

THE

# FREE CHURCH CIRCULAR.

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The Truth shall make you Free.—John 8: 32.  
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VOL. III.] ONEIDA RESERVE, FEBRUARY 7, 1850. [NO. 2.

**Home-Talk by J. H. N.—No. 28.**

[REPORTED FOR THE CIRCULAR.]

BEGINNINGS.

In three particular things at least, we look back to the *beginning* of our experience as the best. First, in respect to life as a whole; second, in respect to love between the sexes; third, in respect to our *religious* experience. We look back to childhood as the period in which we enjoyed the best, greenest and most beautiful life, full of romance; and to our first experience of love as the most beautiful we ever had; and to the *beginning* of our religious experience as the sweetest, liveliest portion of that. I see all of us as striving, searching and groping round, to recover the tone of experience we had in the *beginning*; to get back to our *first life, first love, and first religion*—to get back and keep there.

We are sure that we can be perfectly happy. We have tasted of the pure river of the water of life, and are convinced that it is not imaginary, but a fixed fact.

We have tested it, and are certain that it is possible to have a lively, healthy, busy spirit, full of the romance of youth. We have had a sense too of beautiful love toward God and man. The great prize to gain is, to find out how to recov-

er and keep our first tone—i. e. to become as little children, for 'of such is the kingdom of heaven'—to find out how to recover the simplicity and purity of life which belongs to the first growth in these three things. If we can find our way back to the beginnings of these three things, we have solved the problem of our existence.

Life as it is in the world, offers men the idea of happiness embodied in sufficient experience simply to let them know of what they are capable, leaving an impression which begets perpetual hope, and the longings of a whole life. They are allowed to possess the happiness of heaven long enough to know what it is, but are not allowed to keep it. Every thing drifts away from them—the whole current of their life is toward barrenness and decay. But the first blessed experience we have in these things, is perpetually *in Christ*, and we can find it there again. This assertion is not mere cant, nor talk on authority; it is philosophically true.

What is Christ? He is the Son of God—the Word of God. He is the first outgo of the Father, who is eternal life. By him, God made the world. We may call God the head, and Christ the neck; he is the connecting link be-

tween the universe and eternal life.—Through him a fountain of perfect life gushes forth from the Father. In respect to *the whole universe*, he is, in a perpetual sense, what this first bright experience is to our whole life. If we trace out our existence, we find the first link is life, the second is the first fresh exercise of life, of which we have been speaking. So God the Father is eternal life, the first link; and the first exercise of his life is in Christ. If we have drifted away from this freshness of life, and fallen into weakness, and are longing to find again the first bright link in our experience, we must return into Christ, who is the first exercise and the perpetual flow of that fountain of which we have tasted.

John says—‘That which was from THE BEGINNING, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; for the life was manifested and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ; and these things write we unto you that our joy may be full.’ Afterward he says, ‘I write unto you because ye have known him *that is from the beginning*.’ If we want to recover our first experience, we must know him who is from the beginning; we must have the beginning life that is in Christ. If you have in you any longings for the sweetness, sacredness, beauty, of your first love, either religious or social, seek it in Christ; it is there, and you will find it no where else.

You see here the immeasurable practical importance of recognizing Jesus Christ as *the Son of God*. By it we mean nothing less than that he is the *beginning life*, the outgrowth of God, the first expression of the eternal life which was the Father. Jesus Christ was proved to be the Son of God by transactions fitted to show that his life was of this beginning sort. Paul tells us that he was proved to be ‘the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead;’ and his resurrection from the dead was indeed the greatest possible manifestation of his invincible vitality. His resurrection was an everlasting defiance of decay, and all the powers of destruction. He was the Son of God, and was made flesh; he carried the fresh immortal life of the Father into the flesh, and submitted to all the powers of decay; not only to gradual decay, like other men, but to violence;—his heart was speared. But after three days he rose from the grave, and thereby demonstrated the power of the Father. He triumphed over the worst that man and Satan could do, and rose out of their power to an extent which perfectly demonstrated that he was the Son of God. This is eternal life in us, that we know God and Jesus Christ. We may talk about having fellowship with Paul, and the primitive church, and others; but we must have eternal life in ourselves. It is as true now as it was in the days of the primitive church, that there is no other name given among men, whereby we may be saved, but the name of Jesus Christ. It is as true now as then, that Paul may plant and I may water, but the increase is from God the Father, and Jesus Christ. We may get help from those who are set to plant and to water; but they must not substitute

themselves for Christ; but seek to bring those whom they teach to the knowledge of the Father and the Son.

Peter says, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, . . . in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.' There was the beginning of their experience—there was their first fresh love in Christ, begotten by his resurrection from the dead. If we apprehend him we cannot be overcome by the powers of death. If we know him as the Son of God, as one risen from the dead, we shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. I find in all the epistles, addresses to the church, as being *in the Father, and in Jesus Christ*.

