

THE

# FREE CHURCH CIRCULAR.

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The Truth shall make you Free.—John 8: 32.  
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Home-Talk by J. H. N.—No. 31.

[REPORTED FOR THE CIRCULAR.]

### THE INTERIOR OF THINGS.

The secret of happiness lies in fixing the attention on good, and not on the limitation of it. This is equivalent to saying, that the secret of happiness lies in looking at the *interior* instead of the *exterior*; for in speaking of good and its limitations, we conceive of good as *central*, and the limitations of it, or evil, as the *circumference*. Hence, as was said, the secret of happiness, or the communion of good, lies in turning attention to the interior of things, and not to the exterior.

I find myself in a state of salvation by virtue of the establishment of that principle in me. I have unspeakable reason for gratitude to God for *salvation*; and by salvation I mean grace given unto me, which has turned my eye from the surface to the centre—from evil, which is in its nature the external, or periphery and limitation of good, to good itself, which is the soul and core of all things. I have had lately a steady flow of thought in that direction; and I perceive clearly, that all I lack of being perfectly happy all the time—all that I lack of perfect sympathy and unity with

God and the heavenly hosts, is exactly measured by what I lack of continuance in the *interior view of things*. So far and so often as my attention is caught and entangled by external events, and I am drawn into a view of the dead surface of things, which presents a mixture of good and evil, (and chiefly evil because dead,) so far I am out of order—so far evil has power over me and distresses me. But so far and so often as my soul returns to the vitality of things, and finds there the central good, I am happy again—healthy in soul and body—then the river of life flows freely, and I rise into a harmonic state.

We all understand the distinction between the letter and the spirit of the Bible, and of language in general. We understand the declaration of Christ that 'the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life;' that is, that a person who takes simply an external view of any thing, even the Bible, finds on the whole there is nothing in it but chaff. The only words that really do us any good are those which enter into our interior life. Such words have a soul in them; and it is this soul which conveys to us their real effect. The simple letter will do us no good; it excites expectations

that will never be fulfilled; it gives a show of truth, but the apparent benefit turns out to be chaff. This principle can be applied not only to the Bible, and to language, but to the whole circle of existence. All things have these two sides to them, letter and spirit. In all transactions there is letter and spirit; and from facts continually occurring, both great and small, we get benefit or disappointment according as the view we take of them is exterior or interior.

For instance, the great event of the Second Coming is a fact recorded in the New Testament in the form of prophecy. But precisely the same record might have been made in a historical form; it makes no difference to us whether the record looks forward or backward, if we receive it as inspired. It is there recorded as a fact. Now looking at it from the outside, people are perpetually confused, bewilder themselves and the whole world on the subject, and make it a source of infinite mischief and error. All the advantage we have over the rest of the world in respect to that fact, lies in this: We have gone back to the spiritual position, in which we see its interior reality—then it is simple and perfectly plain to us. We recognize it, first as an interior or soul-fact; and then the body of it also becomes all plain. We see every thing harmonized; and it proves to us a fact full of profit, and edification, and spiritual life.

I repeat, that all facts present within themselves these same two faces. The two common distinctions of exterior and interior face, pertain to all events; and we get good or evil according to the position from which we view them, and the face which we recognize and accept. We may take a sweeping position, and assume, on the ground of the truth of

the Bible, and the truth that comes by experience, that it is as good as a mathematical fact, that 'All things work-together for good to them that love God'—all things without exception. Now if this is so, every fact that occurs has a meaning in it; there is good in it.—Viewed from the outside, there may seem to be no meaning, or to be an evil meaning in any given fact. It may be recognized as a mere dead fact, unconnected with any purpose of God, or with the laws of nature, by those who are without discrimination and insight.—Viewed in this spirit of unbelief it may be insignificant, or significant of evil, and so may make a bad impression on us, and make us unhappy. Indeed, God has so arranged things in this world at least, for the purposes of education, that the outside face of the majority of facts is evil. Yet we know, that notwithstanding a fact may produce an evil impression on us, it still has infolded in it a good meaning. If we understand the soul of it, we shall find it full of good. Only get where we can read the purpose of God, and we shall find every fact full of chime, of harmony, and music. God is in every thing that takes place; and a state of salvation is a state in which it becomes perfectly natural to slip round back of the outward front of things, and to search out the interior, God-meaning of them.

All spiritualists get into the habit of noticing special providences. This is strictly philosophical in itself, although it may run into foolish interpretation. People may misuse the idea, may imagine meaning to facts which do not exist, yet the search is philosophical. All that is needed, is care in the interpretation. All that we are looking on is a book that God has written, and we may be perfectly

sure there is a meaning in every word of it. On the one hand, it will not do to be hasty and make guess-work of reading it; and on the other, it will not do to throw any of the words away, as having no meaning; for he who throws away facts, is as foolish as he who reads them according to his own fancies. In truth, there is a record of God's purposes in every word of the book of events; and we should get into the habit of reading and interpreting every thing that goes on around us. If there is some meaning contained in every event, then by tracing events up to the purpose of God, the whole universe of action becomes light and joyful to us, because it is seen to be full of God.

All things work for good to the interior—the soul. All external facts serve the interior of the universe. Our outward connections and relations with events all conspire to serve our souls, and our bodies too, as fast as our bodies come into subjection to our souls. Those who love God are joined to him at the centre; and if all things work for his good, of course they do for those who are joined to him.

