

Apr 1858

Feb 23rd

I like your proposition vastly My dear Sister,
that we write to each other, at least once a fortnight
whether we have news or not - foreign or domestic, for if there
be lack of interest in daily occurrences, there is no lack of love
to sweeten discourse upon any subject that arises in our
minds and an exchange of thought is even more profitable
than recounting events in every day life - for after all
Solomon has declared "there is nothing new under the sun," and
therefore we may rest satisfied that searching for news is but
labour lost. I acknowledge this; it is pleasant to note the ex-
pression of our friends in verifying this truth, and when you
tell me that my nephews improve in any sort of knowledge
it does not abate my satisfaction, to remember, that the things
of Israel was never learned so many ages ago, but I sometimes
feel humbled at my own ignorance when children ask me
questions on sacred things that have not been furnished
to my own reflections. Living in large cities we waste so much
time in trifling pursuits - walking about the streets and
exchanging uninteresting bits, that we are apt to consider a
rainy day, or a slight indisposition as so much time well
must, being then necessarily kept quietly at home. So you see
I may quote your adage with equal propriety here, and feel
it more poignantly, because so many more years of life is
spent, and yet the evil is not put away - we are now
purposing for a second examination of ~~our~~ Sunday School
and I am gratified at the evident improvement of a large
class of children, in various knowledge, more particularly
as I find it influencing their conduct and manners, and
gaining consideration in the minds of their parents - it will
be a consolation for much lost time, if this late attempt to
improve a degenerate portion of a once great people shall lead
to some good, and induce wise and better men to take the
work in hand.

I have just received a manuscript translation of ~~some~~
work of Menasseh ben Israel, from which I expect
great pleasure, & great labour too. for it is difficult to read
& more difficult to understand. Perhaps I might be better
able to answer your questions, when I have perused it.
You give me credit for more love than I can boast, but
with regard to the tribes of Israel, I do believe there are
descendants of Judah, of Dan's, live in existence. The
Jews of Spain, claim that descent, and tho' they have no
doubt been mixed with other tribes, who emigrated with
them, they probably have preserved their genealogy entire.
The priests & Levites are known distinctly, and most families
have some traditional knowledge of their ancestry -
The "Cabala" is a mystical work little understood and
I never heard it considered a divine Revelation. I believe it
is written in ~~Chaldean~~ ^{Hebrew}. The religion of the bible, or the
law of Moses, is alike for people & priest, was publicly
delivered and teaches them to "love the Lord thy God with
all thy heart with all thy soul & with all thy might" -
in public & ⁱⁿ private. the bible and all Jewish works I
have ever seen teach the same - you must not go to the
enemies of that religion for information of their tenets
and any writer who contradicts the books of the Jews
cannot rightly interpret the Jewish religion, the
wise men among the ancients, had a fixed rule to
interpret the scriptures, and did not accept any ~~theory~~
that disagreed with, or contradicted the text, much learning
has been spent - and numerous volumes written
to illustrate the word of God, but tho. no other book was
left in the world, to speak of the wonders of his doing,
the Bible alone contains all the Jews require to keep
their religion by - yet the sacred vol. and all other history
tells, how shamefully they have at different periods forsaken
the law - and fallen into idolatry & unbelief - summed, been



Q

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