

THE
FREE CHURCH CIRCULAR.

—30—
The Truth shall make you Free.--John 8: 32.
—30—

VOL. IV.]

ONEIDA RESERVE, MARCH 6, 1851.

[NO. 3.]

Home-Talk by J. H. N.—No. 54.

[REPORTED FOR THE CIRCULAR, FEB. 13, 1851.]

EXCITEMENT AND INFLUX.

This is a subject on which a book might be written. I cannot begin to do justice to it in one discourse; but I will endeavor to give some hints this evening, by way of introduction. Let us consider the connection between the exercise of our various passions and susceptibilities, and the spiritual operations we are subject to; that is, the connection between *excitement* and the *influx of spirit*. The fact is certain, that any susceptibility when excited by some appropriate object, either in the way of desire or enjoyment, becomes the inlet of spiritual influence.—Take a notable example from the New Testament, in the case of the Lord's supper. There a proper action of alimentiveness—the excitement of it in a right state of mind—became the inlet of life and salvation. A wrong excitement of the same susceptibility, in connection with the same ordinance, became the inlet of weakness and death. We know by every-day experience, that when some affection is touched, some circumstances excite it in a bad way, and the operation is not suppressed at once, it lets in a flood of evil influences, often leading along

into a protracted, bad experience. We find a distinct connection between what seemed a transitory and trivial excitement, and a long experience of spiritual distress. Then again, it often happens when we are in a depressed state, and feel oppressed by spiritual influences of an evil kind upon us, if only a thought is started which excites the life in a healthy, genial way, the excitement draws upon us a good, happy, genial influence from Christ, that fills the atmosphere around us, and gives us relief and happiness. So the fact is manifest that there is an important connection between excitement and influx, and one we ought to understand. We will study it, at least, and get at what truth we can.

Let us, in the first place, try to represent the idea to ourselves by some illustrations and analogies.

Electricity is an obvious symbol, I should say, of the operation we are talking about. Electricity is generated* by rubbing together glass and silk, or something of that kind. A glass cylinder by turning chafes against a silk cushion: and that excitement if you please to call it, that chafing, draws the electricity of the atmosphere into the glass; and from the glass it passes by wires to whatever purposes it is to be applied; and a perpetual

stream of electricity is generated by that chafing. This is a fair representation of what we see and know takes place in our experience. Our life, in its various forms of susceptibility, is rubbed upon by objects of enjoyment, or by incidents that take place—by reading, by thought, conversation, by every thing that affects our different passions. It is chafed upon, excitement takes place, and electricity is generated by the excitement. The analogy fails in this respect, that all the excitement used in the electrical process generates only one kind of electricity. There is a far more extensive field of experiment in our vital natures; and different kinds of excitement generate different kinds of electricity. In the vital department, excitement produced by a certain combination of circumstances—a certain presentation of ideas, or exciting influences—will draw upon us, and through us pass to others, and fill and charge the whole atmosphere around us with the devil—headache—diseased spirit—and uncomfortable sensations of all kinds. On the other hand, a truthful excitement, one produced by the presentation of truth, or by beautiful action of any kind, will generate a good spirit;—which will circulate, and vent itself into the atmosphere around—and expel and drive out evil influences.

Without going into the minute subdivisions, which may be supposed to exist, it is plain there are two kinds of spiritual electricity, the divine and diabolical. These are the most important, and include all others—the great generic division, which deserves our first attention.

The electrical machine is an instance where excitement is produced by *chafing*. The galvanic apparatus is an instance of similar excitement, produced by more

quiet, stationary influences, without any *chafing*, by proper arrangement of alternate metals and a fluid; and these processes I suppose might be taken as illustrating different methods of generating the two kinds of electricity in ourselves. As in the case of the electrical machine, a positive, active excitement may be concerned in the drawing of divine or diabolical influences; or on the other hand, our affections and passions—the different departments of our nature—may be so arranged, as in the galvanic apparatus, that without any excitement, they will all the time be generating divine or diabolical electricity. I do not mean here by generating, to really *create*, but to *draw* and circulate. There is no real creation of electricity in the electrical or galvanic process; it simply attracts electricity from the atmosphere, concentrates and distributes it. I do not understand that we actually generate spirit—except so far as we are ourselves growing persons; so far, there is an increase and addition of spirit;—but, in the case I am describing, we become mediators between ourselves and society around us, and spiritual principalities that are divine or diabolical.

