earth, his knowledge of the latent powers in man, and perception of his original greatness, might have tended to disqualify him for the details of practical duty; but while asserting that "the soul is a sparkle out of the great omnipotency of God" (*3rd Apology, Text I., par. 112*)—that "by the will God created heaven and earth, and such a mighty will is hidden also in the soul" (*Threefold Life, chap. 8, par. 18*)—he never lost sight of the nothingness and impotency of man as he *now* is, until Christ is formed in him, and every imagination is brought into obedience to Christ. No exaltation of self, because of the abundance of revelations, was possible to one who so well understood that mortification of self-will and reciprocity of grace is *all* that a human creature can do in "working out its own salvation." "The soul hath free will to go out and in, but it cannot generate itself in Christ; it must only go out of its own evil will, and enter into God's mercy." . . . "I lie in imbecility," he adds, "as a dying man, but the Most High raiseth me up in His breath, so that I go according to His wind."—(*3rd Apology, Text IV., Point I., pars. 47 and 49.*)

Some of the most *learned* of his fellow-countrymen sought him out for

instruction on the mysteries of the natural as well as the spiritual world; and it is notorious that from his writings Sir Isaac Newton in England, and Hegel in Germany, drew what the French call "*les idées mères*," to which their own fame has been largely due; but Boehme himself lightly esteemed any knowledge that fell short of that which, as he expressed it, "opens to us the Paradisical gate in the inward centre of our image, that the Paradisical light might shine to us in our minds," adding: "Seeing that Christ the Son of God hath generated us again to the Paradisical image, we should not be so remiss as to rely upon art and earthly reason; for so we find not Paradise and Christ, who must become man *in us* if we will ever see God: in our reason it is all but dead and blind."—(*Incarnation, Part I., chap. 4, pars. 6 and 8.*)

Yet never surely did a holy man so much exalt the uses of art and reason when rightly employed; one of his greatest peculiarities is the stress he lays on the value of all earthly pursuits so long as they do not *fill* and darken the mind. "Indeed, the divine wisdom standeth not in art and reason, but it sheweth art the way, what it should do and how it should seek. Art is really the tool or instrument of God wherewith the divine wisdom worketh or laboureth; why should I despise it." . . . "All profitable arts are revealed out of God's wisdom; *not* that they are that by which man cometh to God, but for the government of the outward life, and for the glorious manifestation of divine wisdom and omnipotence."—(*3rd Apology, Text IV., pars. 73 and 77.*)

"Man must labour and trade, for therefore he is created into the outer world, that he should manifest God's wonders with his skill and trading. All trades, businesses, and conditions are God's ordinance; every one worketh the wonders of God."—(*Threefold Life, chap. 17, par. 11.*)

How different is *this* aspect of *worldly* pursuits from that which pretends to condemn all interests and occupations of present life in order to throw into strong relief the glories and bliss of a future state! as if trying to denaturalise man was the best method for spiritual evolution! The result of this mistaken effort meets us at every turn, a spiritual *false* being too often adopted when the old Adam has not been so much mortified as ignored; and the recoil from such unwholesome tension too often proves that heavenly-mindedness is *not* the usual effect of disdaining earthly good. Our old mystic held "the old ass," as he quaintly terms the natural man, in wiser estimation, and insists on its uses with regard to the new man, which is to be formed in it as gold is formed in the rough ore of its matrix.

The persecution that he underwent after Gregory Richter had denounced him from the pulpit resulted in his being severely condemned for heresy, though on no one point could his judges find him guilty, but vaguely passed sentence on his writings upon "hearsay censure." He was forbidden to write any more, and to this order, with characteristic meekness, he submitted for six or seven years, quietly carrying on his shoemaker's craft meanwhile, till at last the dictates of his invisible guide, and the urgency of friends, led him to disregard the prohibition. Between the years 1618 and 1624 he wrote in quick succession the rest of his works [he wrote 31 in all], each, as it seems, opening more deeply and impressing more earnestly the mysteries and lessons which he had been taught.

