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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. 36.

[REPORTED FOR THE CIRCULAR.]

ATMOSPHERIC EVIL—SPIRITUAL ARMOR.

A good deal is said from time to time about the evils that surround and come upon us through *atmospheric influence*, and from contact with others. It may be well for us to weigh our liabilities in this respect, and study the nature of contagious spiritual action. We talk of the necessity of guarding ourselves against these evils, by cautious intercourse or entire withdrawal from society around us, to prevent a communication of the contagion with which it abounds. This is all very well in a transition state, in which faith is weak, and we need some degree of outward salvation as well as inward power. But after all, it will not do to content ourselves with such a weak state of spiritual health. We must not count ourselves to have apprehended salvation in Christ until we are able to live in any atmosphere that the powers of evil can produce, and not be oppressed by it, but oppress it. That is the ultimate state,—to be able to mingle with any society, and to any extent, and catch no disease from it. When we attain the fullness of life, and the radiating power which makes us

our own mediators, we shall not feel 'stuck up' and defiled by contact with evil, or, as a consequence, that hell has broke in upon us, and the heavens become brass over our heads.

It is a state of *weakness* which exposes us to these spiritual colds and diseases; and although we are not to blame for it, yet it is to be got rid of as soon as possible. The grace of God, indeed, goes to develop a keen sense of the good and evil in ourselves, and in society around us; and in this view it may be said to make us *delicate*, so that gross spirits and influences affect us more than they do coarser people. If this were all it does, our position would certainly require a great deal of care to be comfortable. A stage of salvation merely, in which we approach the refinement of heaven and at the same time are left open to the fire of hell, in such a world as this, would be, as to the present at least, a dispensation of torment and misery. But it is not necessary to stop at that stage. I believe, that with increased delicacy and refinement, a proper apprehension of Christ also gives us *strength, toughness*, and withal a *tightness and closeness* of spirit. Besides, we may constantly have a prevailing sense of good; the spirit is as

delicate in discerning good as evil, and more so; for the Christ-life shuts its eyes to evil, but is nimble and keen in detecting good.

As God is apparently calling us from our retirement, and enlarging our scope for action, and the prospect is that we shall be thrown more into contact with the world around us, it is high time to consider and see whether this complaint of suffering from evil spirits is not the natural consequence of want of faith, and to be regarded as a weakness. If we must have people around us converted before we can stand up, asking no favors of any body but Christ, what hope is there? I feel for myself, that if I am to be at the mercy of my chance society abroad, or even in the Association, I shall be dragged down; and what is true of me is true of all the rest. We must stand up and take Christ as a whole Savior, and have his spirit radiate through our whole life so that we can make all evil fall back before us.

The Christ-spirit will make you tight, buoyant and strong, able to prevail over evil, while at the same time it gives you the acute power of discerning between good and evil. The Christ-spirit gives strength of constitution,—a robust vitality that will make us like seamen.—A sailor cares not for the heat or cold; his life as it were protects itself; and all the outward elements that beat on it are as nothing to it. I know Christ can give us the hardness of the sailor, spiritually—his toughness of skin; for what is true of our bodies, is certainly true by analogy at least, of our souls. That is,—as our bodies are internally delicate in structure—a congeries of exceedingly nicely constituted, sensitive organs, and an almost infinite multiplicity of nerves, that are affected by every touch, yet on

the other hand, this whole mass is covered and encircled by a skin of not so sensitive nature. When the skin is in a healthy condition it can come in contact with hard substances, and endure heat and cold and not be seriously affected by them. And the skin is of different degrees of toughness, according to the constitution and habits of the person. Sometimes the skin is *diseased* seriously, and the person feels as though his nerves were all bare. In others of different habits it becomes hard and impervious. Now I understand the salvation of Christ to be a salvation which brings us the power and purity and vitality of Christ; and not only this, but with it the *security* and *preservation* of the whole by an outward enclosure like the skin. If I were called on for scripture in favor of this idea, I should appeal to Ephesians, where Paul says, 'Put on the whole armor of God;' and again, 'Take unto you the whole armor of God that ye may be able to stand in the evil day,' and so on. In old times, before men were acquainted with fire-arms, they wore iron armor which covered and protected the body, like the skin, from head to foot. When a person went into the army he put on his battle skin. So Paul exhorts believers to take the 'breast-plate of righteousness,' 'the shield of faith,' 'the helmet of salvation,' 'the sword of the spirit,' &c. This is highly figurative language, yet we shall find that there is serious meaning in it, and that we must find out a way to put on this battle skin, in which we can march into the devil's camp any where, and bear all that he can put upon us without receiving harm.

If you ask for examples of this kind of toughness, I shall first point you of course, to Christ. He lived his appoint-

ed time in the world, and was not cast down, or defiled, or made discouraged or to act foolish in any way. He mixed with all sorts of society,—ate with publicans and sinners. His disciples even, were not by any means free from barbarism; he was surrounded often by hundreds and even thousands full of a worldly spirit—persons who followed him for ‘the loaves and fishes,’ in a spirit of downright greediness;—and he was surrounded all the time by those who were constantly calling in question his righteousness; yet he stood high and clear above evil.

Paul is the most splendid example of the toughness of Christ that there is in heaven or earth. See how that man was knocked about. A great part of the time he had not even common-place society around him, but only that that was as good as dead. He was shipwrecked, beaten, and hustled about, and after he landed at Rome was chained to a soldier day and night, according to the Roman custom of securing prisoners. In this, and in every condition, he preached the gospel—fulfilled the word of God and prevailed over all his enemies. The spirit of Christ fought and conquered all the devils that beset him, from Illyricum to Jerusalem. He fought the good fight of faith and failed not. He was a splendid specimen of the toughness of Christ, and we must not be content with any less. Christ has the same invincible hardiness now as then; and he can give us the same power of resistance that he did to Paul.