In this view we see also the importance of our keeping our hearts toward Christ. Seek to know him, talk about him, study his character. This is the philosophical way of getting back to the state you want, and staying there. I see that I am gradually recovering things that I had lost. I am recovering beautiful, beautiful states of spiritual sensation from time to time. I know that every thing that was good in our first experience can be recovered; for as often as I touch Christ, I feel a return of first love. We are all secretly, and perhaps unconsciously, seeking the recovery of our first experience. In fact, the whole world are on the same track, groping around to recover their first experience. I have found out that the true way of recovery is in Christ. Every one who has had happy, genial, fresh life, in which they enjoyed every thing around them, can find it again in Christ. The way to become more acquainted with

Christ, is to count all things but loss that you may win him. Our straying away from first simplicity, is by a natural process. When people are happy they become pleasure seekers; that leads to unhappiness. Then they go to Christ, and in him find happiness again. Here, forgetting our past experience, we run into pleasure-seeking; and so it goes on till we have had experience enough to have it always before us as a fixed fact, that pleasure-seeking fails of attaining its object, and that Christ-seeking is the only road to happiness. When we get that fully settled, we shall stay there, and go on in eternal prosperity. We have been in the habit of using the expression 'desire of improvement,' in opposition to pleasure-seeking. I should prefer the expression Christ-seeking, and put that term in opposition to pleasure-seeking.

#### 'The Free Church of old Times.' No. 1.

MR. EDITOR:—In reading your editorial under the head, 'Change of Name,' in the first number of the new volume, I was forcibly reminded of my own experience in the 'Free Church of old times,' to which allusion is there made. The origin of the free-church dispensation, may not be familiar to all the readers of the Circular. With your permission therefore, I will give a brief sketch of the most prominent features of that interesting epoch of modern church history. Mr. Noyes, in his Religious Experience, incidentally alludes to his co-operation with the *free church* movements in New Haven, in the following language; 'The spirit which I drank into, in consequence of my connection with that free church, with Boyle, and with the general religious party to which they belonged, was a little differ

ent from that which had been my element at Andover. At that time, the revival spirit of which Finney and his fellow evangelists had been the fountains, and which was distinguished for its 'new measures,' and its 'free churches,' had gathered to itself in all the principal cities, a distinct body of the most zealous spiritualists.'

If my memory serves me correctly, the revival that terminated in the organization of the free church system in the city of New York, commenced in the central and western parts of the State, where Finney, Parker, Foote, Lansing and others, were prominent leaders. Mr. Finney was the first among the above named evangelists, who entered the city as a pioneer of the new-measure, revival school, as it might very properly be termed. The success that had crowned his labors in the country, gave him great courage and boldness, in presenting what his clerical compeers of the old new-measure faith regarded as very heretical and fanatical doctrines. The earnestness with which he proclaimed man's *ability* to give his heart to God, without delay, and to live a *holy, praying* life, produced immediate results, especially upon the young. Many who have been active in the moral and religious movements of the past fifteen years, can look back to this period (in 1830 and '31) as the time of their conversion to religious faith, and the experience of their first love to Christ.

Subsequently, Joel Parker, mentioned above, (now Dr. Parker of Philadelphia.) received an invitation to come to the city, and thrust in his sickle, the field being white for the harvest. Mr. Parker accepted the invitation, and entered the city with all the zeal and devotion of a missionary on heathen ground. An old unsightly building, on a back street, near the City Hotel, was procured, and rudely fitted up as a place of worship. Having previously joined the church under the preaching of Mr. Finney, I found myself, in connec-

tion with other young converts, drawn into active co-operation with Parker and those associated with him, in laboring for the *conversion* of the city. At this time, (the winter of 1831—2,) the spirit of God was manifestly hovering over the whole city, producing seriousness and conviction in the minds of a great majority of the common people. The doors of our plain house of prayer were thrown open, and the narrow dark alley leading to it, I well remember, was thronged much of the time, day and night, by those who were making it their business to serve God. From this small beginning, originated the name, "Free Church," which subsequently spread like a fire, into all the surrounding cities and towns, creating a demand for free-church evangelists, far beyond the ability to supply.

For those times, the free-church system had peculiar and interesting attractions, when compared with the old-measure, aristocratic, pew-selling system, that virtually excluded the poor from hearing what they called the gospel. The prominent *free* features, that *charmed* the great mass in cities, were the following, which will be seen, to harmonize more with primitive measures, than the popular beaten track of the old system. *First*—the seats were plain, and free to all without distinction. *Second*—The preaching was free, as the ministers were supported by gifts, and not by salaries. *Third*—The word preached, was in a great degree, free from dry abstruse doctrines of men, presenting to the mind simply the *claims of Christ*, and persuading all to submit their hearts to him, as the only way to cancel those claims. *Fourth*—The plan then adopted, of inviting the whole congregation to unite in studying the Bible, by organizing into classes, proved to be one of the most effectual means employed in bringing sinners to repentance, and in edifying believers. *Fifth*—All the meetings, except those for direct preaching by the clergy, partook more or less of the character of free

social meetings, and were very edifying.

In the course of two or three years from the commencement of this novel movement, not less than six or eight large free-church societies were organized in different parts of the city. The secret of their success did not lie so much in the agency of the clergy, as in the faithful, untiring efforts of the lay members, by whom the main work in all the prayer meetings, Bible classes, &c., was carried on. Another free-feature may be mentioned also, as contributing to the success of the movement. The leader, Mr. Finney, kept himself aloof for a time from the shackles of church creeds and the like, that would tend to divert the mind from the work of saving souls.