The same thing that has been spoken of as applying to the Bible, to language, to history, facts of every kind, is applicable to objects of *enjoyment* of every kind. We seek pleasure, and God intended we should find it, in food, in music, in the sexual relation, and in harmonies of various kinds, that present themselves to the senses. But here, as in every thing else, are two faces—interior and exterior, letter and spirit, soul and body. We shall succeed in gaining pleasure in those things, just so far only as we learn to seek the soul of them and not the body. If we get behind the letter, and embrace the spirit

of pleasure, then we shall find substantial reality in it. If we take the opposite course, we shall find ourselves disappointed; reality falls short of expectation, and we are cheated. All material goods are in their very nature cheats. They are beautiful appearances—not realities. 'This world is all a fleeting show.' This is true; it was intended to be a show, and it is a very valuable one if we let it lead us to the reality behind it. But if we *stop* in the show, we make it a disastrous cheat to ourselves, and turn what God intended as a blessing, into an awful hoax. Here again, the secret of happiness lies in seeking after the spirit, and not sticking in the letter of enjoyment.

To carry this principle up to its ultimate generalization, the real interior of the whole universe is God—the Father and the Son. They are the soul, core, and substance of all things; and all other things are but shows, vehicles of that inner substance. Our salvation consists in our getting into a state of continuous attention to that inner substance. Fix your eye on the Father and the Son. By fastening attention there and keeping open communication with them, the universe is made a blessed reality to us, and its life and joy will flow into our souls. If our hearts and minds are in that condition, we shall not be driven about by chance. We have entered into interior relations and vital contact with a living thing; it is perfect intelligence, perfect love; it is superior to us, and reigns over us; and in proportion as our communication with that intelligence increases, we shall find ourselves a great deal better than we expected. We shall find in ourselves more wisdom than we ever expected—we shall be conscious of the constant operation of

God's wisdom and intelligence in us and continually find ourselves growing wiser and better.

Now what we want is, to learn thoroughly this great lesson of taking the interior view of things. We must learn to look at all action and all pleasure, in the spirit, without sticking in the letter, and to have a habit of holding the heart open to God, the great centre and soul of all things. We shall then find it not a hard thing to behave well, and be happy. It is perfectly easy; all the difficulty consists in learning this lesson. The principle in the case may be readily understood. Attention to a thing, spiritually considered, is contact with it; and contact is the same thing as contagion. The serpent gets the attention of the bird, and through that has spiritual communication with it, and so gains a power which puts the bird entirely at his mercy. So in mesmerism. Attention on the part of the subject puts him under the power of the manipulator. This power, which we all understand by such examples as these, is recognized in the Bible. 'If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light,' is a general affirmation that the attention governs the spiritual condition. Take another example. Paul speaks of those who 'eat and drink damnation to themselves, not discerning the Lord's body.' That is, their attention not being on the interior of the institution or ordinance, what should convey edification and life, becomes a curse. Again, Paul says, 'We all, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.' There too, the idea is, that by attention we are brought under a power that transforms and assimilates us to itself.

The great scheme of salvation turns

on this same pivot. Christ says, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.' 'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.' Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness at a time when the children of Israel had been bitten by serpents; and he directed them simply to look up, making simple attention, not to the bite, but to another thing, the means of cure. 'Even so must the Son of man be lifted up.' Accordingly, Paul holds up Christ as the object to be viewed—the thing on which attention must be fixed. He 'determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified;'—to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.' This is eternal life; and we can see that positive power—miraculous power—has a natural and philosophical connection with directing attention to God and the interior of things. In proportion as our attention is directed in that quarter, the power of the interior flows into us, we slide into it, are charmed by it, until we become interior things ourselves, and the whole life of body and soul floats in the great ocean of interior things. We gravitate thus toward the centre, by a suction just as sure as the law of gravitation, which draws things to the earth. Attraction toward the centre, is attraction toward God; and attraction toward God, gives us participation in his happiness.

We have had experience enough to know that our happiness of every kind—of our hearts first, and then of our bodies and external senses, all depends upon the flow of the river of life into us; and that this flow finds its channel through our interior attention. The diversion then, of attention to some ex-

ternal thing, operates on our whole life like a ligature on the arm; it stops the circulation. If you overlay your arm, you wake in the morning, and find it numb, distressed, dead. You rub it until the circulation returns, and it feels well. So also, you go to bed at night, lively and joyful in spirit, and during sleep, your attention either becomes dormant with the rest of the senses, or else some evil spirit takes advantage of your spirit's being in a floating, uncontrollable state, (in which of course it is running externally,) and you wake up feeling bad, barren, distressed, out of joint. What can be the meaning of it? Why! your body has overlaid your soul, and it feels just as your arm did when the circulation stopped. But just as soon as you can get your attention started in the right way, you get happy again. What takes place in sleep, takes place in business, and in the case of any absorbing external pursuit. When you get taken up with business, and fall into a state of bad feeling, your body has overlaid your soul. Just as soon as you sit down and turn your attention in the right direction, you become happy again. So, if you go into any pleasure which diverts the attention, you find that the body has overlaid the soul; and you have to rub and work to restore the circulation.—This is the secret of all the ups and downs in your experience. We can get into a state where the body will not overlay the soul—where the whole attention will be inevitably and incessantly turned toward God. So that whether we eat, drink, or sleep, work or play, we shall dwell in the interior truth—in the soul of things; and consequently shall be perfectly happy, without intermission.