Again, we shall find that the health of our bodies as well as of our souls is at the mercy of spiritual influences, if we are without the armor of salvation. I see no sort of prospect for the salvation of our bodies, in any way that assumes that we must keep clear of the devilish in-

fluences that create disease. I see no hope for such a salvation in the world as it is, on any other principle than that established by Christ;—‘They shall take up serpents and drink any deadly thing and it shall not hurt them.’ There is no hope in escaping from disease as a man would protect himself from cold, by covering himself with a cloak and staying in the house; for the devil is with great propriety called ‘the Prince of the power of the air;’ and his spirit is really in contact with us as completely and constantly as the air we breathe. We may see this in various ways: in the cooking of food, for instance, by unbelieving, wicked persons;—the poison from the evil spirit of the one who prepares it will be communicated to the food, and in certain states of the system will affect us. What a cause of contagion is here: we must constantly eat something which has passed under the manipulations of the devil’s magnetism, unless we go to some distant part of the globe and raise every thing that we use.

Again, the very atmosphere is charged with poison, go where you will, and that all the time. The mucous membrane, the inner skin of the body, is the part that takes cold; (when we have a cold, the nose, mouth and lungs, i. e. the whole of the mucous membrane, are inflamed.) Here is where the life of the body presents itself most intimately and constantly to atmospheric influences, whether good or evil. It is into that part that God breathed the breath of life. It is the part too from which Jesus Christ breathed the Holy Ghost upon his disciples. This sensitive tissue is exposed continually to the breath of hell. How are you going to be saved from this unless you can ‘take up serpents and drink deadly things’ without

harm? Still further, all the conversation that we hear, and all that addresses our various senses, comes to us charged with the magnetism of the devil.

Now what hope is there of life in the world on the principle of *running away* from evil? Our only hope lies in getting into such communication with Christ that his spirit will be 'in our bellies a fountain of living water,' and the current will be set going the other way—in being so full of the Holy Ghost that we can eat poisoned food and breathe infernal gas, and extract the good and put the poison back on to the devil. Then will our bodies, as well as our spirits, be like flames of fire to resist evil and purify the world. We must lead captivity captive, and get command of the exchanges, or else the devil will beat us. I know this can be done. There is salvation to this extent for us, of soul and body. There is a union with Christ which will create an atmosphere of love all around us. So the Lord shall be a wall of fire round about us and a glory in the midst.

Reporter's P. S. The truth here presented is an infallible prescription for the complete salvation of soul and body:—'To be applied internally, externally, and eternally.'

Hints on Writing.

[The following article is republished from the 4th volume of the *Perfectionist*—being the substance of a letter addressed to a young man who asked advice on the subject of writing. It is the best presentation of the philosophy of writing that we have seen; and those who are interested in the subject (as we think many are at this time) will do well to recur to it:]

The business of a good writer is twofold. In the first place he must learn to think; and secondly, he must learn the art of *expressing* his thoughts.—Both of these accomplishments can be attained by any man of common sense, with due pains-taking, just as well as

any other art. There is undoubtedly some difference of natural talent, but not so much as is generally supposed. Ingenuity is the great requisite; and it will work as great wonders in intellectual as in mechanical pursuits. In order to acquire the art of thinking, the heart must be waked up. That is the steam-engine which sets the machinery of the head in motion. Hence spiritual believers, men whose hearts have been touched by the fire of heaven, can hardly fail of thinking well. By the baptism of the Holy Ghost you have a better foundation of intellectual education than any college can give. Habitual reflection on spiritual subjects, with a due proportion of reading in the Bible, in history of the past, and the papers of the day, will in due time enrich you with a certain and abundant supply of thought. I advise you however to think (more than you probably have done hitherto) *with a view to publishing your thoughts*. Our ideas are apt to be but half formed, when we think for ourselves alone. If a man wishes to accustom himself to steady, effective thinking, he must come out into the sight of his fellow men, where his thoughts will be scrutinized.

The various plans of reform, the wants and prospects of the world, are the best subjects which we all may well be engaged upon; and which are constantly crowding themselves on our minds. Let us study them, not in a vexed and querulous spirit, but with the coolness and vigilant faithfulness of true philosophers.

The art of expressing thought, is much like the art of *landscape-drawing*. The object is not to manufacture thought by putting words together, but to *copy out* the thoughts previously existing in the mind. Good writing is like a good picture; a correct imitation of the forms and proportions, lights and shades, of the objects delineated. If you have good thoughts, learn to copy them out correctly, just as they exist in your mind, and you will be a good writer. The imi-

tative painter seeks to divest himself of the impressions which his judgment would suggest concerning the forms of the object before him, and gives himself up to that simple view of things which a child would take who had not learned to correct first impressions. This simplicity is essential to good imitation, and it is the true secret of good writing.— This is the reason for the fact which most persons are aware of, that first drafts are generally better than articles which have been long worked over. A rough sketch taken directly from nature, is more likely to be a good imitation than a picture which has been altered and mended and repainted half a dozen times. When you have got a bright idea, make it your object to give an *exact* copy of it, without caring much for the elegance of your language. The true elegance lies in the correctness of the imitation,—not in the elegance of the words. If you convey your first meaning, and your meaning is worth something, your writing will be effective. This shows why the writers of the Bible expressed themselves so beautifully.— They were most of them illiterate men; but they received noble thoughts from the Spirit of truth, and they were simple-minded enough to copy them out exactly. Indeed the baptism of the Spirit, inasmuch as it gives men simplicity, is as essential as life to writing or thinking. Correctness and elegance of mere language, is, I admit, of some secondary importance, and this is to be attained by practice; by closely examining and reflecting on the words and constructions which you employ; and by reading habitually good specimens of writing. This last means is I think quite important. I get much help from reading some of our best political editors, and the writers for the English Reviews. By the persevering use of such means you will soon acquire a taste and facility of expression which will be as sure as instinct.