Now if we attempt to inquire into the why and wherefore—the *modus operandi*, of electricity and galvanism—we shall find ourselves in deep matter; *why* the chafing sets in motion the latent electricity, is a deep inquiry. Poe, in his philosophical flirtation, undertook to give a reason. His theory was something like this, I believe: that the divine spirit, by a natural and vehement choice, pervades every thing minutely; and that when any particles of matter are brought so near together that they threaten to coalesce, so as to exclude the pervading of the divine spirit, it brings on a reaction against

it; there the divine spirit flames and blazes to maintain itself in its pervading omnipresence. Electricity is the flow of that pervading spirit, concentrating at a particular point to prevent the coalescence of some particles of matter.—However, I refer to this only as an ingenious theory about things, which it will do us no harm to exercise our thoughts upon.

Returning now to the spiritual field of operations, we find ourselves in the same depth and difficulty, in the attempt to inquire *why* the excitement of our susceptibilities brings on influxes of spirit. Well, you say it is *sympathy*;—and now do you understand it any better than before?—How do *sympathies* work? I can conceive of a way to expound sympathy, which is some approximation to the truth at least, and will give you my idea.

I conceive of life in a state of non-excitement, for example, like a hat—a fur hat—with the fur all smoothed down, compact, solid, resting upon itself; and life in a state of excitement, like that hat with the fur all ruffed up—its fibres thrown out in every direction. Well, life with its fibres standing out like the fur of a hat, shooting itself forth in all directions toward the objects that excite it, is a more tangible thing, more accessible and open to the spiritual influences that surround it, than when smoothed down and compact. Is not that the change that takes place by excitement? Now it is a manifest fact that life radiates. But what is radiation? If you hold your hand, for instance, near to mine, you feel the radiation of its warmth. Now I want to know whether the heat you feel is not actually connected with the life of my hand, as the fur is with the hat?—whether that heat is not a chronic excitement of my life, produced by the

circulation of the blood, and a fair sample of all excitement? All life radiates its own nature;—and the radiation that surrounds life when excited, is connected with it as the fur is with the hat: and when the life is not excited, that fur rests on itself. When the life is excited it rises up, throws itself out in all directions—radiates. If that is the fact in reference to life, we see a reason for increased communion, increased influx, when it is excited. Excitement puts life in a more extended, accessible state.

We may still go back and inquire what it is that raises the fur? Let us try another illustration. Here is a violin or a piano, with its strings at rest, and it makes no impression on our senses, has no communication, more than other substances, with the atmosphere. But strike the strings, put them in vibration, and immediately the instrument is in special communication with the whole atmosphere around, and its vibrations affect sensation in a large circle. A little excitement of the strings, produces an extensive vibration; and that vibration acts on the nerves, and produces a corresponding vibration in the sensation of all within its sphere. Suppose our passions are like these strings. (We are at work now, not on the philosophy of the matter, but by way of illustration—to help ourselves conceive of the processes of the daily phenomena we see.) Suppose a person's passions have been cultivated falsely—his amateness, self-esteem, combativeness, or any other passion, has been cultivated in a false way—and has come into chronic communication with an evil spirit. Leaving the idea of place, locality, out of the account, we conceive that evil spirits are present at all times, though we are not always seriously affected by them; but

let some circumstance strike that string which is in communication with a devilish spirit, and it produces a vibration, which every body around can perceive—a devilish discord. Persons may, by a bad excitement of themselves, produce a horrible vibration in the whole atmosphere around, and affect every body in their spiritual presence. The same illustration may be used for the other side of the matter; a susceptibility, struck by some pure and truthful influence, can set going vibrations that shall charm and happy a great circle of surrounding spirits.