In his 3rd Epistle, he gives a wonderful account of the "instigation of the Spirit," under which in nine months he wrote three of his most profound books.

The disturbance raised in Górlitz by his persecution obliged him to leave it for the sake of peace. He went to Dresden, where he resided until his death—after a short illness—in 1624. His last words were: "Now I go hence into Paradise."

We are told that he was a small man of low stature, and the written account of his features in no way contradicts the impression given by his pictured likeness, of harsh and homely outlines illumined by a singular look of settled peace and intense inward activity.

Boehme has many wonderful truths to tell us, and a solution to offer of many mysteries deemed inscrutable by most divines; but the most priceless truth and the most unfailing pass-key to a treasury of spiritual knowledge which he presses upon us, in his every book, with ever new fervency, is the necessity of *continued* dying to self, and keeping the soul plunged in humility, patience, and love. A hard lesson practically, but how simple and easy to understand are the terms in which he gives it! "Thou wilt ask what is the new regeneration? or how is that done in man? Hear and see; stop not thy mind, let not thy mind be filled by the spirit of this world with its might and pomp. Take thy mind and break through the spirit of this world quite: incline thy mind into the kind love of God: make thy purpose earnest and strong to break through the pleasure of this world with thy mind and not to regard it."—(*Three Principles, chap. 16, par. 48.*)

"Seek you nothing else but the Word and Heart of God: you need not break your mind with hard thoughts, for with such high fancies and conceits you will not find the *Ground*: do but only incline your mind and thoughts, with your whole reason, into the love and mercy of God, so that you be born out of the Word and Heart of God in the *centre of your life*, so that His light shine in the light of your life, that you be one with Him."—(*Threefold Life, chap. 3, par. 30.*)

And now, having so far learned who and what Boehme was, from his own evidence as well as from the report of contemporary biographers, I think we can understand the accuracy of his prediction in the preface to his "Aurora." "Now, if Mr Wiseling, which worketh with his wit in the fierce quality, gets this book" (any of his books) "into his hand, he will oppose it, as there is always stirring and opposition between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of hell."

Yes, but as the King of Heaven is Omnipotent, all who resist His rule *must* yield at last: at last all conquering love will extirpate the venom of scorn, and prevail even on *Mr Wiseling* to know "the meekness of wisdom," and all its resulting blessedness. "In the time of the lily," said Boehme, "my writings will be much sought after." Some little buds of that lily may be descried among us already.

The Interior Eye.

(Translated from Eckartshausen.*)

"If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

THE interior eye of man is reason; man's intellectual faculty, the mind. If this interior eye is enlightened by the divine light, then it becomes the true interior sun by which all things are brought to our knowledge. So long as the divine light does not enlighten this eye, our interior dwells in darkness. Its dawn only begins when this light arises. This sun of the soul enlightens our inner intellectual world just as the sun gives light to the outer world. Likewise as upon the rising of the outward sun the objects in the world

* Carl von Eckartshausen—born 1752, died 1803—held several high positions at the Court of Munich, was a deep student of Theosophy, and author of numerous works on Mystical Philosophy. He is referred to several times in the interesting Theosophic correspondence between St. Martin and the Baron Kirchberger.

become visible to us bit by bit, so on the rising of the spiritual sun the intellectual objects of the rational world come to our knowledge. As the outward light shines for us on the way of our pilgrimage, so the inward luminary lights us on the way of our salvation. But just as the outer eye of man is exposed to many dangers, so also is his inner eye. It must be kept sound, pure, and incorruptible; then it may lift itself up like the outer eye and contemplate the interior heavens, the angels, and even God Himself.