I would encourage you to turn your attention to writing, because I am satisfied that the press is destined to super-

cede the pulpit in the government of the world; and if we can raise up an army of effective writers, we shall ere long get ahead of the clergy. Their profession was instituted before the art of printing was invented. It belongs to the old world; and the new world will discard it.

In addition to what I have said about the ways and means of good writing, I will suggest that you will find it necessary in this as well as other things, to watch and follow your *spiritual instincts*. My experience has taught me not to write *mechanically*—not to *force* myself into the work. There are times when I feel inspired, and then I write easily and satisfactorily. At other times I have no heart to it, and then I let it alone. This suggestion however should not hinder you from exerting yourself systematically and habitually. It will take time for you to learn to discriminate between spiritual instincts, and the suggestions of the flesh and the devil.

In following the leadings of the Spirit, we must not assume that all we may be called to do will seem easy and natural. If we were in a world of peace and holiness, it would be as easy and natural to follow the leadings of the Spirit, as it is for animals to obey their instincts. But in this world there are antagonist forces. God and the devil strive together in human nature. The Spirit of God may impel us to do that which the devil will be disposed greatly to resist our doing. In that case we shall feel, on the one hand, an instinctive desire, recurring again and again as often as it is frustrated or suppressed, to do the thing proposed; and, on the other, a counteracting aversion and sense of difficulty in the attempt to do it. We must not take for granted that this aversion and sense of difficulty is an index of the will of God that we should give up the attempt. Reverting to our primary and most rational instinct, we should attribute the force which counteracts it to the devil, and press forward with the more combative-

ness. I find frequent occasion to use this philosophy, in writing. The Spirit draws my attention to some deep and interesting subject. I see that it would be very useful to investigate it and bring it to the light. But on attempting to do this, I find myself perhaps immediately enveloped in darkness and confusion of mind. A heavy, stupid, resisting spirit seems to press on my brain. I have long since learned to give no heed to such influences, except to make them occasions of stirring up my zeal. "Forward," is the word; "if God points the way, all the devils in the universe shall not hinder me."

J. H. N.

Each Necessary to All.

In a band of music we have a combination of very different sounds. This illustrates the unity of the church of Christ. All persons cannot give the clear, full, and melodious tone of the flute, or the loud blast of the trumpet, fife, or bugle, or the sweet tones of the violin and Piano Forte, nor is it necessary. The more variety of sounds the better, as long as there is perfect harmony of sounds—all in concord with the pitch God has given the tune. Let us that are lovers of good music ask the Spirit of Truth to give us our lessons, that we may be able to join harmoniously with the Primitive church in their songs of praise to him that has loved us, and redeemed us with his own precious blood.

In 1 Cor., 12th chapter, we find an edifying thought. Paul says here, 'Much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble are necessary. God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: that there should be no schism in the body: but that the members should have the same care one for another.' If a man has five talents, God will require more of him than he will of the man that has but two, so that there is no room for envy by either. They will each have to give an account of every particle of capital

they received; and they will be blessed, not according to the amount of capital, but according to the use of the capital God gave them when he set them to do his business. Every one will find it out a rigid fact, that in the kingdom of God every man shall be rewarded according to his works. If we can but get our ambition aroused to be what we are made to be, and give a clear, full, and distinct sound, that will be acceptable to God; and what recommends us to him will recommend us to his people.

Every reader can see that the words of one syllable are as necessary to give the reading good sense as words of four and five syllables; so it will be with every one that counts himself as a weak member of Christ's church. The promise to us is, that 'the feeble among us shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God.' It is true, as we have been instructed, that to be content with the minimum is the only way to obtain the maximum; and to live happy is to have a sincere heart that says to God, 'the smallest favors gratefully received.'

I am much interested in the example the little honey bee gives every sincere Christ seeker. Its industry is worthy of imitation. It flies from flower to flower with a cheerfulness that bespeaks gratitude to its creator. It gives no indication of complaint against providence, for the distance it has to travel to obtain its honey, or the greatness or smallness of the flowers, their color or shape, or the distance they are apart. It gathers honey from every flower, no matter how they appear externally, it boldly reaches into the interior, and obtains good honey. Thus, like the bee we may obtain good out of every kind of suffering, trial, or circumstance. Though the outside shape of them may appear nothing but evil, yet if we will but reach into the interior of them, to where God is, we shall obtain good honey. The appearance of a flower does not hinder the bee from getting a supply, no more should it us.

We know that God says, 'all things shall work together for good to them that love him.' A sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice. So, much more, shall not any evil befall us without his notice or his care over us to turn the temptation to our best good. The very hairs of our head are all numbered by him that sees from the beginning to the end. If we are but feeble members, we know Christ says, 'The least in the kingdom of God is greater than John the Baptist,' and he was the greatest of prophets born of woman.

G. MALLORY.

CRITICISM.

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

CONSCIENCE SLAVERY.