With these preliminary observations, we come to the point I have had in my eye from the beginning. The text which I really intended to discourse upon, was Paul's exhortation to Timothy—'Stir up the gift of God that is in thee'—or the idea of the power of *self-excitement*, as connected with *spiritual influx*. In Timothy's case, Paul had laid hands upon him, and the Holy Ghost had come upon him, and remained upon him; and Paul tells him to *stir it up*. What does he mean? A gross antinomian view of spiritual influx would exclude all stirring up; it would say, 'If you have got the Holy Ghost, it will flow; you have nothing to do, only to wait and let it act in you.' But Paul says, *stir it up*; stir up the gift of God—evidently recognizing the philosophy that excitement of ourselves, in our individual faculties and susceptibilities, does act upon the spiritual atmosphere we are connected with. It was as much as to say to Timothy, 'Excite yourself in that way which will cause the spirit that is upon you to vibrate; strike the strings—turn the machine. By the laying on of my hands, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, you are in an atmosphere of life and health and edification; well, turn the machine, and chafe, and set the currents going.'

This is a philosophical truth, and very important truth—that we can excite ourselves aright, and in connection with the Holy Ghost—so that the Holy Ghost, will concentrate upon us, and flow from us like electricity. Let us think over some ways in which self-excitement may be brought to bear. For instance, I want to be thankful to God; I know I ought to be; I want to be in a good state, which will attract the communication of heaven, and diffuse a good atmosphere around me. The antinomians would say, I must submit myself to God, and let him make me thankful; but Paul's philosophy is, that the spirit of thankfulness is upon us, and around us, like electricity in the atmosphere; and it only needs to be drawn out, and set in motion, by proper exercise on our part, to make it a matter of consciousness to us.—Accordingly I sit down and rehearse to myself the most notable reasons I have for thankfulness, in order to excite in myself the feeling of gratitude toward God—not in a dry, legal way, but *in faith*; believing that I shall generate this current—stir up this spirit that I want. The difference between faith and legality is, that under a spirit of legality, we do good works with the idea that the value is *in them*; in a spirit of faith, we have no idea of value in the works themselves, but in their producing the influx of a good spirit. Good works, to a man of faith, are *ordinances* through which the Holy Spirit flows in and blesses him; to the legalist, acts are good in themselves—their value terminates in themselves. We can then, in perfect consistency with true spiritual principles, diligently set ourselves to excite the feeling of gratitude; and expect the influx of God's spirit upon us, in that excitement of ourselves.

Again, suppose that I have been foolish, have taken in evil spirits, and induced a bad, chronic habit of mind and spirit, and I want repentance. The antinomian way of meeting the matter would be to wait till God gives me repentance. But this philosophy teaches us to attend to *our* part of the business—to faithfully turn the machine—to set before ourselves those things which are calculated to make us loathe deceit, discontent, evil passions of every kind; and do it in faith, expecting to draw upon us the spirit of repentance. By this means we make our fibres more accessible, so that the spirit of repentance finds our life open and enters into it.

Suppose a person that is seeking repentance, finds that one quality of repentance is indignation—revenge—a vehement action of life against evil: that in order to perfect repentance, it is necessary for him to become angry with sin and the devil—that a spirit of godly indignation should be excited in order to separate him from evil, and open the chasm of hell between him and his sins. Here again he must turn the machine—stir himself up—address his combativeness with all the considerations that a godly view of the matter presents; and give himself freedom to get angry.—People often do get angry by self-excitement in this way. Nothing is more common than for people to inflame their passions, and get themselves in a perfect foam of rage, by voluntary meditation: turning things over in their own thoughts, chafing and exciting their combativeness. Well, we may excite ourselves against sin—against evil in ourselves—in the same way.