Oh, what a great destiny man has in his interior! His spiritual part may rise even to the angels and the high intelligences; it can approach the throne of Deity, and view in itself all the grandeurs of the divine, spiritual, and physical worlds. "*Turn away thine eye from beholding vanity.*" Withdraw thy soul, thy inward eye, from everything that is not God. Close it to the night of error and prejudice, and open it only to the sun of the spiritual world. This sun of the spiritual world is Jesus Christ. As the outward sun possesses light and heat, making everything visible and giving growth to all things, so likewise this inward sun renders everything capable of being known in the spirit and made active in the heart. For wisdom and love are its powers, and man's will and understanding its organs. It fills the faculties with wisdom and the will with love.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE HUMAN FACULTIES.

It is an undoubted fact that the more a body is organised for the reception, development, and propagation of diverse influences, the richer and more perfect is its existence, because it has more vital capacity. But many forces may lie dormant in us for which we have no organs, and which consequently cannot act. These dormant forces may be awakened; that is to say, we may become organised so that they may become active in us. Now, an organ is a form in which a force acts, but every form consists in the determined direction of the parts towards the acting force. To be organised for the action of a force, therefore, simply means to give to the parts such and such a form or situation, so that the force may act therethrough—that is, to be organised. Now, as for the man who has no eye for light, to him it does not really exist, although all those who have this organ enjoy the light; thus, many men cannot enjoy some things which others enjoy. I mean that one man may be organised in such a way that he will feel, hear, see, and taste things that another can neither feel, hear, see, nor taste, because the organs are wanting to him. Thus, in such a case all explanations would be useless, because the one would always mix up the ideas which he would have received through his own individual organs with the ideas of the other, and he could not comprehend anything except it approach his own sensations. As we receive all our ideas through the senses, and all the operations of our reason are abstractions of sensible impressions, so we can form no idea of many things, because we have as yet no sensation of those things—only that for which we have an organ becomes sensible to us. Thus, it appears to be determined that the men who are organised for the development of superior forces cannot give to other men who are not organised in this way any idea, or only an obscure idea, of the superior truth. So that all our disputes and writings serve little purpose. Men must first be organised for the truth. Although we were to write whole folios upon light for the blind, they would not see any the better for them. We must first of all give them the organ so that they may apprehend the truth. Now, the question arises, Wherein consists the organ of truth? What is this capacity for truth in man? I reply, in simplicity of heart, for simplicity puts the heart into a position suitable for receiving the pure ray of reason which organises the heart for the reception of light.

Days from a Diary.

(A. Bronson Alcott in "The Dial," Boston, 1842.)

Sunday, February 22nd.

You desire, my friend, some exegesis of the Doctrine of Inspiration, through its twofold organs of Conscience and Reason—with their subordinate functions of Sight and Sense (Faith and Understanding): and the authority, original and final, on all Revelations possible to the Soul. Shall I vex these old questions—tax these divine problems, with hope of success? I do, indeed, tempt these spiritual waters with awe; so slender and frail my line, so short withal—the stillness primeval—the depths profound. And each soul, moreover, singly and alone sails these seas, her own steersman and observer of the heavens, to find her way unaided, if she may, to the celestial havens. But yet I will dare the theme.

To the innocent, upright, all is present, instant, in sight. They have not lapsed into forgetfulness; nor memory nor foresight divides the intuitions of their souls.* They partake of the divine omniscience: they are quick with God. They do not fumble, dubious, in the memory; nor clutch, anxious, in hope, for lost or unexpected goods—they are self-fed—they inherit all things. Day by day, hour by hour, yea, pulse by pulse, exhaustless Providences minister to them—each sequel and complement—history and prophesy, of the other—the plenitude of Life rushing gladly into the chambers of the breast, and illuminating their brow with supernal lights. They are Incarnate Words,—prophets, silent or vocal, as the divine influx retreats to its source, or flows over their cloven tongues, bringing glad tidings to all who have access to the urns of being. And such are all bards, saints, babes. These reason never—nor seek truth as lost treasure amidst eruditions, or precedents, of the Past. Having eyes, steadfast, they see; ears, quick, they hear; hearts, vigilant, they apprehend; in the serenity of their own souls, they behold Divinity, and themselves and the universe in Him. These are they who "walk not in darkness but in the light of life, bearing record of themselves, and knowing their record to be true; knowing whence they came, and whither they go; who are not alone, but the Father with them, and witnessing of themselves, and the Father that sent bearing witness of them."