BROTHER J—: Mrs. R. gave me some account of your spiritual difficulties, and asked me to write you something on the subject. I thought your case was in many respects like my own, formerly, and that I should be glad to offer you the help of my present deliverance, to assist you in effecting yours.

I suffered a good many years from a morbid conscience. It was the great tyrant and torment of my life. It worked in respect to eating, and in respect to all the little actions of my life. It was a continual questioning in me whether I was doing exactly right. It kept me continually answering its questions, and trying to justify myself against its accusations, even in respect to the commonest things. I was a perfect slave, and did nothing freely; I dared to do nothing without framing some answer in my mind to the torturing ingenuity of this questioning devil. It reduced me almost to insanity—where every word I spoke and even my involuntary breathing was subject to this ter-

rible court of inquiry within myself.

It is some years since I have been rising out of this bondage, but I think not till within the last year that I have come to a decisive judgment and expulsion of that spirit. I believe now that it is the essence of legality; it is a position of weakness and death—one which has no salvation in it, and whose only use is to lead us to a state where we shall despair of ourselves, and recklessly abandon ourselves to Christ to keep us. We cannot have both Christ and the law; we cannot have his salvation and justification and at the same time trust in this legal effort to do right ourselves. I see now plainly, that while this accusing conscience kept me at work all the time trying to make out my case, and to steer clear of its condemnation, yet when I succeeded, there was no life in my justification. I was in reality no better than I should have been if I had violated it; for it was my own righteousness that I sought, and my own condemnation that I dreaded—not God's.

It was one of the greatest steps I ever took, when I was driven to hate and reject this conscientious self-guidance. I believe, however, it is one of the strongest holds of the devil—it is the place where we cling to ourselves the longest—the last place where we see the horrible deformity of our own life. If you are trying to save yourself, and establish your own righteousness, by obeying the tyrannical dictates of your conscience in respect to this or the other outward thing, the sooner you are reduced to despair the better. It is because we have some confidence in *ourselves* that we allow this eternal nightmare of conscience to rule over our outward actions. But you will have to learn that your best efforts, and all your good-

ness in this line, are perfectly worthless and hopeless. I have had to repent a good deal more of my own righteousness than for any outbreking sin. When we get to that point of repentance, we are ready to cast ourselves without reserve on Christ: and 'what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh,' we find he can do. Salvation, I have found, consists in getting out of myself, renouncing all confidence and hope in myself, and simply recognizing my union with him.

Here is the true sphere for the action of conscience. God calls us, not to save ourselves, or to do some good thing, but to believe on Jesus Christ. This is the great work; and a true, God-fearing conscience, will rebuke first of all the counterfeit action which seeks to absorb our attention and distract our life in outward duty-doing. Thus you may, by taking a right, earnest view of things, awaken your true conscience against this devilish imposture, and break it up. Conscientiousness, like Pride and Fear, must be carried clear through into the light in order to be safe. If carried far enough these things will correct themselves. We shall be afraid to be fearful, too proud to be puffed up, and too conscientious to be legal. G. W. N.

THE FREE CHURCH CIRCULAR.

GEORGE W. NOYES, EDITOR.

ONEIDA RESERVE, JUNE 6, 1850.

☞ We have mailed to each subscriber a copy of the Tract lately issued by Mr. CRAGIN. It is stereotyped, so that we can supply any quantity that may be desired for circulation.

☞ A Power Press costing \$300, has been bought for this Office, and is now on its way from New York—the gift of some true hearted friends in that vicinity.

☞ As we saw some Irishmen engaged in setting up the poles for a telegraph line, the other day, we thought if they were Catholics, it must be a congenial occupation.

The fixtures to which the wires are attached, form a perfect *crucifix* about twenty feet high; and as you come upon a line of the telegraph it produces rather a singular effect to see this upright figure recurring at regular distances, until the line is lost in the perspective. In this way, crosses are set up once in a few rods from Burlington to New Orleans, and from Bangor to St. Louis. To Catholics this must be a millennium of the grace which they attach to their favorite symbol. There is something in it suggestive to us of the Kingdom of God. Meaningly or not, men are setting up everywhere the reminder of their guilt and their salvation. And the telegraph as a whole, is an appropriate outward type of the spiritual agency, which the true cross is introducing into the world."

A Conscientious Young Man.

Benjamin F. Cooley, a young man who fraternized for a while with some of our friends in Prescott, Mass., and afterwards expanded under La Roy Sunderland's manipulations into a mesmeric oracle in poor imitation of A. J. Davis, having lately been criticised and rejected by brethren from this place, and having lost the confidence of believers in Prescott, has avenged himself by republishing in pamphlet form that part of our First Annual Report which treats of the relations of the sexes in the kingdom of heaven, and is entitled the 'Bible Argument.' He introduces the document with the following brief notice:—

"The following Exposition, which has heretofore been held private, is now made public, for the following reason:—These principles of the so-called Perfectionists having been hid from the eye of the undersigned, until he was led to adopt their belief in part,—is the first great reason that actuates him to make public the following true copy of the so-called BIBLE ARGUMENT,—and believing this to be my solemn and religious duty, I subscribe myself an enemy to all such doctrines and Theories, yet a friend to all humanity.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN COOLEY.
Worcester, May 1850."