## CRITICISM.

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

### HOW TO RECEIVE CRITICISM—NO. II.

In the first stages of religious experience, when we commence seeking an acquaintance with God, there is much selfishness mixed up with Christ in us, and we get wrong impressions of the character of God, from his severity with this selfishness. To illustrate this idea, suppose a man should undertake to feed his sheep, and a company of swine should come with them—he could not immediately separate them, and might have to drive the whole back in order to do it. It is necessary to separate the swine from the sheep, or they would get all the food, and perhaps eat the sheep too. For the time being, the sheep might think they were cruelly deprived, by a hard-hearted master who was willing to starve them—but when separated from the swine, they would find their master bountiful and kind.

The greatest happiness that any of us have ever experienced, does not come up to what will be our permanent state, when God has driven the swine away. It is our business to help God to clear out the evil herd—and doing so will bring us into sympathy with God, and make us charitable to him. We should be generous to God, and not misjudge him. The devil uses his cunning in this way: every time God strikes a blow at the swine, he says to us—'See what a God you are seeking—he is saying Be gone! to you.' People insensibly get a false impression of God's character, by confounding his faithfulness in rebuking evil, with his feelings toward them as individuals. Our expectations for

the future, are founded on the character of God; and our experience, so far as we have dealt fairly with him, and presented ourselves as sheep to him, has given us an opportunity of learning his true character. But all his dealings with the swinish part of our natures, must be laid out of the account, except as proving his kindness to us indirectly. We must think of him as if he had never crossed us or scolded at us. If we make up our minds of his character, by the way he deals with the swine, we shall consider him as cross, niggardly, austere, &c. God should be judged by the way he treats good children, and then his character is unimpeachable. It is only as petulant and wayward children, that he corrects us—and that is the way we treat our own children.

It is the swinish nature which makes us ready to remember criticism, and forget God's benefits. Swine have no gratitude—they do not even show good nature when they are fed. Simply to know God, is eternal life; and as far as there is any difficulty in our salvation, it lies in getting a true idea of him. There is a positive obstruction to our knowing God. If we could sit down like Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, without any devil, it would be just as natural for us to know his goodness, and the sweetness of his character, as for a child to know his parent; but there is an accuser between us—he is identifying us with himself, and getting us under the cloud of his spirit; and provoking God's displeasure—so that we naturally feel that God is cross, and are hindered from discovering his true character. There never was more tenderness in a mother or a bridegroom, than can be seen in God, where he has a chance of showing it. The devil ac-

cuses us to him, as well as him to us. When he gets an evil spirit between two persons, however good their wills may be toward each other, there is a constant tendency to see evil on both sides. God sees the devil that envelops us with his spirit, and we see God through the devil's eyes. There is this difference however: God patiently waits, and distinguishes us from the spirit that covers us; but when we present ourselves to him covered with the devil's spirit, he cannot help being disgusted. We must learn as fast as we can, what God is, and what we should be if there was no devil—we should ignore the devil, and put him out of mind—he has nothing to do between us and God. We need not be concerned but that God will keep clear of misjudging us—but the difficulty will be for us to keep clear of misjudging God. We may be sure, if we think of God as being hard to deal with—as cross and illiberal—or if we have not much idea about him at all, or an indefinite idea of him—if we do not consider him as more liberal, kind and tender-hearted than a father or mother, or bridegroom or bride; that our imaginations are not right—we totally misconceive him. When we get clear of the devil's misrepresentations of God, it will be like cutting a cord that fastens a balloon to the earth, and letting it go up. We have thought of God as a severe, exacting tyrant, whom we would serve as well as we could, and try to bear all that he put upon us, and keep on as good terms with him as possible. As soon as God can get us separated from the devil, we shall find such promises as these fulfilled:—“And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall

obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." There is God's heart. "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord." You see here, *this is the Lord.* We are to wait for him and not mistake his character, and while we are waiting, not think he is cross and niggardly, because he reproves evil. When your imaginations of the truth about God get stronger than the representation of the devil about him—when God's true character is fixed in your heart, so that it cannot be misjudged, it will be safe to say to you in the words of John—'I write unto you young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one.'

#### UNFRUITFUL RELIGION.

It is a fearful thing to have *the truth* in our possession. God will reckon with all those who received the truth of salvation when it was first preached, and will ask for the fruits that are due to him. Some have taken the gospel of Christ—the doctrine of holiness, and made a carnal religion of it, as dead and barren as that of any of the sects. They have built themselves up in theoretical truth, and warded off condemnation and the demands of the churches, and yet been unfruitful toward God. They have not commended Perfectionism as a vital, practical religion, as a religion of *power*, as well as wisdom.

A worldly Perfectionist is really farther from the kingdom of God, than a man without any profession; because his double-minded course has hardened his heart, and spoiled his simplicity.

Some persons who visit the Association, have known nothing of our theory—but they are sincere, have a fresh, healthy appetite for the truth, and when they hear its appeal, it calls out from them an expression of allegiance, that comes from the bottom of their heart; and it goes to the heart, attracting the regard and fellowship of the community. But a worldly Perfectionist, who has long held the truth in unrighteousness, or unfruitfulness, comes here, and finds himself isolated and uncomfortable. It is not for want of equally good will on the part of the community, toward him as toward the other; but his state of insincerity and calloused feeling, has the least affinity possible to our spiritual condition. Cant and superficiality come directly into the fire, and burn like hay, wood, and stubble. Not till the genuine gold of his heart is laid open, will a man find any comfort, under the involuntary scrutiny of the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning that is present among us. One grain of sincerity is heavier in this element, and will find its way to the heart of the community, quicker than all knowledge that understands all mysteries; and the tongue of an angel loses all its eloquence, compared with the simple offering of the poor in spirit.