But this logic of the Breast is subtle, occult. It eludes the grasp of the Reason. It is, and perpetually reaffirms itself—the I AM of the Soul. Inspiration speaks alway from present, face to face parley with eternal facts. It darts like lightning, straight to its quarry, and rends all formulas of the schools as it illuminates the firmament of the mind. God enlightens the brain by kindling the heart; He is instant in the breast before He is present in the head. All reasoning is but self-finding, self-recovery.† And the head

* If souls retained in their descent to bodies the memory of divine concerns, of which they were conscious in the heavens, there would not be dissensions among men about divinity. But all, indeed, in descending drink of oblivion, though some more and others less. On this account, though truth is not apparent to all men on the earth, yet all have their opinions about it, *because a defect of memory is the origin of opinion*. But those discern most who have drank least of oblivion, because they easily remember what they had then before in the heavens.—PYTHAGORAS.

† Now all right and natural knowledge, in whatever creature it is, is sensible, intuitive, and its own evidence. But opinion or doubting (for they are all but one thing) can only then begin, when the creature has lost its first right and natural state, and is got somewhere and become somewhat that it cannot tell what to make of. Then begins doubting, from thence reasoning, from thence debating; and this is the high birth of our magnified reason, as nobly born as groping is, which has its beginning in and from darkness or the loss of light.—LAW'S *Way to Divine Knowledge*.

but dreams of the heart, whose oracles are clear, as the life is pure, dark as it is base.* Conscience receives the divine ray, and Reason reflects the same on the sense. The Conscience is an abridgment of God—an Apocalypse of Spirit—and man reads the secrets of ages therein; nor needs journey from his breast to solve the riddles of the world or divine the mysteries of Deity. Therein, the spiritual and corporeal law is enacted and executed; and a true life interprets these to the mind; yea, more, discovers the upholding agencies of all things, and works out the Creator's idea, moulding the worlds anew day by day.

"Reclused hermits oftentimes do know
More of Heaven's glory than a worldling can:
As man is of the world, the heart of man
Is an epitome of God's great book
Of creatures, and man needs no farther look."

Receiving thus the divine ray into his breast, man needs not wander from its shining into another's darkness. Assured that none comes to the light save as drawn from within, and that vicarious guidance ever misleads or blinds, let him wend his course through this world of sense, distrusting its beaten pathways, its proffered redeemers, his eye fixed perpetually on the load-star within, that by solitary by-roads leads direct to his birthplace and home.

And this, my friend, is the Doctrine and Method of Revelation, as taught by the Christs of all time. But, Christendom, how false to its spirit and hostile to its discipline! She leans as of old on traditions, nor dares walk erect, a trustful and self-helpful brother, in the light of that common beam which illuminated the face of her Prophet and made Him the joy of the nations. She scoffs at the heavenly doctrines of immediate inspiration; she pores blindly over Scriptures, and worships not the word incarnate in Him, but the skirts of His robe.

PASSAGES FROM HERAUD'S MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

Athenæum, Boston, March 5th.

Of these Foreign journals Heraud's Magazine interests me most. It is catholic, free, philosophic. It speaks for universal man, not for sects nor districts, and breathes a charity humane and diffusive. It compares (or did) favourably with our *Dial*, but is more various in its contents, and addresses a wider public. But neither those journals nor others content me. They fail to report the bosom life of the hour; they are not Diaries of the Age—scriptures of the ideas taking body now in institutions and men. But yet we wait, with a calm patience, for souls who shall make organs and a public for the life that is in them—men who shall dial not only the evening and morning ray, but the broad noon of piety and genius.