In looking back upon those scenes from this stand-point, aided by the invaluable assistance of experience in the school of Christ, I can see more clearly than ever before, how to discriminate between the works of man and the works of God. How important the truth, and yet how little appreciated, that God is not turned out of his way by man's capriciousness and unbelief; that 'he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;' that all things are possible with him, and that what he *purposes* he *executes*. No one, who has experienced any of the fruits of that revival, can doubt the agency and power of God in beginning, and carrying it on, at least for a time. And no more can it be doubted, that the true, genuine fruit of the spirit of God crowned the labors of those only, who had faith in Christ, and presented him, so far as their own experience enabled them to do so, as a whole Savior, and the Bible as a helper to their faith.—Great, no doubt, was the number in all the free churches that were in sympathy with Mr. Noyes, at the time he was so *deeply in earnest* in searching the Scriptures for greater blessings to his soul than the churches had experienced. And it seems that this was their attitude, waiting for God to open a deeper vein of truth from the Scriptures. When

the doctrine of the Second Coming and Perfect Holiness was brought out by Mr. Noyes at New Haven, that vein was opened, and has proved, to him and his followers who had the boldness of faith to face all the unbelief that earth and hell could throw in their way, a *boundless store of truth and love, worthy of the gift of God.* But the fearful and time-serving priests reported evil of those truths, converting them into a lie. The free-church movement thereby received its death blow, not by the truth, but by those who perverted it. But did God stop the work he had commenced? Were his purposes thwarted by the unbelief of the many? Certainly not. The free-church movement was the last *harvest* under the law—the last congress of law teachers, whose closing act was to swear against the spirit of truth, that the work might not go on unto perfection. But God thought differently; and it will yet be seen and known, and read of all men, that Perfectionism 'is the true heir of all the spiritual wealth of that church.'  
G. CRAGIN.

## CRITICISM.

[SELECTIONS FROM REPORTS FURNISHED BY OUR SYSTEM OF CRITICISM.]

"Grown wiser for the lesson given,  
I fear no longer, for I know  
That where the share is deepest driven,  
The best fruits grow."

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FROM A CRITICISM BY J. H. N.

There is something about Mr. D. which hinders his communion with God, and his mingling with society around him. There is evidently a lack of *public spirit* in him. He has a spirit of honesty and rectitude—he means to do right, and what he says is true. But he has it all to himself, without partnership with God, or the community around him. He is very silent, and when he speaks, it is in some unsympathetic way, something foreign to the subject which others are talking or thinking about. I sit silent a great part of the time, yet I am not engaged in sol-

itary thought; my meditations are something like conversation; I talk with God. If a man's meditations are really social, he will be social; and if his meditations are solitary, he will be unsocial. A man's meditations are not necessarily solitary, when he is silent, but they are if they take the form of *soliloquy*. If it is true that you soliloquize a great part of the time, you will certainly be an unsocial man; but if you think towards God and the primitive church, and your thoughts take the form of prayer, they are social, and will breed sociality. This is the best way to get into a social state. I have been a silent man, yet I have grown social and genial towards those around, and it is because my meditations have been social toward God. You say, it is not natural for you to talk; no matter if this is true—if you think socially, talking will follow; what you want is a sympathetic mind, especially toward God. I do not criticise the amount of your talk so much as the matter, which is not harmonious with the society around you. Instead of giving heed to Paul's exhortation to 'mind the same things,' your observations are peculiar to yourself, and often on the contrary side—you are original in the wrong way, not genial and harmonious. If any one thinks in the atmosphere of inspiration, although he may not say much, when he does speak, it will be in the element of what others are saying or thinking, supposing them to be spiritual; and he will be more likely to hit the mark than those who chat a great deal. You cannot attain the perfection of sociability by chatting, but you will attain it by faithful connection with inspiration. I regard being a moderate talker as a good habit; yet I would advise you to cultivate the habit of conversation, because it will assist you to think with those around you, and turn you away from self, and so favor your thinking with God. You had better chatter than soliloquize, for a social habit predisposes us to think with God.

I said, you were deficient in public

spirit. You think it would be natural for me to feel responsibility, but I should like to have you look into it and see how far it belongs to me, and not to you. I could not be a spiritual man—I could not be in sympathy with God, if I did not have the interest of the church at heart. The truest way to improve the church is to improve ourselves. Self-improvement is the main thing with me, because I regard it as the best means of furthering the great purpose which swells my heart, which is in sympathy with God's purpose, the purpose he had before the world began. If we have true public spirit, we shall regard our own improvement only as the means of being made useful to God, to carry out his purposes; without that in view, our own improvement is a very small affair. I want to see Mr. D's heart enlarged, and filled with a desire to see the will of God done on earth as it is done in heaven. I know that a patriotic heart and a feeling of responsibility do not depend on talent or position, but on *sympathy with God*. This sympathy is necessary for our salvation. The spirit of the churches is to be admired in this respect; they have a missionary spirit, and considerable breadth and zeal in their operations. Their aspirations are glorious, but their method of execution is false. We condemn their proselyting spirit, but the zeal for God back of it we must approve. If you had a magnanimous spirit which would throw itself into the community for the good of the whole, you would find your talents developed with ten-fold power. Let truth conquer egotism,—get a spirit of sincerity which will love criticism, and give truth full possession of you, and I shall see you fruitful; you will be to the world like a gas-light, a clear, bright flame, burning in the midst of darkness.

