

**THE BLAZING STAR; WITH AN APPENDIX  
TREATING OF THE JEWISH KABBALA.  
ALSO A TRACK ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF  
MR. HERBERT SPENCER, AND ONE ON  
NEW-ENGLAND TRANSCENDENTALISM**

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**WILLIAM B. GREENE**

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*Nathl. Greene Esq.  
with the respects of the author*

THE

# BLAZING STAR;

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## THE JEWISH KABBALA.

ALSO A TRACT ON

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BY

WILLIAM B. GREENE.



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## THE BLAZING STAR.

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SOME men — not all men — see always before them an ideal, a mental picture if you will, of what they ought to be, and are not. Whoso seeks to follow this ideal revealed to the mental vision, whoso seeks to attain to conformity with it, will find it enlarge itself, and remove from him. He that follows it will improve his own moral character ; but the ideal will remain always above him and before him, prompting him to new exertions. What is the natural conscience if it be not a condemnation of ourselves as we are, mean, pitiful, weak, and a comparison of ourselves with what we ought to be, wise, powerful, holy ?

It is this Ideal of what we ought to be, and are not, that is symbolically pictured in the Blazing Star.

The abject slave on an East-African rice plantation, brutal, ignorant, and a devil-worshipper, sees this Day-Star rising in his heart, and straightway he becomes intellectually of age. For it is the soul, not the body, that attains to the age of discretion. They who see this Star, have attained to their majority : all other persons are minors. Before the rays of this Star, voodooism and devil-worship, whether in refined

societies, or among barbarous peoples, vanish into night; for immersion into the rays of this Star, is the beginning of the baptism of repentance and penance for the remission of sin — and of the penalties of sin.

\* \* \* \* \*

Whoso beholds this Star acquires FAITH. Faith is conviction born from the consciousness of aspiration. Faith is the active principle of intellectual progress.

The Blazing Star is the transfigured image of man — the Ideal that removes farther and farther, making always higher and higher claims, until, at the last, it becomes lost in infinity; and faith affirms that this same Blazing Star may be, *perhaps*, the shadowy, imperfect, and inadequate image of some unknown and invisible God.

Now, if it be true that God and man are in one image or likeness (and the affirmation that they are so is not unplausible) then it is the duty of man to bring out into its full splendor that Divine Image which is latent, on one side, in the complexity of his own nature. This conclusion confirms itself.

You say you will never believe in God until the fact of his existence is proved to you! Then you will never believe in him at all; for, in the face of positive knowledge, faith is no longer possible. Faith affirms in the presence of the unknown. If science should ever demonstrate the existence of God (which it never can) faith would become lost in sight, and men would no longer believe, but know. The reason why science is intrinsically incompetent to either prove or disprove the existence of God, is simply this, that the subject-matter transcends the reach of scien-



tific instruments and processes. The dispute is, therefore, not between faith and science, but between faith and unbelief. Unbelief is a disease, not of the human understanding, but of the human will, and is susceptible of cure.

Saint Paul says, "We walk by faith, and not by sight;" again, "We see through a glass darkly;" and again, "We are saved by hope, but hope that is seen is not hope." Do what we will, we are under the necessity of walking, much more than half our time, not by sight, but by faith. The better half of our life upon the earth, and the happier half, is the part that is spent in advance of positive knowledge.

Science is constantly encroaching on the domains of faith, by showing that postulates of faith are demonstrably correct. But whenever any postulate of faith is proved, and thus becomes a truth of science, and no longer a truth of faith, faith immediately passes again to the front, with the affirmation of a new, and a higher, postulate. Faith keeps always well in advance of science.

Legitimate science never arrays itself in a hostile attitude against genuine faith. Science, it is true, often successfully refutes dogmas that are alleged to be of faith; but, in such cases, it is always found, upon due observation and inquiry, that the dogmas so refuted were born, not at all of faith, but of political or clerical ambition, or of fear, or of self-interest, or of the presumption of ignorance, or of some other human passion, — or, perhaps, of sheer stupidity. Superstition, fanaticism and bigotry are signs and

marks showing that the soul is not yet intellectually of age. They never result from convictions born of the consciousness of aspiration, and are, therefore, never of faith.

Faith does not say, Is there a God? It is doubt that says that. Faith says, Why should there not be a God? Absolute perfection is no natural obstacle to existence, but the contrary. Faith says, Figure to yourself, if you can, that there is no God! You cannot do it.

Faith is the affirmation respecting things unknown, that is implied in the practical recognition of known absurdity as such. Faith is reason denying absurdity in the face of the unknown.

An admissible definition of God must be in the form of a negative pregnant—an affirmation of God as that unknown Absolute and Infinite, which is the reason of the existence of the known finite and relative that we ourselves are.

Faith is from within; it is the outbreathing of human spontaneity; it is force of soul, grandeur of sentiment, magnanimity, generosity, courage. Its formulas are naturally unintelligible in their literal tenor; for, otherwise, they would represent that which is scientifically known, and would not be the mere provisional clothing of that which is not objectively given, but subjectively\* projected from the inmost depth of the soul. Man, having an ideal before him of that which he ought to be, and is not, and act-

\* That is *subject* which calls itself *Ego, I*. That is *object* which the *I* contradistinguishes from itself, calling it *non-Ego*. That is *subjective* which belongs to the subject; and that *objective* which belongs to the object.

ing as though he possessed the character he ought to have, but has not, comes, by the very virtue of his aspiration, to possess the character he imagines. Thus the world is leavened. Materialism, the spiritual death which is consequent upon the subordination of the subject to the object in thought, is the very soil from which faith springs; for every thing that stands by itself alone, makes way, through the necessity of the principle of contradictions, for its correlative opposite. Stoicism has always its birth in Sybaritic cities, and among over-civilized and effete peoples. Men learn, through faith, to do always the very thing they are afraid to do, and thus come to fear no longer. Unbelief naturally gives emptiness of heart; and emptiness of heart surprises itself with spontaneity of worship; and spontaneous worship gives the worshipper something of the high nature of that which is worshipped; and, in this way, unbelief transfigures itself, and loses itself in faith. Faith may always be acquired. Whoso is devoid of faith, and desires to have it, may acquire it by living for a few days (sometimes for a few hours only) as though he already possessed it. It is by practical, not theoretical, religion, that men transform their lives. By the practice of faith, man grows strong in faith. The moral coward becomes a moral hero as soon as he acquires faith. Weak women, among the early martyrs, learned by faith to face the wild beasts. When they were thrown to the lions, the lions trembled; for the women were more lion-like than the lions, and the lions knew it.

\* \* \* \* \*

Man has a threefold nature. He is, therefore, sym-