The fact that there is this connection between excitement and influx, and the fact that we are capable of self-excitement that shall draw upon us the influences of good and evil spirits, implies also the converse fact, that we can shut

off influx when we choose, either of good or evil, by stopping excitement. We can put our hand on the string and stop its vibration—take off the crank of the cylinder, stop the revolution and chafing, and so stop the current of electricity. We have a great deal more free will in this way than the antinomian theory allows. It is not true, when we are touched and excited by some circumstance, that we are obliged to go on revolving and chafing, and generating great volumes of electricity, disembodying hell itself into the atmosphere around us. We can stop the machine, and so stop the current.

With this philosophy of the matter, as we increase in wisdom, we shall be able to get command of the thing, so as not to be exposed to the influx of oppressive and distressing spirits. We shall be able to teach ourselves and others simple methods of resisting and excluding devilish spirits, and simple methods of inviting and attracting good; so as to keep good spirits vibrating all the time in our consciousness and sensations. And I should say in classifying characters, that the most reliable men and women—the most valuable as spiritual persons—are those who have practised the power of self-excitement most—who know how to stir up the gift that is in them—who are not dependent on the motion of things around them, but know how to stir themselves up to good under any circumstances.

We should set ourselves to producing a right excitement—one that harmonizes with the heavenly spirit—not to be praised for doing a good work, but to draw heaven's spirit into us, and make music with it, and give it circulation.

The truth is, when you have an edifying spirit, the principal value is not in the good you do to persons around you, but because it vibrates in heaven; and pleases Christ. Paul was a sweet savor *unto God*, in the word of truth he preached, whether its effect was life or death to those who heard his voice—it vibrated musically in the atmosphere of eternal truth. This is the real secret of the

virtue there is in the confession of Christ. There may be such a thing as confessing Christ in a parrot way; (though it is difficult to confess him in any way without effect;) but where there is any seriousness of purpose about it, by the confession of Christ, you stir yourself up to lay hold on the truth, and strike a string which vibrates in connection with all the atmosphere of heaven. To honor Christ is the life and breath of heaven—to acknowledge Christ as a Savior, is the whole glory of the heavenly church. An action on our part in that direction, however faint it may be, makes music—sets in motion a good atmosphere; and that atmosphere reacts and flows into our life.

The twofold operation of producing a good excitement, and suppressing evil, is described in that saying of James—'Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you; resist the devil, and he will flee from you.' It is very important that you have the power of exciting yourself in a way to attract God—and in a way to repel the devil. I stir myself up all the time to good—make an important business of it. I should not be an edifying man if I did not—if I let things take their course, and submitted to the influence of circumstances. I excite that in me which will harmonize with God and heaven, and draw upon me the graces of the Spirit. Whatever I want, flows into me, as I confess Christ, and stir up in me the remembrance of God's goodness, and give myself to thoughts that tend heavenward. I should like to have others join me in this practice—and the exhortation is to you as well as to me—'If there be any fellowship of Christ, any bowels of mercies, any communion of the Holy Ghost'—stir yourselves up—give it vent, and cause it to flow forth, and displace the devil, and those things that annoy you. 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.' Why

think on these things? Because it will produce an excitement in your mind that will reproduce them, by drawing the spirit of these things upon you.

Learn to manage yourselves correctly, in view of these principles—manage your excitements correctly—manage to suppress false excitements; and let them be mere excitements without influx; which are nothing but temptations. An excitement suppressed, is properly a temptation, not a sin: there is no influx, and no evil. But if a bad excitement is allowed to go on, it will bring on an influx, and convert a temptation into a positive evil. 'God tempteth no man—he is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust.' His life in some inferior, gross part—in some of his susceptibilities that are sensual and anarchical, puts itself forth in the radiating form—in an attitude of expansion and invitation toward evil. Well, lust when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin. It is by the conjunction of excitement with the influx of the devil's spirit, that sin takes place. On the other hand, learn to hold your spirits in an attitude of excitement and invitation toward God, till his Spirit flows in;—then conception will produce the opposite result, and bring forth righteousness.