#### Sticking in the Letter.

A friend in helping me out of spiritual difficulty, made the remark—'you must not *stick in the letter*.' The idea proved a fruitful one. The interpreta-

tion of this homely, but significant phrase, is found in the writings of the New Testament in such language as this—'The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.' The term *letter* as used in many instances, is synonymous with law, legality &c. All outward teachings by rules, symbols &c., belong to the *letter* dispensation, which in its nature, is adapted only to the primary state of the knowledge of the truth.—The temptation is, to *stick fast* in the transition state, while under governors and tutors; a state necessarily productive of much suffering and discipline, to carry one *through* into the freedom of spiritual life and union with God.

This was the weak point in the character of the Jewish nation. They refused to look beyond the shadow, for the substance. The letter-state proved their overthrow and destruction. The faithful John Robinson, the father of Congregationalism in this country, warned our Puritan forefathers, in his parting charge to them on the eve of their departure for this new world, against the evil that had already overtaken the reformed churches of the old world, of sticking fast to the experience in which they were left by the instruments of the Reformation. But the history of that church furnishes undeniable evidence, that his advice to them was soon forgotten. Instead of searching for greater light and *deeper* truths, from the word of God, they stuck fast, where they were left by their teacher, and became the *persecutors* of those who have attempted to follow the advice given to them.

Probably a historical criticism of all organized societies, whether religious, moral or political, would trace the cause of their opposition to every new truth, and their gradual loss of all moral power and vitality as seen at present, to the fact of their sticking fast to the *letter* of truth, which, instead of giving life, killeth. This was emphatically true of the great revivals, free-church movements

&c., under Charles G. Finney and others, from 1833 to 1837. The history of Mr. Finney's experience, is a striking illustration of this principle. Mr. F. was successful in his labors, just so long as he yielded himself up as the *instrument* of the spirit of truth. But when God saw fit to reveal deeper and greater truths, by another instrument of his, truths that would not only have secured his own deliverance from sin, but the salvation of his numerous converts, he refused to submit to them, thereby proving that he did not acknowledge himself owned by the *spirit* of truth. Notwithstanding Mr. Finney's subsequent successful career as a professor of theology in Oberlin, I do not hesitate to say, that a truthful confession of his spiritual state, would disclose the fact that he was forsaken twelve years ago by the spirit of God, and left *sticking fast in the letter*, because he refused to deliver up himself and his converts to their rightful owner, that He might make them free indeed. The fact that the *truth* owns us, instead of our owning it, is the key that will unlock the secret history of all such cases as Mr. Finney's. The teaching spirit, proselyting spirit, egotistical spirit, all belong to the *letter* dispensation; and if any one is held fast by them, their improvement ceases. The evil therefore, lies not in passing through this letter-state, or dispensation, but in resting in it, seeking one's own in it, mistaking *shadows* for substances, loving the creature more than the Creator, which persons are liable to do, unless the truth that God is the owner and disposer of all things, is ever present to their minds. In my own experience of late, I have been enabled to extricate myself from spiritual difficulties, by discerning that my spirit was *sticking to the letter*; or in other words, that I was trying to find satisfaction and present comfort in things that were only *suggestives* of God's love, instead of finding it in him, its source and foundation. To be *owned* and acknowledged by the spirit of truth,

is salvation. It is salvation from *isolation*, and every other obstruction that hinders a permanent union with Christ.  
G. C.

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THE FREE CHURCH CIRCULAR.

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GEORGE W. NOYES, EDITOR.

ONEIDA RESERVE. FEB. 7, 1850.

☞ *Correspondents will bear in mind that our Post-Office address is—"ONEIDA CASTLE, Oneida Co., N. Y."*

☞ Until further notice, Subscribers may expect a No. of the Circular every week.

☞ Persons having business relating to the paper, are requested to address their letters directly to the Editor. If directions are sent to other persons in the Community there is a liability that they will be forgotten, or not properly reported to the office. If mistakes of this or any kind have occurred in making our new subscription list, we shall be glad to rectify them on receiving notice.

☞ Mr. CRAGIN gives in this No. an interesting historical sketch of the old 'Free Church' movement in connection with the great revivals twenty years since. He will continue the subject in another number. There is terrible iniquity lying at somebody's door, for the rejection by that church of the gospel of holiness; and before they get through, Finney and the master spirits of that time will have to face the account.

☞ We commend to 'Christ seekers' an interesting method of studying his character. Take Paul's description of Charity, and substitute the name of Christ for Charity—Christ 'suffereth long, and is kind,' Christ 'envieth not,' &c.—then look through his history for illustration and proof, on each separate specification.

☞ Have our friends noticed the coincidence between Father Miller's decease, and the appearance of Prof. Crosby's Book 1 One of these events was noticed in the last No of the Magazine, and the other in the first No. of the Circular. If there is any

thing in the coincidence, (and it is certainly a curious one,) it argues the downfall of falsehood, and the beginning of an extension of the truth on the subject of the Second Coming.

It has been well remarked, that this book of Prof. Crosby's has created a tremendous vacuum. It has exhausted the minds of those who received it, of their old ideas on the subject of the judgment, the resurrection, and the Second Coming of Christ. But this is all. He supplies nothing to fill the vacuum thus created—offers no positive theory of the present dispensation, or the future destiny of the world. Nothing, in fact, can fill the space that he has exhausted but our theory. The Bible furnishes us a positive theory that just covers the whole space; and as soon as an aperture can be made into the receiver that has been exhausted by his book, the truth will rush in, and fill it by a natural law.

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'Blessed are the Meek.'