This introduction, occupying eight lines of the pamphlet, contains almost as many falsehoods as there are lines: 1. The statement that the 'Bible Argument' has

been held private is false. It has been in print and in circulation more than a year. Copies of it have been presented to the Governors of Vermont and New York, to the Editors of the Tribune, of the Home Journal, and the Rome Sentinel, to Professors Upham and Agassiz, to many of the most distinguished lawyers in Vermont and New York, and to every respectable man who has applied for it at Oneida. More than four hundred copies of it are in circulation from Maine to Wisconsin, and it has been published piece-meal in the Methodist and other papers. The discretion which we have used in circulating it has not been for the purpose of keeping it private, or restricting it to the limits of our own circle, but for the purpose of disposing of our edition as far as possible among decent and reflecting men. 2. The statement that the principles of this Association were hid from him, is a lie. The Bible Argument was read to him before it was printed, at the period of its first circulation in manuscript. 3. The statement that the alleged deception was the first great reason for his publishing, is a lie; for it is easy to see that he has no objection to deception on his own part, and it is fair to infer that malice, and not honesty, is his motive. 4. His subscription of himself as an 'enemy to all such doctrines and theories,' is an intended lie; for under the pretense of assenting to them, he actually perpetrated seduction, and is now operating only by an utterly dishonest concealment of his doings. 5. It is therefore self-evident that he lies in calling himself a 'friend to all humanity.'

So far as we have exercised choice and responsibility, this Argument has been accompanied by other matter which forms its appropriate introduction and commentary. Our opponents have now chosen to take it up in its most radical and difficult form, and they must digest it as they best can. We are satisfied that God and the Right will make a positive, straight forward profit out of this publication, and that now, as heretofore, the malicious devisers of injury will find they have 'soiled their souls in vain'. The Truth will take care of itself. On the whole, we think Cooley is doing us a good service without requiring thanks.

Community Common-places.

—We may consider attacks of disease as simply methods among others of the devil's invention, to divert our attention from Christ. The disease, whatever it may be, demands our whole attention; but if we can contrive to *disobey it in one thing*, do something which it forbids us for instance, we can weaken and discourage it, and commence a course which will finally rout it. This is a simple method of combatting disease; for every body can find out how to disobey it in some particular: and the work of disobedience once begun, it is down-hill work. To illustrate: a child becomes troublesome and disagreeable, we worry along with him a while, and do not know exactly how to get at the evil; but by and by something comes up which enables us to quarrel with him, and then we get a victory over the whole difficulty. Thus it is with disease. It makes no difference where we attack it; the thing to be done is to make an issue with it somewhere, and the quarrel will end in victory.

—We think that *God is near us* when we are happy—in the sunshine of his approbation; but he is also near us when we are criticised. We may always consider that God draws specially near to us in criticism; for he says, 'whom I love, I rebuke and chasten.'

—Little children are continually found fault with. It is 'don't do this,' 'do be still, you have done that wrong,' 'do this better.' from one day to another; and yet they bate nothing of their buoyant, cheerful activity; it does not make a breach between them and their parents, and they do not say they will never try again. They never imagine they know every thing—they expect to be continually checked and corrected; but they act freely, and receive correction with simplicity. They know their parents love them, and they have no self-conceit. We must all be converted, and become like little children in this respect.

—If we can only look back to a time when we know we *submitted to God*, we need no more assurance of our salvation. The devil may lose his captives, because there is a stronger than he; but if we have once yielded ourselves to God, we can never get away from him, we are his servants forever.

Daily Bread.

In my late experience I have often recurred to a remark in some past Home Talk—that ‘unbelief regards God as a capricious being, who once in a while, when he is in a good humor, will give us something, but we must not expect *regular supplies*.’ My heart has craved *regular supplies*, and this prayer, ‘give us this day our daily bread,’ has assumed an indescribable beauty. Peter’s exhortation—‘as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby,’ points me to the same simplicity of prayer. I want spiritual nourishment suitable to my capacity from one day to another—*regularly*, not by fits; and I believe that God is a tender parent, who will not deny my daily wants. ‘He will give to every one their portion of meat in due season.’ This never ceasing prayer for the Holy Spirit commends itself to me as the natural breath of our spirit’s respiration—the air of the Kingdom of God—and I respond with all my heart to the saying of Christ, ‘Men ought *always* to pray, and *not to faint*. H.

The Age of Spiritualism.

Since the mention of the Stratford ‘Mysteries’ in the last Circular, our comrade, S. R. LEONARD, has visited Stratford, and sends us the following interesting report of his observations:

Brooklyn, L. I., May 18, 1850.

DEAR EDITOR:—For the last week our family here have been interesting themselves somewhat in the ‘Stratford Rappings.’ Some ten days ago, two of our company sailed up the Sound, and visited the residence of Rev. Dr. Phelps, where these mysterious rappings occur. Their report was substantially the same as has appeared in the public papers; and they returned home satisfied that the

family are respectable, intelligent, and conscientious—that they are the victims, and not the abettors of these supernatural disturbances, and their testimony concerning the things which have happened entirely reliable.

During the present week Mr. Cragin and myself have visited Stratford for the purpose of further exploring these mysteries; and it will perhaps interest the readers of the Circular to briefly lay before them the results of our observations. I must be allowed to say here, however, that I had no thoughts of reporting to the public at the time of my visit to Stratford, (it having been suggested to me since my return,) and consequently do not pretend to much minuteness of detail in whatever I may relate. And it may be further premised that I am not writing to convince skeptics, but simply to relate my own observations and convictions,—only expecting for them an appreciation so far as they commend themselves to the candor and common sense of your reflecting readers, as indications of the ‘Age of Spiritualism.’

The communications of the spirits at Stratford, unlike those at Rochester, appear to be confined to the family in which they transpire. They profess to have a special mission to this family, and refuse to communicate with any others. And, as their principal communications relate to private interests, it belongs to some one other than myself to lay them before the public; but I may say this much—that they display an acquaintance with their subject which convinces those who are concerned in their revelations, of their intelligence.