We are Christ-seekers; and Christ-seeking and worldiness are in dead opposition; one is death to the other. We call the spirit of the world a pleasure-seeking spirit, and we class worldly Perfectionists among pleasure-seekers. In this spirit, if they seek the truth, it is to make it their servant—to possess it, and use it unlawfully—to salt their worldliness with; not to give it possession of them, to bow themselves to it, and yield it the command of their thoughts and tongues, and undivided service. They do not love the truth as Paul did, when he said, 'God forbid, that I should glory save in the cross of Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' They have possessions in the world, and a great many

things besides Christ's business to attend to. 'How hardly shall they that have riches, enter into the kingdom of God.' A rich man *cannot* be sincere. His heart is divided. The best he can do is to *pray* for sincerity, and offer himself to the Spirit of truth, that it may apply the cross of Christ to all his worldly affections. It is only in the state of poverty, where we can say with Paul, we *have suffered* the loss of all things, that we attain sincerity, real downright earnestness, the hunger that opens the heart to Christ. In the early stages of our experience, we have a great amount of life and heart nourishment in superficial attractions of various kinds; and the first work of the Spirit of truth is to cleanse us from idolatry, and crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Then we become *earnest*, interior, dead to the world; and then we mourn for Christ in a way to find him. He that forsaketh not all that he hath, is not worthy of Christ, and will not seek him with that singleness of heart which only is acceptable. This has been the peculiar operation of the Spirit of truth in this Association, to cleanse us from idolatry—to cut off every thing which satisfies the heart, all treasures of affection, reputation, experience, self-respect, every thing one side of the *excellency of the knowledge of Christ*. The spirit which is overruling every other in this church, is that of Paul:—'For I am determined not to know any thing among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified.'

Though we may not expect the same kind of fruitfulness from believers abroad, that is produced by the favorable circumstances of our school, yet they can find some way to grow *sincere*, and become Christ-seekers; they can be servants of the truth, and prove to themselves and those around them, that they are pilgrims and strangers in the world. Christ can make them shine; and the word of their testimony can surround them with a free, purified spiritual atmosphere.

## THE FREE CHURCH CIRCULAR.

GEORGE W. NOYES, EDITOR.

ONEIDA RESERVE, MARCH 26, 1850.

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

☐ THE SECOND ANNUAL REPORT of the Oneida Association, is now printed and ready for distribution. A copy will be sent immediately to each of our subscribers, who will please to find in it an apology for the delay of the Circular. A share of its preparation was unexpectedly thrown upon the Office; and its immediate publication was considered desirable, even at the risk of disappointing our Subscribers, by the non-appearance of the Circular. We shall hesitate before making a promise of exact regularity again.

The Report is a pamphlet of 31 pages; an edition of 1000 copies published. A fair price for it, is 25 cents per copy. It is however subject to our Subscribers on the same free terms with our other publications.

☐ We receive from correspondents occasionally, suggestions and inquiries which do not seem exactly pertinent to the present interest of the paper, and are therefore not publicly noticed. We hope our friends will not on this account communicate less freely, whatever their minds lead them to.

☐ Considerable matter of interest has accumulated in the interval of our delay, which will receive attention directly.

### The 'Interior.'

The 'Home Talk' of this number on 'The Interior of Things,' will prove interesting and suggestive to those who study it.—Who has not had at times, a certain consciousness,—a perception, transient perhaps, but vivid, of an interior universe, opening to them from the central Christ-point of their hearts? Who has not stood upon the threshold, and gazed into a world luminous with a mellow light than that of the sun—a realm of truth and beauty and unspeakable harmony, where the soul, uncon-

scious of evil, is subdued with the deepest joy at mere existence? Is this then an illusion, a dream, or is the outward world an illusion? or are they both realities? We believe at any rate in the reality of the inner experience; and that so far as either must be doubted and ignored, it should be the visible and external. 'We look not,' says Paul. 'at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.'

'Attractions are proportioned to Destinies.' All the struggling of the soul after rest—the longing for some immortal aliment—the weary disgust with which the spirit returns from its outward search to the work of central inquiry, are instincts inviting us to 'the better land.' These yearning aspirations were not given to mock and torture us; they must be the tokens of an accessible reality; their keen and sorrowful wistfulness is itself a promise. We believe that the instances of individual genius, which have surprised the world from time to time with productions of imperishable beauty in poetry, music, and the creative arts, are but so many jets bursting up through the crust of superficial life from the interior heaven of harmony. We wonder at the results produced—attribute them to the fortunate possession of genius, and seek to know no more: when the truth is, there is a door in our own hearts through which we may enter into that wide world of beauty, of which the highest productions of genius are only specimens and reminders. Genius itself is simply the faculty of perceiving and dwelling in the interior of things.

In unbelief, we are ourselves a part of the outward crust of things, where the devil's spirit broods. Faith commences the interiorizing process with us. As we proceed we find, that though the devil shapes the outer surface of events into all imaginable forms of evil, yet the benign providence of God is equally in contact with their inner surface, and fills every cavity with goodness. By our centreward movement, which is also a progressive refinement of life, we are more and more withdrawn even from the outward power of evil. As we become interior, we become less tangible to the

devil's perception and more the masters of circumstance. There is without doubt a degree of inaccessibility conferred by communion with the interior. We do not mean the physical phenomenon, but a spiritual one. Christ said 'Henceforth the world seeth me no more'; and this declares the necessary condition of every spiritual, interior man. The plane of his life is so far removed from the surface grossness of the world, that he cannot be definitely introduced and understood. But if he is removed from the applause of the world by his ambiguity, he is also sheltered from their ill will; and his deeds, works, effects, will not be the less productive because silently wrought.