We have a word to say to the scattered believers who are still held in bondage to difficult circumstances, and are exposed to the deadly, oppressive influences of surrounding worldliness.

We sympathize with them, and we know that Christ and all heaven sympathize with them; and this not in the way of mere idle compassion; it is the signal of active, earnest, omnipotent effort in their behalf. Let them remember that the devil is not almighty, that God is, and that the time of his kingdom has come, according to the first petition of Christ's prayer.

We do not speak by guess. We know that this is the beginning of a new dispensation to the world. There has been a period—a long period of 1800 years—of prayer and hope, of seeing the promises afar off—when faith has dwelt as a pilgrim and a stranger in the earth, and had here no 'continuing city.' But as certain as ever a true prayer was made, so certain is it that an answer exists with God. We should not forget this, and think that the transaction is ended when we have offered up our desires to him. Our hearts and expectations should prepare us for the positive action of his answer. Let the faith of believers act on this



point, and expand so as to grasp the great answer of creation's prayer, the establishment of heaven's kingdom among men.

We are full of conviction on this subject. Perhaps we cannot immediately convey to our friends the assurance of strength and victory which animates this body; but we cannot withhold the witness of our hearts, which tells us that deliverance and blessing (together with the purification of judgment) every where await the meek. And we would say to all such, Prize and cherish the faith that you have, however limited and obstructed it may be, as a divine gift, as the beginning of an action whose end is in certain and everlasting joy.

### Faith for our Climate.

In respect to the separate functions of the two churches which we have called the primitive and the present, and which may more properly be called the two branches of the one Free Church, it is well to notice that the first church had its seat in a warm climate, somewhat like that of our Southern States, while the second church now coming forth, belongs by descent and birth to the colder climate of Germany, England and the Northern States of this country. Accordingly, while John's description of the comfort of heaven,—*'the sun shall not light on them, nor any heat,'*—was perfectly congenial to the tastes and feelings of the churches of his day, a more satisfactory assurance to us in these wintry regions, would be that—*no snow-storm or any cold shall fall on the inhabitants of heaven.*

Now it is well known that the peculiar diseases of warm climates are quite distinct from those of colder regions. Fevers, and in general inflammatory diseases, prevail in the Southern States, while the deadliest enemies of life at the North, are colds, consumption, or in general the chill rather than the fever of death. Our summer diseases pretty fairly represent the prevailing diseases of the South, and they are generally acute and violent in their nature, as, for instance, dysentery, cholera, &c. And on the other hand our winter diseases, including all the debilities and delicacies of frost-bitten constitutions are of a more chronic character, and carry off a majority of our

population. Consumption is the standing Cholera of the North.

It is obvious from these premises that the application of the faith and power of Christ, to the specific diseases of mankind in the first branch of the church, was limited in a measure to what may be called heat-diseases, and that a second and separate work of application of the power of Christ, to cold-diseases, is committed to the second branch of the church. The right wing of the army of death, and, if you please, the centre, was routed in detail by Christ and his apostles, but the overthrow of the left wing, remains for our courage and enterprize. We have already from time to time, met and conquered a variety of acute diseases; summer complaints have been discomfited; Cholera cannot harm nor frighten us—but we find that worse enemies than these hold out against us yet. Tendencies to consumption have tasked our faith most severely from the beginning. Believers throughout the country undoubtedly are at this moment laboring heavily under the coughs, sore-throats, and side-aches which in our climate are the favorite conveyances of death. Now in mid-winter is the time to stir up our faith, and rally to the battle especially appointed to us, believing assuredly that he who withstood the hot breath of the equator, shall also triumph over the cold blasts of the pole—that the resurrection life which bade the south 'keep not back,' shall also command the north to 'give up,' and shall be obeyed.

J. H. N.

### 'Spirits in Western N. York.'

EDITOR OF THE CIRCULAR:

If the account of these mysteries is true, and we have no reason to doubt it, then a *power*—not exactly a doctrine, like Davis's, or a mere set of opinions—but an actual *power* has come into the world, which is above all law. If those spirits can turn tables over, pull chairs about, and play on the guitar, they can *kill folks*. They can take up a chair against the resistance of several men, and what should hinder them from knocking a man down with it? There is no limit of power to be assigned in this case. A *hand* has been seen and felt. If spirits can present themselves in that way

to the various senses, one may come and sleep with some man's wife, just as well as to show himself to her. He may commit adultery with her, and how are you going to prosecute him for it? The power of the invisible spiritual world has come into such relations to men in this world, that it supercedes and subverts the authority of the State. And we have reason to expect these operations will become more palpable and extensive. In proportion as confidence in them increases, their power will increase; and confidence has been sweeping through the State. There are few but have given way before the facts which have been forced upon them.