I. *A Sketch of Jacob Boehme.* By FRANCES BARHAM.

"I. Boehme was, in the opinion of all who have studied his works, a man of high spirituality and strong original genius. His mind was of that heaven-scaling and world-defying heroism which dares all things and bears all things in search of wisdom. By the stern contentions of faith and prayer, by the struggling energies of unflinching reason, and the logical analysis of a few

* Everything is and must be its own proof; and can only be known from and by itself. There is no knowledge of anything, but where the thing itself is, and is found, and possessed. Life, and every kind and degree of life, is only known by life; and so far as life reaches, so far is there knowledge, and no farther. Whatever knowledge you can get by searching and working of your own active Reason, is only like that knowledge which you may be said to have got when you have searched for a needle in a load of straw till you have found it.—*LAW's Way to Divine Knowledge.*

theosophic books, he attained many of the loftiest visions of truth, and completed a system of transcendentalism more brilliant than any which had appeared for ages. He was one of the few cobblers who have proved themselves capable of judging above the last. From his dingy stall and workshop issued the Aurora of a theosophic doctrine which set Europe in a blaze. None but those personally acquainted with the works of Boëhme, and the Boëhmists, can justly estimate the influence his doctrine has had on the world. It is not without some reason that such men as Poirer, Fenelon, Ramsay, and Law, have eulogised this extraordinary man. It is astonishing to me that his solitary genius should have worked out so many philosophemes resplendent as those of the Cabalists, the Brahmins, the Pythagoreans, whom he had never read. It is a proof, if any were needed, of the essential unity and sympathy of true genius in all times and nations. What would Boëhme have executed had he enjoyed the learning of Mironbola, Richlin, Agrippa! How many of his ideas that now loom large in the midst of rhapsody, shadowy and obscure, yet vast and astounding as the ghosts of the mighty dead, would have worn the keen edge and effulgent configuration of positive science! But in spite of his disadvantages, Boëhme is the Plato of Germany, and to him the Kantists owe their brightest theories."

II. *Foreign Aids to Self-Intelligence, designed as assistance to the English Student of Transcendental Philosophy.*—These are admirable papers by Heraud, who thus speaks of Boëhme's Theosophic Doctrines:—

"2. With Boëhme all opaque matter had a luminous spirit. In the seven planets, in the seven days of the week, he found emblems of the ideas intended by the seven lamps before the throne; and the seven stars in the Apocalypse, the seven pillars of the House of Wisdom; the six steps of Solomon's throne and the throne itself, as emblematic of Sabbatical Rest; the seven seals, the seven phials, the seven trumpets, and the seven candlesticks,—all these symbolised the Seven Spirits of God, which emblem the complete Deity. Our illiterate theologian dared to soar into this sublime region of speculation, and presumed to analyse the seven-fold perfection of God. Now how was he to conduct the analysis—how declare its results? What apparatus had he for the process—what language for its expression? Prayer and thought were the instruments of his operations. For language he might select his illustrations from the phenomena of mind, or of matter. The philosophy of mind, however, for him was not; he had to create one for himself. And he had conceived the astonishing idea to account for all material appearances upon spiritual principles, and to prove the identity of the laws which influenced both Nature and Spirit. He was, therefore, teaching two sciences at the same time—Theology and Natural Philosophy—under one name, Theosophy. And no language had he but what was common to both, and all words are derived from the objects of the latter. He, therefore, at once elected to set forth spiritual laws by their imperfect resemblances as they are to be found in the laws of nature; and more perfect symbols, indeed, may not be found: for the laws of nature are but the forms of the human understanding. What are both but 'as strings in the great harmony; as articulate words, but distinct parts of the Love-Sport,' as Boëhme says, 'of the angels.' Well! of this seven-fold perfection divine, he presumed to call the first spirit an astringent power, sharp like salt, hidden in the Father. The second is an attractive power, vanquishing the astringent. The astringent and attracting powers, he says, by their contrariety, produce anguish—a raging sense—not by agent and patient, but by violence and impatience. This anguish is the third spirit; it is the cause of mind, senses, thoughts. It is an Exultation, the highest degree of joy,