The end of the process is the attainment of the resurrection. We burst from the chains and pains and mortality of the circumference, and find immortal freedom in the interior life of God.

### The 'Free Church of Old Times.'

#### No. 3.

We have traced in previous articles, the swelling account of the Finney administration down to the winter of 1834—a period ever memorable to many hearts. We have thoughts clustering around the events of this year, which we cannot now attempt to express.—Suffice it to say, however, that a voice did speak—that the united prayer of Christendom, uttered by the spirit of the great revival, that 'God's kingdom might come and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven,'—*was answered*. The seed that had been sown had germinated, and 'God gave it a body that pleased him.' But it may be asked, what was the great significant event that occurred in 1834? Heaven, by the Spirit of truth, has answered; and those that had ears to hear, heard the answer. And the time will come, when history will record, however reluctantly, the confession made by JOHN H. NOYES on the twentieth of February 1834—that '*Christ was in him a present and everlasting Savior from all sin, as that answer*. The birth of a living, positive

principle of truth—born from the heart of man—is to every philosophic mind, a great event—a remarkable epoch, the germ of a revolution pregnant with blessings to mankind; and such was the birth of perfect holiness.

The Anti-Slavery cause also, dates its birth from the winter of 1834.—Chatham St. Chapel, the central forum of the Finney school, witnessed then the first gathering of a few daring spirits, who organized themselves into an *Anti-Slavery Society*; and doing so without asking permission of the guardians of public opinion, a mob had the honor of dismissing their meeting. This event too, (a fruit of the Free-Church revival) was the birth of a *principle*—negative indeed in its character, and pregnant with elements of destruction, if we may be allowed to judge from its subsequent growth, and the present aspect which the slavery question is assuming in the Congressional counsels of the nation. In looking at a period so universally charged with earnestness and efforts, the question comes up in stern force, How could Mr. Finney excuse himself on any ground whatever for leaving the field of his labors on the eve of such a crisis?

But to proceed with our Free Church history, which must henceforth be a history of its decline and fall. The writer, after the events of the winter and spring of 1834, still continued co-operating with others in the attempt to build up Free Churchism—still with others went about to establish his own righteousness, which was of the law, not heeding nor submitting to the righteousness of God. The birth of Perfectionism however, proved to be the signal, that the motive power, like the detaching of a locomotive from a train of cars, was withdrawn from the Free Churches, leaving them only the momentum of a past experience, and the certain destiny of approaching stoppage. They had refused to follow the spirit that had guided them, into the new issue that was presented, and that moment they

were left soulless, and decay began its work. Thenceforth the consequences began to be apparent. Instead of *Holiness*, *Abolition*, with a host of other reforms, became the watch-word and the sure harbinger of discord and dissolution among the Free Churches.

The first movement, demanding our attention at this time, was an attempt to organize the sixth Free Church, and that too, on pure abolition principles. The writer and others were invited to unite with L. Tappan, in starting the enterprise. A hall for holding meetings was immediately rented, and notices posted out about the city. A young preacher, whose zeal was up to the mark, offered his services; and tradesman like, we were soon doing quite a business, in the usual line of Free Church operations. For a while the enterprise bid fair to succeed; but when the time arrived for taking measures to organize ourselves into a church, the elements of discord were disclosed, and made sad work. The first business in order, was to appoint a committee to nominate deacons. L. Tappan nominated an African brother for one of that committee; but immediately upon this, several individuals who anticipated joining took offense, and forthwith left the meeting. Nothing daunted however, the measure was carried into effect; and a committee, composed of one third black and two thirds white, made their nomination of deacons. The nomination gave satisfaction to all with one exception—that of an elderly brother, who had been very active and prominent in sustaining the meetings. His opposition appeared so groundless that all could read in it, 'disappointment in not being one of the nominees.' And so great was his lust for office, that his better judgment was wholly overpowered, and an explosion took place, giving positive proof that he wanted *office and nothing else*. In quick succession upon this trouble, followed the failure of our young preacher, who, having exhausted his resources of borrowed capital in new-measure revival sermons, all at

once dropped down into a very ordinary exhorter. All these calamities staring us in the face, produced the effect to melt us into perfect agreement on one point—namely, to adjourn, *sine die.*

The period occupied by this most critical period in Free Church history, coincided with the time of Mr. Finney's foreign tour. At length, after an absence of many months, Mr. F. returned to the scenes of his past labors. And, considering the agency ~~Mr. F.~~ had in promoting the revival, it would be natural to suppose that he would take a deep paternal interest in whatever had resulted therefrom. That Perfectionism was the legitimate progeny of the Free Church could not be denied. We believe therefore that a true, sincere man, under the circumstances in which Mr. F. found himself on his return, would have given the subject of perfect holiness a thorough and prayerful investigation, before taking the responsibility of giving it the cold shoulder. Can it be possible, we ask, that Mr. F. was so far blinded by *egotism*, so *topically self-conceited* by past success, that he did not see that the course he was now making out for himself, would convict him of criminal unfaithfulness to Christ and the numerous converts he had won to his name? But we will fall back into the line of events, and let the disclosure of facts suggest their own comments.