Here is a power brought into serious action upon the citizens of the State of N. York, with ability to *destroy*. I do not say that the spirits will do this, but they *can*, and *the law is no protection*. The citizens of the State must look now to something beyond the law for the security of their property, their chastity, and even life. Every thing that the law undertakes to protect is at the mercy of these powers. I would rather have an invasion of the Indians, or of the Goths and Vandals, if I had no God to appeal to. What is the use of the Legislature of Albany?—or of the United States army and navy? They are no protection against these invisible powers. *What are you going to do about it?* Nothing but the God of Israel can protect men in the emergency they are being forced into. These spirits have not shown themselves mischievous, so far, but we do not know how soon they may show themselves diabolical, and invade all rights. If we are going to have our physical, to say nothing of our spiritual interests, secured, we must have a higher protection than law. This invasion is the most serious one that ever threatened the world. It loosens every thing; government is subverted; for all that law can do, we are at the mercy of these spirits. Will not men be compelled to seek a new government,—to seek the protection of God? **QUERY.**

### A Recollection of Lorenzo Dow.

DEAR G.—As it appears by your last paper that the ghost of Lorenzo Dow is rapping out theology in central New York, it seems proper that I should offer a little in-

formation about him which I obtained by personal acquaintance. In 1833, during my connection with the Theological Seminary at New Haven, Lorenzo Dow visited that city; and Robert Hall, one of my fellow-students, having been previously acquainted with him, introduced me to him. We spent an evening with him at his lodgings. I had long entertained high imaginations of his sanctity, and hoped for much edification from his conversation; but I was utterly disappointed. His principal discourse during the evening was about the perils which he was subject to from the machinations of the Catholics, who he said were seeking to kill him; and his chief attention was occupied with *cleaning and loading an old pistol*, which he carried habitually to defend himself from the 'bloody Papists.' J. H. N.

### Communications.

[We take pleasure in giving up a large portion of the paper this week to communications. Several, who have in some past time stood in an equivocal position toward the truth, take this opportunity to make a public and distinct acknowledgment in its honor.]

*Oneida Reserve, Feb. 5, 1850.*

DEAR G.—I feel like submitting the following to you for your disposal.

I suppose many know the circumstance of my desertion from Mr. Noyes and the Association at its commencement. Previous to the first gathering here, I had heard something of the true state of things among the believers at Putney, which at first brought great alarm and distress; but upon consideration and reflection, I made up my mind that they were God's truths and sustained by inspiration. This view of the matter gave me quietness and rest; and under this impression I sought the opportunity of being one of the first in this State to move forward in the community enterprise.

It may be well to say here, that I at-

teaded the two Conventions in the fall of 1847, at the latter of which it was voted that measures be taken immediately for the gathering of the few that were ready to commit their all to the service of God. At these conventions I became acquainted with J. Burt, who proposed to me to come on to his place, (Oneida Reserve,) and make a trial with him. I thought of the matter much, and prayed over it much. The impressions I got by the Spirit seemed to be favorable, yet the things seen were unfavorable. While in this state of mind, I received a letter from Mr. Burt, wishing me to come and see him. I did so, and made arrangements to join him immediately, which was done; and we set about building for the purpose of accommodating others. This was the first commencement of the present Association. We soon received two families more, those of Wm. S. Hatch and D. P. Nash.

After their arrival, we heard that Mr. Noyes was in New York City. Mr. Burt proposed sending him an invitation to come on here. This was agreed to, and I signed my name to the invitation. Mr. Noyes came immediately after receiving the invitation, and boldly and fearlessly presented the truths of our social relations. At first, I took no exceptions either to Mr. Noyes or his principles, but received him with gladness and singleness of heart; notwithstanding his words were a sword to me, instead of peace. I was true to my instincts. But after seeing others quarrel with him and manifest a fearfulness towards him, it begat in me a questioning of my first instincts, and the truthfulness of Mr. Noyes' position. At this time I was in strong sympathy with Wm. S. Hatch, and greatly under his spirit. He came out in open war with

Mr. Noyes. There were also Perfectionists coming in from abroad, most of them in deadly opposition to Mr. Noyes. From these I felt disturbance, and oppression, particularly from John Corwin. In this agitated state of mind and feeling, I let conscientious unbelief remove me from community life into the cold, dreary world. The spirit that possessed me seemed not to be hostile to Mr. N. or his principles, but one that wanted rest and reflection, and indicated to me that retirement back to the world was the only place in which I could find it. When I left, I felt that I had fellowship and union of heart with those I had forsaken, and within three days time had all the reflection I needed to endorse Mr. N. and his doctrines. From that time I was convinced that my stay in the world would be short, and commended myself to God that I might be ready to move at his bidding. I wrote after a short time to those who had cautioned me against Mr. N., stating my confidence in him. From some of those persons I have not heard since.

I rejoined the Association in February, a year ago. And now I feel it my duty to God, the spirit of truth, and to Mr. N. that I publicly disclaim and renounce all fellowship with the spirit of desertion. Firmly believing that the spirit of truth is my best friend, and that in a good degree it has won me to itself and possessed me; and further, that this Association is built up of the truth, and that J. H. Noyes is the lawful head and leader appointed of God to lead his people. I confess myself united and identified with him for the truth's sake, and ask for no better fare or greater blessings than can be obtained through this channel. JOSEPH C. ACKLEY.

*Oneida Reserve, Jan. 25, 1850.*

In looking over my past life since 1834, I find I have been under various influences that have operated to turn me from the simple truth of God to giving heed to fables. Surrounded as I was by an unbelieving world, its spirit that worketh death was daily pressing upon me; I was unconsciously enveloped and became identified with that spirit of combativeness and controversy, which is the opposite of edification, and the beginning of poverty. Under that influence, Ishmael-like, I have groped my way, seeing men as trees walking; and would often cry out in anguish of soul 'My God, why hast thou forsaken me?' I was conscious that like the Prodigal I had strayed from my Father's house, and the way to return I knew not. During this time of my departure from God, the second chapter of Revelation found a place in my heart. Passages like these would press upon my mind: 'I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' With such truth constantly sounding in my ears I was at length constrained to say, *I am a prodigal*; I have left my first love and am feeding upon husks. I said in my heart, I will return to my Father's house where there is bread enough and to spare; and, unworthy as I was of the least of God's blessings, he has kept his promise, and has met me and blessed me on my return.