excited to a trembling in its own quality. These three spirits are but as millstones without corn, grinding each other. The raging spirit cannot deliver itself from the strong bands of the Astringency, and excites Heat by its struggling, the extremity whereof is Fire. Now is the corn found for the millstones to grind. Heat is the fourth spirit, the beginner of life and of the spirit of life; it generates Light. The food of fire is cold: for want of which heat and fire would fall into anguish. But Infinity has no deficiency; therefore, the fire, by rarefaction, breathes the sullen cold into liberty of Air. Air, again, by condensation (being imposed upon by its father the Cold), falls to water, which again, by the kindled element, is licked up by Nutrition. The fifth spirit, which is the produce of Light, which, as we have already learned, is intellectual as well as material, is Love. The sixth spirit is the Divine Word, whence Speech and Language, Colours, Beauty, and all ornament. And the seventh spirit is the Body generated out of the six other spirits, and in which they dwell as in their Sabbath. The seven spirits are the fountain of all Being. All these spirits together are God the Father. The life generated by them all, and generating the life in them all, in triumph, is the Son of God—the second person in the Holy Trinity. The power of the seven spirits, proceeding continually in the splendour of the life, forming all things in the seventh, is the Holy Ghost.

“Reader, unless thou canst thyself give meaning to these things, we cannot help thee to the significance, but if thou canst with whatever difficulty understand them, take our word first, that they are worth understanding. Thou mayest, however, form some notion of the same by attending a little to the following illustration, which we have abridged and modernised from William Law:—

“The first forms of vegetable life, before it has received the sun and air, are sourness, astringency, bitterness. In a ripened fruit, these qualities improve into rich spirit, fine taste, fragrant smell, and beautiful colour, having been enriched by the sun and air. This attraction, astringency, desire, is one and the same in every individual thing, from the highest angel to the lowest vegetable. Attraction is essential to all bodies; Desire, which is the same thing, is inseparable from all intelligent beings. And thus, by an unerring thread, may we ascend to the *first Desire*, or that of the Divinity. For nothing can come into being but because God wills or desires it. Its desire is creative; and the qualities of the Creator must necessarily pass into the creature. Herein lies the ground of all analogies between the world without and the world within. And as vegetables by their attraction or astringency, which is their desire, and as an outbirth of the divine desire, attain perfection by receiving the Light and Air of the external world, so do all intelligent beings attain their perfection by aspiring, with their will and desire, to God, and receiving of the word and spirit of God.”

These mystic pietists are to me most aromatic and refreshing. How living is their faith—deep their thought—humane and glowing their zeal! Boëhme, Guion, Fenelon, Law—these are beautiful souls. Sad that few of my contemporaries have apprehension of their thought, or faith in their intellectual integrity. O Age! thou believest nothing of this divine lore, but deemest it all moonstruck madness, wild fanaticism, or witless dream! God has ebbed clean from thy heart, and left thee loveless and blind. But lo! He is rushing in full flood into the souls of thy youth, and thy sons and daughters, driven from the sanctuaries of wisdom and piety, shall prophesy soon with cloven tongues of fire to thy discomfort and shame; for thy priests are godless, and thou art slave to the gauds of sense!

A Visit to Glasgow in 1691.

(From the Journal of C. Story.)