Having failed as has been related, in organizing an Abolition Free Church, the writer soon after received an invitation to unite with Wm. Green, I. M. Dimond, S. W. Benedict, and other prominent friends of the Free Church cause, in organizing another Free Church especially for Mr. Finney, and on a much higher plane than those already formed. My personal, filial feelings and prejudices inclined me towards Mr. F.; and having married during his absence one whom he always claimed as his first convert in the city of New York, the invitation was cordially accepted. I accordingly proceeded to attend the preliminary meetings, and

take a part in their deliberations. Here I met Mr. F. for the first time in two years. I have spoken of his previous popularity in the revival world, where he was regarded as a man peculiarly endowed with power from on high. My own early acquaintance with him had secured entirely my confidence in his uncompromising piety. I expected therefore to meet the same earnest, God fearing, and sin-rebuking man that I had known before. How startling my surprise therefore, at the change so apparent in his whole bearing. I looked in vain for a token of that religious earnestness and sincerity that he formerly possessed; but, to use a common expression of his, I found him '*right over against*' where he once stood; i. e. removed from a basis of inflexible straightforward principle, to that of a pliable worldly policy.

The plan of operations which he unfolded to his friends, was in substance the following:—He was ambitious, he said, to reach a higher class in society, than had yet been affected by the Free Church revival: a class reckoned among what are called the "upper ten thousand." To attempt to allure such aristocratic sinners and professors into Chatham St. Chapel, was out of the question; particularly so, since the odium cast upon that place by the discussion of Anti Slavery. Mr. F. proposed therefore, that his friends should purchase a site on Broadway, and erect a spacious, elegant edifice upon it. He desired also that the Church we were about organizing to worship there, should be disconnected entirely from all the offensive reforms and doctrines that were now disturbing the churches; as much as to say, that Abolition, Perfectionism, Moral Reform, and all unfashionable novelties should be kept out of the pale of this new sanctuary. Mr. F. had surrounded himself with a band of men of decided efficiency, men who were thoroughly educated in the discipline and experience of practical life, and who were abundantly able in financial means, to

carry into execution any plan set before them. The proposal was accepted, and two men, Green and Dimond, offered the capital necessary (a sum not much less than one hundred thousand dollars) to execute it forthwith. Mr. F. on his part, expressed the fullest confidence in his ability, under such favorable circumstances as this plan offered him, to win for Christ and the Church, the hearts of many of those 'well-to-do sort of folks,' whose interest in their own salvation, was not sufficient to tempt them out of Broadway.

Having drunk deeply of the proselyting spirit, during the rise of the Free Church, the hope of winning converts from the ranks of the rich and influential, excited the greatest enthusiasm on our part in prosecuting the work. Early then in the spring of 1836, that famed Broadway Tabernacle was thrown open to the public as the last, largest and grandest of the Free Churches. While the building was progressing, the business of organizing the church by electing elders, deacons, &c., had been accomplished. The same game of *worldly policy* and availability was played off throughout the entire arrangements. A single instance will suffice to exhibit the purity of the elective franchise under this administration. Elders were to be chosen, and to carry out Mr. F.'s policy of having it a popular church, it was important to have the mercantile aristocracy represented in the board of elders. Consequently a very wealthy English merchant, and very clever withal, was elected. But as to his *fitness* on the ground of *spirituality* and *experience*, the Duke of Wellington would have filled the place equally as well.

The new edifice having been duly sanctified by the usual custom of a public dedication, the next and last thing to be done to complete the preparatory arrangements for Mr. F.'s *debut*, was to install him as the pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle. But have we not stated that Mr. F. had vowed that he would not allow himself to be hampered by

church shackles of any kind? So we understood him. Nevertheless, having been a lawyer, he probably found a way now to plead on the other side of the question, and pick flaws in his former vows and resolutions.

All things were now completed. The building with its numerous compartments dedicated, and in complete order—pastor installed, the officers commissioned, and privates duly appointed and stationed at their various posts; in a word, every thing is in readiness for action at the word of command. A full-rigged Free Church 'man of war,' this Broadway Tabernacle. Notices of a protracted meeting are placarded over the city; Mr. F. takes his station and commences preaching and praying in his usual style. The church commence the business of praying, singing, exhorting and talking to sinners as in former times—but all to no purpose. No sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, filling all hearts with the spirit of God, is heard. Not a genuine convert made. True, Mr. F. did not reason in his masterly manner before vacant seats; a sea of heads surrounded him evening after evening, but they offered him no hearts, as trophies of his power with God. Thus he continued through the winter and spring of 1837 with the same fruitless, abortive efforts.

And indeed, how could Mr. F. expect to receive any thing from the Lord when, as we believe, he was *conscious* of double-mindedness and instability in all his ways? Was he ignorant of the fact, that numbers in and out of the Free Churches were at this time earnestly inquiring on the subject of *perfect holiness*, and were demanding assistance from him as a spiritual guide, in obtaining a satisfactory solution of that problem? Was he ignorant of the fact, that New Haven Perfectionism was the legitimate child of the revival, over which he claimed paternity? Had he not in his possession at this time all the printed testimony issued from New Haven, and leisure at command to inves-

tigate thoroughly the whole ground upon which Perfectionism was based? And if it was an error and a damnable delusion, was he not bound by every consideration of honesty and faithfulness to God to prove it so, by *reason and scripture*?

Mr. Finney's subsequent career and connection with the Oberlin abolition, do not require at present an extended notice. After toiling through the winter and spring of 1837 without the least success, Mr. F. threw up his hand in the Tabernacle game, and accepted a professorship in the Oberlin College, where in conjunction with Mahan, a smart trade was carried on for a while in manufacturing *doctrinal opinions* on legal holiness. Having created a demand, by his own agency, for glorious Bible truths, can it be supposed that he was *sincere* in suppressing the genuine testimony of present salvation from all sin, and attempting to impose on his followers the cold hash of Oberlin Methodism? These opinions were industriously peddled out over the old revival fields, as a genuine article, and a sort of *legal-tender* to cancel the demands against the Finney administration. And its formal resemblance to the genuine was such, that many were deceived with it for a time; but its destitution of all *vitality* very soon deprived it of the *appearance* of life, and of course made an end of its imposition.