Many of their *doings*, however, are of a more public nature than their communications, and are more or less mani-

fest to any one who may visit the house. At the time we were present, a lady (a connection of the family) from Philadelphia was visiting there, and, being an unbeliever in the reported manifestations, had come expressly to explode the whole thing, and thus redeem the reputation of her relatives in the circle where she resided. But, in spite of her previous persuasions, a week's residence in the house had completely exploded her skepticism, and at the time we speak of she appeared to be the special object of annoyance by these invisible agencies. Shortly after her arrival her dresses were stolen from her room and secreted, some in one place and some in another, and after she had collected them again and was endeavoring to lock them up in a trunk, the key was jerked from her hand by an unseen power. After this occurrence it was communicated to the family by the usual 'rappings' that the key would be returned at a certain specified time. At the hour appointed the key came suddenly flying across the room, striking the person of Mrs. P——; but whence it came was known only to the subtle agency that abducted it. At other times this lady's dresses would be taken from a locked wardrobe, and after she had searched for them in vain, would be replaced. On Sunday morning, the 12th inst., Mr. S——, a resident of the town and teacher of the high school, requested that the two keys (of the room and the wardrobe attached to it) might be placed in his possession, and he would be responsible for the quietness of their contents. He took the keys, being assured by the undoubted word of the family that there was not a duplicate of them in the house, locked the doors himself, and was absent during the day. On returning at night, the contents of

the wardrobe were missing, and, if I recollect aright, the doors were unlocked.

Shortly after our own arrival, as we were conversing with Mr. Phelps in the parlor, a sudden racket from the adjoining room alarmed our ears, and as the occupants of it quickly opened the door, we discovered chairs lying about the floor in confusion, a bureau drawer had leaped from its case to the centre of the room, and also the doctor's cane, which he had a few minutes before laid up in its usual resting place. An hour or two after this, the lady already alluded to, while in a room up stairs, in which two or three children were sitting on the floor quietly playing, was alarmed by the sudden throwing in all directions of various loose articles about the apartment. Little books and large commentaries would fly from the library, and divers things from other quarters of the room. This was continued, and repeated as fast as she replaced an article, until, becoming frightened, she sent the children out, when the commotion ceased. And perhaps it would be well to say in this connection that one of these children, a lad of about 11 years of age, and his sister, a young lady of 16, appear in some way to be connected with these supernatural manifestations. Though their presence is not necessary absolutely, (as all the strange phenomena occur when they are absent, and even miles from home,) yet the special manifestations are more frequently in the vicinity of their persons than any where else. It is in this young lady's room, and on the door of her room, where loud knockings as with an axe are made in the night; and this is the boy who a number of times has literally had the clothes on his person torn into shreds suddenly, in the presence of the

family and others who might happen to be in. These two persons are clearly *impressible* characters, and, the young lady especially, amiable; and whatever agency they may have in the case, are undoubtedly innocent of any voluntary connection with this witchcraft.

After the family had dined, the day we were there, and the servants had commenced removing the plate from the table, the latter began to move, and was increasing to a violent shuffle, when it was stopped only by the united strength of some half dozen persons. The same power, with the evident intention of throwing the things from the table, was again manifested at tea-time, and was again met and resisted by physical strength. The silver service, such as forks and spoons, have a number of times, while on the table, been bent into ludicrous shapes, and after being removed have been straightened again by the same agency. This thing occurred while our friends were there two weeks ago, and has taken place several times since. Mrs. Phelps informs us they were once straightened while she was sitting at the table. The last time these were bent, the family and some visitors attempted to straighten them: the result is, the task is imperfectly accomplished. It is nothing unusual for a shovel or poker, and other loose articles, to suddenly leave their places and leap across the room through open doors and closed windows. Many panes of glass in different parts of the house have been broken in this way.

The day previous to our visit, the doctor had written a letter to Philadelphia, relating to a matter in which the 'spirits' profess to be interested.— After finishing, and before mailing it, he

left home for a short time, and in his absence it was purloined and destroyed by these invisibles, who communicated the fact to the family by 'rapping,' informing them as their reason for doing so, of a certain clause in the letter to which they objected. Mr. P. was asked on his return, if he had written the letter, with the clause alluded to, and he replied affirmatively. The next day another letter was purloined by these intermeddling sprites, and afterwards returned with the words 'safe and sound' written on it, in a hand-writing unknown to the family.

It would make my story too long to continue these descriptions much further; but I must not refrain from noticing a pageant, so fantastic and solemn, as to produce in us the simultaneous sensations of levity and awe. The following extract from the N. Y. Tribune of the 24th ultimo, well describes the phenomenon, and is inserted here in the place of a paragraph of my own:—

"Various rooms were fixed up with great ingenuity to represent funerals, and pageants similar to Roman Catholic performances. There were several human figures, mostly serious, but some very grotesque, in appearance and posture. These were formed out of whatever came to hand best fitted for the purpose. It was curious to see how every wardrobe and trunk and lurking place in the house was ransacked for materials. The neck of one of the female figures, kneeling at the foot of the bed, in a chamber, her arms crossed, head bowed, and an open Bible before her, was formed of the leather top of a carpet bag, rolled up. There were four other figures, one on each bedpost; a flying figure, with a parasol, was pinned to one of the curtains of a window. In rooms, closets, everywhere, those figures were stumbled upon. The great wonder then was, the sculptural beauty and fullness of their outline, their number, and the incredibly short time in which they were reproduced after being pulled all to pieces, and the simultaneousness of their appearance. As fast as they could be destroyed in one room, they would reappear in another. A

taste and effect was shown in their arrangement which it would ordinarily take hours to produce."