IN the year 1691 I travel'd into Scotland, and Thomas Blair with me. I had in my mind to go and see a few friends at Glasgow, for at that time there was no settled meeting there. We travel'd to Edinburgh, and so to the north, and back again into the west, coming to Garthshore. After the meeting I acquainted friends that I had in my mind to go to Glasgow and visit the few friends there, and enquired if any friend would go along with me, but some excusing themselves, and I being resolved beforehand, said, if none of them would go, yet I would, and coming there I found the people so barbarous, that I did not think there had been any such in the three nations. I felt a little of it as I came towards Garthshore, and set my face westward. I thought I felt a great cloud of darkness, yet having travel'd several times through Scotland, and been in many places both in England and Ireland, I did not think they would have been so cruel as they proved. James Milner and John Milner both went with us to Glasgow, where, putting up our horses at an inn, we sent for our friend John Hewstoun, and told him we were come to see them, and enquired if we could have a little time with friends, but his wife being no friend, and the people very cruel, she was not willing any meeting should be in their house, whereupon our friend John Neile, having a child not well, we went thither, and being retired a little, something opened upon my mind to speak. After I had said a little, on a sudden people came rushing into the house in a rude manner, as the following account will shew, and stoned us out of their town with great severity. We went that night to Hugh Wood's, of Hamleton, with a great deal of peace and comfort in our own particulars. There we writ the following account, and called it a looking-glass for the inhabitants of the town of Glasgow :—

The 4th day of the 4th month, 1691.

A LOOKING-GLASS FOR THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF GLASGOW.

"We Christopher Story and Thomas Blair, being drawn from our outward habitations, in the county of Cumberland, to visit friends in Scotland, were in the pure love of God drawn to Glasgow. John Milner of Garthshore, and James Milner of Hamilton, in the same love and in the freedom of their spirits went along with us, and meeting with our friend John Hewstoun, we went to visit our friend John Neile and his wife, they having a child not well, and after we had waited a little together upon the Lord, to feel His power and enjoy His presence, we can safely say the Lord was near us, so that I was made willing, and in obedience to the Lord's requirings, spoke of the great joy and comfort that was received in the Lord's presence, nothing more desiring than this, that all people might be sensible of the goodness of God held forth unto mankind, in and through His Son Christ Jesus; also exhorting the people to turn unto the Lord, and believe in the Light that manifests sin and evil, shewing unto all, according to plain Scripture, that it was sin in all ages that separated between man and His Maker, and it was iniquity that withheld good things from him, &c.

"For this cause and no other given by us, many cryed with great bitterness against us, surrounding the house about, knocking at the windows, women as well as men, with great fury, saying, 'Pull him out, pull him out,' seeming as if they would have torn us, but others of them were more moderate and seemed inclinable to hear, if the rabble would have been quiet. At last there was an uproar amongst them, and they quarrel'd one with another, at which

time I became silent, and a young man amongst them, more uncivil than the rest, named James Bear, a Presbyterian, as he said, and no magistrate; neither had any warrant, with some other, would hale us out to the streets, but after some tender arguing with him, and wishing that this day's work he had done might not be laid to his charge, he was more quiet; then John Hewstow, seeing their incivility, exhorted them to moderation, with some other Scripture words of brotherly advice, lest their bonds should be made stronger; at which time some scoffed: others said, 'We would fain hear you preach, for we never heard Quakers preach.' A little after, I not being clear in the sight of the Lord, was concerned to clear my conscience, and spoke to the people according to Scripture, that *Except our righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, we could in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven*; endeavouring, by several Scripture testimonies, to prove the necessity of first making clean the inside of the cup and platter, then the outside will be clean also, and that they might not be liable to the wo pronounced against the Scribes and Pharisees. Then came in one thronging among the people, whose name was John Sprewell, tobacco merchant, and pulled me violently out of the house, and when I was out of the doors, the rabble laid hands on us, as if they would have torn us to pieces; but the said Sprewell haled us to the magistrates, and commanded the rabble to be civil, but they cried, and shouted, and threw dirt and stones at us through the streets, saying, 'He is a Jesuit dog, he hath spoken blasphemy;' but none of them offered to prove anything against any of us. We were brought before Bailiff Brooke, one of the magistrates, who, when he understood the matter, said he had not time then to hear us, but he would call us at another time. But the said John Sprewell desired earnestly that he would detain us till some of their teachers were brought to examine us. Yet notwithstanding the magistrate dismissed us, and Christianly desired the said Sprewell to preserve us from the rabble; but Sprewell went away, and left us to the will of the rabble, who stoned us all along the streets to the house of James Bisben, innkeeper; yea, hundreds of men, women, boys, and girls followed us, casting stones, coals, and dirt at us, Sodom-like, notwithstanding all their profession. And when we were come into the aforesaid house to get some refreshment for our money, the rabble encompassed the house, looking in at the windows where we sat, abusing us with their tongues, and spitting in upon us. And when we took our horses to go away, they abused us in like manner, as aforesaid, all along the streets to a place called the Draygate.