It is now about one year since I joined this body of believers, and my confidence in God and the Association daily increases. I can see the hand and wisdom of God directing all our movements, and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without his notice. The feelings of my heart call for an expression of thankfulness to God and the Association

for cutting loose my moorings from the world and its fashions, which are soon to pass away, and setting me afloat on the ocean of God's eternal love.

S. NEWHOUSE.

*Oneida Reserve, Feb. 1, 1850.*

Having never made a public confession of Christ, I now feel that the truth demands it; and believing it will be the means of separating me still further from the world, I consider it my duty and a privilege to do so. I wish to declare to the world my present views; and in order to do this, I will give the reasons of my first confession of Christ. I saw clearly that Christ had claims upon me, and that he was calling upon me to forsake all and follow him; and the conviction was fastened upon me so strongly that I found no peace until I gave my heart to God. Such passages as these were continually forcing themselves upon my mind: 'He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.' 'Except a man forsake all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' I have all my life been searching for happiness, and at the time referred to I was fully satisfied that there was nothing in the world that would satisfy the soul. In view of its hollowness, I felt that I had rather suffer affliction with the children of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

In my experience in the Association I have found that when I have given way to the spirit of unbelief, and have thus been drawn into a state of disfellowship toward Mr. Noyes and the Association, it has brought on me misery and unhappiness; and whenever I have come out and identified myself with the Association and its principles, it has given me peace and happiness such as I never

experienced in the world. I believe this Association is the true church of God—that its principles are sanctioned by the Bible, and that John H. Noyes is the man raised up by God to be its head and leader.

FRANCIS HYDE.

BROTHER G.—I am desirous of expressing my thankfulness to the Spirit of truth for what it has done for me in saving me from the world and joining me to Christ. I wish to invite the truth to take possession of me, and would renew my confession of Christ as a whole Savior. I wish also to express my confidence in this Association and its principles. I believe it is the only true church of Christ on earth, and that its visible head and leader, J. H. Noyes, is a man appointed by God.

JULIA S. HYDE.

Rev. H. Eastman, in his late effort, attempts to make a little capital out of the case of Mrs. Field, the widow of a well known clergyman in Vt. Her leaving the Community at Putney is twice alluded to in support of his slanderous charges. We give her card below, and commend it to the digestion of those who have interested themselves in the case.

FOR THE CIRCULAR.

*Skaneateles, Jan. 24, 1850.*

I do feel it my indispensable duty, and an act of justice to God, to myself, to J. H. Noyes and the Corporation of Perfectionists at Putney, and to the world at large, that I should say that I did not desert Mr. Noyes because of ill treatment, or of any misconduct in him or those with him, but because of my own ignorance and unbelief in the doctrines of the gospel in which they believed. After I left them, I conferred not with flesh and blood, but gave myself wholly up to God, to know the truth. He has followed me ever since, by revelation after revelation, opening these truths to me in such a manner, that I would not dare to deny them. I firmly

believe that is the church of the living God—the pillar and ground of the truth, which the gates of hell can never prevail against; and I do know by direct communication from God that Mr. J. H. Noyes is the man inspired and appointed of God himself, to set up a kingdom on this earth, which is destined to dash in pieces all other kingdoms.—I have not seen one of them since I left Putney; but these things I have had from that God that cannot lie; and I do beseech God that not a soul may fall short of the great salvation of the Gospel, by my deserting that Corporation. And I publish this to the world, that I may rid my skirts from the blood of souls that lift up their heels against Mr. Noyes and that church. I have now perfect confidence in him, and wish my name enrolled in no other church.

SUSAN FIELD.

#### Facts for Feeding Faith.

We have in the history of the Jewish nation, a mass of facts well suited to justify and encourage faith, and make foolish the wisdom of this world. This wisdom had its growth in the apostacy, and teaches men, instead of acting as children of God and dependent on his providence, to trust to their own prudence, be independent, and make gods of themselves.

First, we see in Abraham's forsaking his country and his kindred at the call of God, to lead a wandering life in a strange land, a transaction not at all fitted to commend itself to the maxims of human prudence; a transaction however, which was the commencement of a series of lessons, designed of God to manifest his own faithfulness toward those who believe and obey him, and to fix in the hearts of his people the truth that 'the just shall live by faith.'

Then, in delivering the Israelites out of Egypt, in leading them through the

wilderness, in sustaining them miraculously for forty years in their passage to Canaan, and in the subsequent events of their history, God's object was still manifest, to prove his own faithfulness to his promises, and to train his people in *practical faith*. He speaks of his purpose in separating the Jews from other people, in the following manner—'I am the Lord your God who have separated you from other people. . . . And ye shall be holy unto me, for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine.' Lev. 20 : 24, 26. 'Now therefore if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.' Ex. 19 : 5, 9. 'Because the Lord loved you, and *because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers*, hath He brought you out with a mighty hand,' &c. Deut. 7 : 8.