We have canvassed the case of Mr. Finney and the Free Church thus plainly, from a sincere hatred of shams, and a growing love for godly honesty. We have felt moreover, that this criticism was demanded by the cause of true holiness and the faithful followers of Christ. The writer also considered himself called upon to take this step as an act of self-clearing and separation from that subtle spirit of legality and dead works which characterized so distinctly the decline of the Free Church, and which must sooner or later meet the righteous judgment of God.

From this period the Free Churches,

one after another began to fail, dropping their names and returning to the rank and file of the old order of things. And not one at this present time retains even its former name. The Tabernacle church, from the time Mr F. left it, became the battle-ground of furious conflicts and broils between the different factions into which the church was divided. It was sold and resold several times; changed as often, from Congregationalism to Presbyterianism, and so was handled about like fancy stocks at the broker's board, until we ceased to keep track of its history.

GEORGE CRAIGIN.

### Positive and Negative.

I think the distinction between positive and negative action should be clearly kept up in our minds. It may be said, that the great difference between God and the devil is, that one is positive and the other negative. The Bible gives no account of the devil's creating any thing. His business is to destroy. He is called the enemy of God. He is a *friend* to nothing. On the other hand, God created all things. Love is the foundation of all positive action. A thing must be loved in order to be built up. A being must be the friend of a thing to create it; and such a principle does not exist in the devil's nature.— God is love; and the whole force of the action of his life is positive, or creative; and so far as God exerts negative or destructive force, it is because it stands in the way of positive designs. Our work, like his, is positive. We are to build up each other in the faith, to promote love, to make God and the church happy. If there was no evil in the universe, we should be just as active as we now are, and have just as much to do. Heaven is none the less busy because the devil is excluded. We do not devastate fields to gratify our destructiveness, but to make them peaceful homes, and fertile, fruitful gardens.

The promises of the Bible are almost entirely of a positive nature. 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled,' is a rich and glorious promise of being filled with positive good and righteousness. This is the way we shall overcome the devil. We shall be filled so completely with righteousness that he will and can have no place in our hearts. Darkness will be dispelled by the introduction of light. We shall be so devoted to the interests of the church, its prosperity and happiness, that selfishness cannot keep up in the race, and we shall in deed and in truth love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves.

H. M. WATERS.

### Carlyle on Sincerity.

And now I venture to assert, that the exercise of private judgment, faithfully gone about, does by no means necessarily end in selfish independence, isolation; but rather ends necessarily in the opposite of that. It is not honest inquiry that makes anarchy; but it is error, insincerity, half belief, and untruth that makes it. A man protesting against error is on the way towards uniting himself with all men that believe in truth. There is no communion possible among men who believe only in hearsays. The heart of each is lying dead; has no power of sympathy even with things,—or he would believe *them* and not hearsays. No sympathy even with things; how much less with his fellow-men!—He cannot unite with men; he is an anarchic man. Only in a world of sincere men is unity possible;—and there, in the long-run, it is as good as certain.

For observe one thing, a thing too often left out of view, or rather altogether lost sight of in this controversy: That it is not necessary a man should himself have discovered the truth he is to believe in, and never so *sincerely* to believe in. A Great Man, we said, was always sincere, as the first condition of him. But

a man need not be great in order to be sincere; that is not the necessity of Nature and all Time, but only of certain corrupt unfortunate epochs of Time. A man can believe, and make his own, in the most genuine way, what he has received from another;—and with boundless gratitude to that other! The merit of *originality* is not novelty; it is sincerity. The believing man is the original man; whatsoever he believes, he believes it for himself, not for another. Every son of Adam can become a sincere man, an original man, in this sense; no mortal is doomed to be an insincere man.—*Hero Worship.*

## CORRESPONDENCE.

Shelburne Falls, Mass. Mar. 15, 1850.

BELOVED BR. C.—Your letter was duly received and its reference to what especially interested the school at that time, viz. the subject of sincerity, I think has had a salutary effect on my spirit; and I hope for the full development of Gospel simplicity and honesty in my heart and life. I find the testimony of truth is spirit and life to my soul, and strengthens it to cast off the bonds of hypocrisy and deceit, and rise into nobleness of life. It is sweet to know that I am in fellowship with the truth, and that too in those persons whose charity 'worketh no ill' but is ambitious of all possible improvement. O I am thankful to God and to all those who are presenting to the view of men the practical results of salvation from sin. We thank you for the Report sent us by mail. It came in good time, and I think it is likely to work some self-clearing here. The 'Bible argument' is emphatically a new testament to me; and is the most scorching testimony against the root of all licentiousness that I have ever met with. By it I am brought back in my understanding to see the very point in our experience here, where false testimony and the fellowship of devils entered, and led us captive at their wills. I have endeavored in vain to see before; but I found I

had no sufficiency either to clear myself or even to see the nature of the spirit that bound me. You will doubtless perceive in these facts an excuse for large gratitude; and likewise an apology to those who fear to seek God in his people, for the entire confidence I now feel in the Free Church, its organization and principles. I am sure that its fellowship is the most powerful motive that can attract or impel me onward in personal improvement, and a direct means of access to Love or God. I cannot fully express my delight to find the Gospel of entire Salvation completely intelligible, and beautifully presentable to the understandings of seekers of pure unselfish love. How glorious to behold this precious treasure in earthen vessels, in which we can clearly see the excellence of the power of God operating upon the understanding, sustaining the spirit and bearing them over the sea of opposition and contempt for the last fifteen years.— They must allow us to admire their patient faith, and labors of love; since it is so clear that it is the power of God that has enabled them to accomplish so much amidst so great difficulties. The everlasting gratitude of all who come after them shall help to swell the joy of those faithful souls who have been co-workers together with God in bringing forth in form the elements of the Kingdom of God.