"Now if the tree must be known by its fruits, let all sober readers judge from what spirit those fruits aforesaid proceed: and tho' we have not given so full an account as we would, yet we think what is here said will shew the evil of such actions to other nations, and to generations where these shall come, whatever their profession be. And we heartily desire that the Great God of heaven and earth, who always saw, and still seeth the afflictions of His people, may forgive our persecutors, and convince them of the evil of their ways, that they may do so no more, lest a worse thing befall them. And for a confirmation of this testimony, we subscribe our names, and appeal to all sober persons that beheld it.

"CHRISTOPHER STORY.

"THOMAS BLAIRE."

"About a week after, Robert Barrow and John Thomson, of Westmoreland, came there, and they abused them, and endeavoured to set a mastiff-dog upon them. But notwithstanding all their cruelty both against friends that lived there (tho' but three or four), and also strangers that came to visit them. In a little time a meeting was settled, and several convinced, for which the Lord shall have the praise."

Notes and Queries

RELATING TO MYSTICS AND THEIR WORKS.

"THERE was a man in his time who deserves to be remembered both as a mystic and a very profound thinker, one who had many of the qualities both of Tauler and of Boehme, and yet who belonged emphatically to his own age, and could scarcely have learnt his philosophy or his divinity if he had not been a contemporary of Cromwell, perhaps if he had not been his chaplain. Peter Sterry, the author of the 'Race and Royalty of the Kingdom of God in the Soul of Man,' and of a treatise 'On the Will,' is one of those men into whose writings few have looked seriously without carrying away some impressions which they would be very sorry to lose." . . . "The reader may be utterly lost in the wealth of Sterry's thoughts and imaginations." . . . "A better knowledge of him would often throw light upon the works of his contemporaries."—*F. D. Maurice's "Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy,"* pages 350-1, vol. 2.

Can any reader say anything more about Peter Sterry and his writings, and give some extracts from the books?

Will some one give an extract from the writings of Pordage?

To the Reader.

NEXT Number will contain a Review of Bishop Martensen's Book, "Jacob Boehme: His Life and Teaching," &c., and in each Number of this Volume considerable space will be given to studies bearing on the writings of Jacob Boehme. We are fully assured that, as our Paper becomes known, these studies will be widely appreciated.

The English Mystics will be largely quoted, and we hope to continue to give new translations from foreign writers on Theosophical subjects.

A complete work, by Van Helmont, will be reprinted in the early Numbers, and this alone we believe will be worth the Yearly Subscription.

Notes and Queries, relating to Rare Mystic Books and their Authors, will be given each month. The Editor will be glad if readers will aid in this.

More space and attention will be given to notices of New and Recent Books, and also to the contents of Foreign Magazines.

We welcome contributions relating to the Lives and Works of such men as Pordage, Van Helmont, and the early Alchemists.

It may be well to state that this Magazine has no connection with any sect or party of Christians, and our chief aim is to assist in the unfolding of Truths relating to the Spiritual Life, through whatever channel they may reach us.

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