To prove and to strengthen their faith, the Israelites were brought repeatedly into circumstances where, without the interposition of God for their deliverance, their destruction appeared inevitable. For instance, when they had come to the Red Sea, pursued by Pharaoh and his host; and afterwards, when they found themselves—so great a multitude—in the wilderness and the desert, without any other means of sustenance than such as God provided day by day. (At Marah the bitter waters were made sweet; and at Rephidim, when 'there was no water for the people to drink,' God through Moses brought water for them out of the rock.) Let any one consider the character of the country through which their journeyings lay,—spoken of by the sacred writers as a 'desert land,' and as 'a waste, howling wilderness,'—with the immense number of persons that made up the camp of the Israelites—computed by Adam Clarke to be (including young and old) more

than three millions of souls—let him consider that this vast multitude were not supported by their own labor, but depended on the daily providence of God—that they were thus sustained for forty years, fed on manna—and he will see what opportunity and what necessity there was for the exercise of faith. We may see too how pleasing it was to God to find faith among them, and how displeasing was the unbelief that he had to contend with. This appears by the blessings and promises he gave to those who believed in his goodness—to Joshua and Caleb for instance—and by the judgments which he threatened and executed against those who believed not.

It is worthy to be noted also, as furnishing a valuable admonition to us, how differently God treated the unbelief of the Israelites in different stages of their experience;—how much more mildly he dealt with it in the beginning, than he did after they had had a longer acquaintance with his ways, and had seen more numerous instances of his wonderful works. When they had just come out of Egypt, and were brought into the perils that encompassed them at the Red Sea, expecting certain destruction, they said to Moses, 'Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?' God then spoke encouragingly to them, and said to them by Moses, 'Fear ye not; stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord which he will show you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more forever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.' Ex. 14 : 11—14. But at a later period, when they had received multiplied proofs of God's power, and of his care over them, he treats their unbelief with greater severity, as being more inexcusable. Thus, when they murmured at Moses and Aaron, on the report of the spies, and were ready to stone Caleb and Joshua for their hopeful account of the promised land and for their faithful advice, the Lord said to Moses, 'How

long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed them? I will smite them with the pestilence,' &c. Numb. 14: 11, 12.

The great importance of remembering and appreciating God's works, is shown by the frequency with which he reminds his people of the miraculous events of their past history. The Bible gives us many specimens of 'historical criticism,' such for instance as the following: 'Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee, to know what was in thy heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no. And he humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth man live. Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy feet swell these forty years. Thou shalt also consider in thy heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee. Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna: . . . . and thou say in thy heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God; for it is he that giveth thee power

to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he swore unto thy Fathers.' Deut. 8: 2—5, and ver. 11—18.

The main part of the book of Deuteronomy, besides a recapitulation of the law, is a rehearsal of the history of God's dealings with the Israelites in their journeyings through the wilderness. See also the 9th chapter of Nehemiah, and the 78th and 105th Psalms.

Many precepts and regulations enjoined in the Jewish economy might be mentioned, showing the care which God took to teach that nation lessons of faith, to check covetousness and greediness, to forbid oppression, and to prevent the excessive accumulation of individual wealth. Even in regard to the gathering and measuring of the manna a peculiar fact is recorded. Moses directed the people to 'gather of it, an omer for every man, according to the number of persons. And they did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.' Again, 'Moses said, let no man leave of it till the morning. Notwithstanding they hearkened not to Moses; but some of them [very prudent in taking thought for the morrow] left of it until the morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was wroth with them.' Ex. 16: 16—20. Then it is to be noticed further, that the Jews were required to devote a tenth part of their increase to the sacred service; that one whole tribe was set apart from common worldly avocations, to be employed in that service; that all the males in the nation were required to go up to Jerusalem three times in a year to carry their tithes and offerings, and to keep their appointed feasts: or if the distance was too great to carry their tithes they were to turn them into money, which they were to take with them and spend in the place that God should choose, thus necessarily consuming much time; (it appears they were not taught Franklin's maxim that 'time is

money,' but were required to spend liberally both time and money in serving God;) that every seventh year was to be a year of release, in which all creditors were to release their claims against their debtors, and all slaves were to go free; that every seventh year was also to be a sabbath of rest to the land, during which they were neither to sow nor reap; and that every fiftieth year was to be a jubilee in which all who had sold their inheritance and become poor, returned to their possessions.

All these things considered, the history of the Jewish nation furnishes a splendid array of facts going to shew that in organizing and training that nation, God's object was to assert his right to claim their service to him as their King and Father, to teach them their dependence, and to beget and nourish faith in him. Thus he prepared them practically for the doctrine of Christ, who has taught us to take no thought for the morrow—to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added.

J. L. S.

☞ We have on hand some interesting correspondence, but for want of room defer it till our next No.

☞ We are now supplied with the papers we advertised for. Those who have forwarded them will accept our thanks.

#### Receipts from Jan. 28th.

W. H. Norton, \$1.00	Dr. B. Devoe, 2.00
Mrs. Randolph, 1.00	Dr. J. Gridley, 1.00
S. Chapman, 1.00	A. Barnes, 1.00
Delly Gibbs, 1.00	N. A. Morse, 2.00
Alice Farbell, 1.00	Henry Mohrer, 5.00
J. Longley, 2.00	Mrs. Stacey, 1.00

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☞ Letters may be addressed to 'Editor of Free Church Circular, Oneida Castle, N. Y.'

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