I introduce this extract the more readily, as it very naturally savored, before our visit to Stratford, of exaggeration, but after our own personal observations commended itself to us as substantially true.

On entering the parlor chamber in company with other friends, we beheld three of these figures—two of them resting upon chairs in a kneeling posture and inclining forward in the attitude of silent prayer, and one sitting on the floor leaning against the corners of the room. (And we have to confess here, dear editor, to a slight disturbance of our nerves, as we found ourselves in the presence of these august yet supremely ridiculous creations of intelligent and unknown agents.) One of these wore a gingham dress belonging to the Philadelphia lady, a mourning hat, covered with a black veil, and mounted by a blue feather. They had been formed within two hours, as they were not in the room at five o'clock, and it being only seven o'clock when we visited them. As is suggested in the above quotation, we were astonished at their sculpture and fullness of outline from head to feet, and the complete naturalness of their position as imitations of live persons. Mr. C. and myself assisted in taking them to pieces; and while we found complete symmetry of form, and tasty arrangement on the outside, inwardly they were stuffed with a variety of articles, wadded together in chaotic confusion. I believe there have been thirteen of these figures in a room at a time.

In the evening we were witnesses to the mode of communication between the spirits and the family, by means of

the alphabet and rapping; but as nothing very remarkable occurred, I will now only take space to say that we heard enough to persuade us there were veritable raps perpetrated in answer to questions, by some agency other than that of the company present.

I have not given quite so full a report as I desired, but its length already admonishes me that I must abruptly close my narrative, and give room for a few concluding remarks that suggest themselves.*

1. According to their own representations, these Stratford spirits are two, and their mission relates to an extensive fraud they committed or were accessories to when in the body; and while one of them is endeavoring to make restitution, and relieve his conscience by enlightening those whose interests are involved, the other is as zealously interested in frustrating the plans of his partner, and appears to be the wicked spirit that causes the mischief at Stratford. This development contradicts the revelation from Lorenzo Dow, as reported in the Circular of Jan. 28, that 'Hell is man's own body, and when he escapes from that he escapes from bondage;' and also indicates that the *judgment* which we find ourselves living in is pressing upon the spirits in Hades, subjecting them to a historical criticism of their past lives.

2. We have been educated to look upon our Puritan forefathers as bigoted

*As I have not attempted in this sketch to repeat what others have already reported, by noticing the origin or narrating the history thus far of these mysteries, I would refer such of your readers as desire fuller information concerning them, to the testimony of disinterested witnesses of what they have seen and heard, as reported in the New York Weekly Sun of the 27th April and its succeeding No., and the Daily Tribune of the 24th and 26th April.

and superstitious in their zealous persecution of witches. But these latter-day transactions tend to redeem their characters from this charge, and lead us to reverence the Bible theory of witches and supernatural interference of both good and evil agencies.

3. We may recognize in the skepticism that exists in relation to these 'mysterious rappings,' the incredulity and stubbornness of unbelief. People have been in the habit of arguing against the 'age of miracles' because they could see no supernatural manifestations; and now that they actually happen before their eyes, they refuse to believe, 'because the age of miracles is past.' Is not this a commentary on the sagacity of Christ's saying--'If ye believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will ye believe though one should rise from the dead?'

4. We wish decidedly to confess our own convictions of the verity of the mysterious rappings and other manifestations. Without pretending to reverence them as of divine authority, they manifestly indicate that the veil between this world and Hades is growing thin, and that UNBELIEF in the supernatural will continue to be 'rapped' till it is forced to surrender.

In conclusion, permit me in a word to express our grateful appreciation of the generous hospitality extended to us by Mr. Phelps and family. The genuine courtesy and kindness which met us on every hand betokened a refinement and education of the moral and social feelings, the cultivation of which we would commend to those who can distrust their integrity or suspect them of collusion as the easiest way of accounting for mysteries which they cannot fathom.

Yours &c., S. R. L.

CORRESPONDENCE.

As a matter of interest to our readers, we publish the following letter to Mr. CRAIG, acknowledging the receipt of a package of books:

Galveston, Texas, May 5, 1850.

DEAR BROTHER:—Your invaluable favor has safely arrived, much to my gratification; for though we have lived twelve years in this wild, benighted, and slaveholding region, yet I have not lost my first love; and though I may have made but small advances, or none at all, I still acknowledge the care and kindness of God; and your favor brought a refreshing like a shower on parched ground; for which God be praised.—'The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof;' and you, brother Cragin, have acted like a good and faithful steward, whom I know God will and does reward accordingly; and many more besides myself will rejoice through your favor. My wife, who estimates the value of things in dollars and cents, says to me, your present is worth \$50; for she reads the publications with pleasure, and is very anxious to visit you and the brethren, though she is a Methodist, but not much in bondage to them. * * *

Brother Cragin, I wish to make you a proposition, which I hope you will lay hold on. At all events, give us in Texas a fair and candid hearing; and I have no doubt you will. A few days since, I was talking with A. W. D—, saying what I would give to your Community if a part of them would come to this country. In answer to my remarks, he said, Tell them for me, that I will give them 1000 acres of good land, with a good water-power, in a healthy portion of Texas. He says, 'I will deed it to the Community, or their representatives, forever, if they will come to this country.' Much more could be said, but let this suffice now. I wish you would send some person here in whom you have confidence, and examine this question; then you can decide accordingly. D. is not counted wealthy, according as

the term wealthy is understood in this country; but he owns several thousand acres of land. He has a good plantation where he lives, and a number of slaves, and I believe treats them kindly. The subject of slavery I think is little understood at the North. Now D— will do what he has proposed, I think, and many more, I have reason to believe, would come into the measure. I think when you have thoroughly examined the question, you will find it both your pleasure and your duty, not to hide your light under a bushel, but to aid in extending God's light in Texas. You must judge of this matter; but if you should not come, I fear God will not prosper you in Oneida. He only knows. I judge no man.