I perceive I have wandered somewhat from the object I had in view when I first set down to write; but I could not well avoid expressing my feelings as above, and thus become an endorser and follower of the truth. Occasionally I have a glimpse of the conflict before me; and when humanity is disposed to quail, how comforting the assurance that the victory is won, and is now brought nigh; so that I am no longer a pioneer in spiritual conflict, but can fall into the ranks, and just quietly fill the place adapted to my capacity. Dear brother I know you can appreciate my feelings on this subject, without my attempting further to analyze them.—

My companion also heartily coincides with me in the love of the truth, and wishes to be remembered to you and yours. And we pray you, be faithful to us in all things, which also we believe you will be.

Enclosed I send you five dollars, which you may place to my credit. I am not particular about accounts, only so far as this; I intend, as soon as expedient, fully to pay up, for all paper, ink and manual labor I have called for; and then I will talk about liberality perhaps; but shall not expect to diminish my indebtedness to the publishers of the gospel; for I well know that there is *nothing* which I possess, but what is theirs of right; and is devoted to their use when needed. Yet, this fact does not conflict with a reasonable, consistent manner of conducting the business of life; for the Gospel makes no man an idiot.

Yours in love, LOREN HOLISTER.

Schenectady, Feb. 15, 1850.

EDITOR OF THE CIRCULAR:—I wish you to send me your paper as usual. \* \* \* I am much pleased with the enterprising spirit of Bro. J. H. Noyes, his perseverance, untiring zeal, and success. He must be called of God and inspired, or he could not have walked upon the foaming billows of desertions, persecutions, opposition, bigotry, unbelief, and, as I doubt not, slanderous falsehoods, with which he has had to contend, and succeed so well to the admiration of the saints, and to the dismay and confusion of the unbelieving world.

You have my best wishes and prayers: that your present location will be a holy, peaceful, godly habitation, and that the members associated there may ever be a happy family—like a city set upon a hill, sending forth rays of heavenly light, which shall grow brighter, and shine more and more until the perfect day. My spirit is often with you. I think that my doctrine, my heart, my feelings, all harmonize with yours, regardless of the opposing atmosphere around me.

I hope and trust that God's gracious eye will ever guide your feet in the path of peace, harmony, and love—that you may realize the fulfillment of the innumerable blessings of the gospel of Christ, promised to the faithful.

ISAAC LEDYARD.

*Falling Waters, Va. Feb. 14, 1850.*

DEAR BR. NOYES:—At the time I was North, I promised to correspond regularly with the Association, but soon after my arrival home, I went into sufferings and trials of faith, unsurpassed in any former experience. So great were my trials, that for more than three months, I was entirely unfit to write to any one. There seemed to be a mighty crisis approaching; I sometimes feared lest I should sink into entire unbelief; God seemed to have forsaken me—I sought him but could not find him. Why God had thus abandoned me to the powers of darkness, seemed strange and unaccountable to me. But my case came ultimately to the most glorious crisis. I had long seen and contended for the privilege of internal communication with God, but in the time of great trials, I invariably fell back upon the old external method, and so I never succeeded in having the glorious fountain of inspiration struck within. But God, who knows how to manage our case best, refused to hear me this time in the external way; I had no way left but to find him through the channel of my heart, or sink into utter unbelief. After the most inexpressible sufferings, I at last perceived the purpose of God, to establish me in the practice of seeking him primarily through internal communication. I thank God for this discipline. Internal communication with God is like a feast to my soul. I shall, by the grace of God, never more let this glorious privilege slip. I desire to improve it to perfection. I find that I am weak or strong, in proportion to my communing with God in this way.

I will now speak of some other interesting experience. The morning I left

Oneida, I was caught in the rain and wet through, and after I was seated in the car, I was still exposed for twenty miles, by its being very leaky. My clothing was rather thin, and I suffered extremely from cold. I began to feel myself attacked by chills and cholera symptoms; and by the time I arrived at Albany, I was very sick. I took boat for New York, engaged a state-room, and went to bed immediately. I then tried the Theopathic system of faith, and was almost instantly restored to health and strength. My heart was so filled with gratitude to God for this manifestation to me, that the tears flowed down my cheeks upon the pillow. Indeed, my health this day is exceedingly good. I take no medicine but faith—I eat and drink in faith, and do all I do in faith. My hope extends to conquering death. I am under no obligation to the devil; if Christ can make more use of my dying, than my living and conquering death, I shall die; but I shall not die to please him that hath the power of death.

Whenever the Lord opens the way for me, I shall again visit the Association, and remain there sometime for my education. I am determined by the grace of God, to do all I can to co-operate with God in the setting up of his kingdom.

DANIEL LONG.

**Receipts from Feb. 21st.**

J. Phelps,	\$1.00	S. Spencer,	1.00
D. M. Hotchkiss,	1.00	L. Holister,	5.00
Mrs. Andrews,	1.00	P. Gilbert,	1.00
A. W. Desmuke,	1.00	L. Holden,	1.00
E. H. Cheock,	1.00.		

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