I think that God has granted to this country blessings that New York and the North know not of; I mean in soil and climate. I know that he has blessed me in a peculiar manner, beyond my expectations. I know that I am not looking after money; but I desire to be useful as a steward in God's household. In this I am prospered; for I am able this year to build on one and two year's credit, \$20,000 worth of sugar mills. I would like to say much more about God's dealings with me, but I must hold up; I can only say now, come and see, and judge.

I did not discover until now that your letter was dated at Brooklyn, N. Y. I shall therefore direct this to that place. I shipped on board the bark Montauk, a barrel of syrup to you, directed to the care of J. H. Brower & Co., New York, and if you wish, you can take charge of it in New York when it arrives, and dispose of it as you think best; and when you have received it, I wish you would answer this letter as fully as you can afford to. If you can bear the burden, I should like to correspond with you as often as would be convenient to you. I think I can send you some subscribers to the Free Church Circular, and shall do so as often as I can. * *

I remain &c., HIRAM CLOSE.

[We may say in reference to the foregoing, that our brother's generosity is warmly estimated by the Community. The invitation repeated in this letter is under consideration, as he will learn from Mr. Cragin's private reply.]

[Mr. DE LATRE, the writer of the following, will be remembered as a former correspondent, whose letter of inquiry was published in the 3d No. of the Circular. He visited us soon after that correspondence:]

Drummondville, Canada West,
May 30, 1850. }

MY DEAR M—: When I left you in Feb., I suppose that neither you nor I thought it would be quite three months before I should write to you. Such, however, has been the fact; and I can give no other reason for it than this:—that knowing how much you had at heart the welfare of our community here, and wishing to give you some account of it, in relation to the new views introduced through our acquaintance with your Association and its publications, I postponed doing so from time to time, hoping that things would soon settle down so as to enable me to see what our position was likely to be. I can now give you some idea of how we stand. I knew from the first that the spirit of this community would have to undergo a complete revolution—a change from the 'love of life,' which had been too successfully instilled into them, to the true martyr spirit, so well treated of in the Berean.—(Chapter on 'Love of Life.') When, therefore, your works were not merely read, but brought to bear upon their actual experience, there arose no small stir, which continued for some weeks in the shape of discussion, (already too rife,)—resulting in the withdrawal of some of our members—one or two having been too effectually magnetised by our former leader, and others finding the new school too practical. On the whole, though portions of your works are in high repute, others are in high disgrace—in one instance Mr. N. having been charged even with imputing sin to Christ.

Thus, though shaken and mutilated, our little body still holds together; but no longer on a foundation of sand. We now form a nucleus which, I may say, is in perfect sympathy with yourselves. We have had to storm it in order to attain to this; for I at once proclaimed my entire identity with the Church at Oneida, and told them that I rejoiced in saying, that 'your God was my God, and your people my people.' Your standard has been planted here, and blessed are those who have rallied around it. We thank God for having brought about a union between us, and especially that he ever put it into my heart to visit you personally. I feel it a high privilege to have made your acquaintance; and I value your good opinion as I have never valued that of the world.

We always hail the appearance of your Circular. Some portions of it are sure to be read at our meetings, and occasionally a chapter in the Berean, with Bible at hand to be referred to after the manner of true Bereans; and I can truly say that these meetings are usually most edifying to us; for they are now attended solely by those of one mind.

Some remarks contained in a recent No. of the Circular we found very useful. They formed the substance of a reply to applications for admission to the Association. I was prepared for the suggestions contained in that reply: to the effect that believers must expect to continue scattered at such a moment as the present, so that their lights may shine at all points for the sake of those who are still benighted. That is the noble martyr spirit. However, unions, I imagine, must of necessity be formed from time to time for the purpose of carrying out external measures, and of manifesting the internal unity of the Church. We have no present prospect of forming one here. On this point we should like to hear more from you, though we are fully disposed to wait God's time.

I feel it an honor to be employed, however humbly, in establishing the

kingdom of God on earth; and I am ready to co-operate with you in any way your more perfect experience may direct. At the same time we do not forget to attend to home qualifications.

* * * * *

I am your attached brother,

R. S. DE LATRE.

As an item of gossip we may mention that for some months past the Community have been engaged in the freighting business on the North River. Their Sloop, the Rebecca Ford, has thus far had a very successful season, commanded by A. C. SMITH, her original owner, and manned by a crew of our people. The Brooklyn friends are at present a good deal interested in the art of navigation, and at the prospect that is opening to us in the line of Marine enterprise.

Give! Give!

BY GEORGE H. CALVERT.

The Sun gives ever; so the Earth,
What it can give, so much 'tis worth.

The Ocean gives in many ways,—
Gives paths, gives fishes, rivers, bays.
So, too, the Air, it gives us breath;
When it stops giving, comes in Death.

Give, give, be always giving;
Who gives not is not living.

The more you give,
The more you live.

God's love hath in us wealth upheaped;
Only by giving is it reaped.

The body withers, and the mind,
If pent in by a selfish rind.

Give strength, give thought, give deeds,
Give love, give tears, and give thyself.

Give, give, be always giving;
Who gives not is not living.

The more we give
The more we live.

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

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