With this philosophy, you need not be afraid of legality. If your mind is on the idea of exciting yourself with reference to the influx, you are in no danger of making too much account of ordinances—of works—and the whole value of works is in their character of ordinances, as occasions of the influx of good spirits.—It is said of some, that they are 'alienated from God by wicked works.' Wicked works have the effect to produce discord, repulsion—to exclude the spirit of God, and invite the influx of the spirit of the devil.

Christ healed diseases on these principles. If a man was sick, he did not neglect excitements. 'Take up thy bed and walk'—as if he had said, 'The power of life is present, superficially pressing upon you—now excite yourself

into healthy action, such action as is appropriate to health, and the spirit of health will flow in upon you. The influx will respond to the excitement. It is there; now find a way to produce suitable friction, and excite the susceptibility—turn the machine.' In the case of natural electricity, we understand that it is all the time present in the atmosphere; but, in order to make it available, we must arrange suitable attraction.

This philosophy may lead to principles for regulating fellowship with each other. Love is the circulation of another's spirit in our spirit—an influx; and it is connected with voluntary excitement on our part. We can excite ourselves by attention to the matter, so as to get deeply in love with almost any person; or we may suppress excitement, and even excite ourselves against a person, so as to induce repulsion. Spiritual attraction and repulsion are the result of voluntary excitement, determining the currents of electricity. This precludes our saying in any case, 'I fell in love, and could not help it;' and, on the other hand, it precludes our saying, 'I don't like such a one, and cannot help it.' The flow and mingling of life between us and others, we can invite or repulse by the voluntary management of our excitements. Self-excitement, as a general thing, should be in the ascending direction. The motion should be upward in order to be wholesome. There is ever so much antinomianism, in the views of love taken in the novels. All this talk about *falling in love*, is, antinomianism. When persons get desperately in love, pretty likely, if you go back into the secrets of their experience, you will find they voluntarily excited themselves—they turned the machine.

All our skill in education depends on our understanding this philosophy.—Consider life like a fur hat; then in dealing with children, if you want to manage them right, you must seek to excite those emotions and passions that will open them to good spirits, and *know when* you do it, and think of it as an ac-

tual spiritual operation; and when a child gets falsely excited, and throws his fur out towards devilish spirits, have it in mind that you are dealing with a spiritual machine, and apply these principles of regulating excitement.

Sketch of a Conversation.

Mrs. N.—I dislike the voluntary humility, which refuses sincere praise. An incident occurred to-day, which led me to look at this spirit, and criticise it. I separated some links for Mrs. C. to work chain with; and when she said it was kind, and just like me to do people good, I disclaimed her praise.

Mr. N.—I think *you* need never be afraid of receiving praise: there is no danger of your over-appreciating yourself. Your modesty is excessive.

Mrs. C.—When I praise a person in sincerity, I hate to have it thrust back upon me.

Mr. N.—So do I. I take the praise if merited, and thank God, and help it along by backing it up. And this spirit we condemn, what is it? Is it not a coquettish spirit, seeking for more praise?

Mr. G.—How are we to know when praise is sincere?

Mr. N.—Judge by the *feeling*; and if it is flattery, criticise it on the spot.

Mrs. C.—I wish to mention an instance which occurred to-day, of my being praised, and receiving it with thanks to the person and to God. F. L. praised me heartily for general management, good house-keeping, &c. She used to think I was very green at it. I thanked God, saying, 'things do come round.'

Mr. N.—I think you deserve it.

The family, (with one voice.)—So do I.

Mrs. C.—I think so too: thank God for his grace.

Mrs. S.—How impolite all this fashionable politeness is turning out to be. When we disclaim praise, it is certainly a broad insinuation that the one who gives it is either trying to flatter us, or is deficient in sense—a serious affront one would think.

The Free Church Circular.

HARRIET H. SKINNER, EDITRESS.

ONEIDA RESERVE, MARCH 6, 1851.

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

The Plodding Spirit.

'You need more of the plodding spirit,' is a remark we hear occasionally in our Community. The definition of *plodding*, according to Webster, 'is traveling or laboring with slow movement, and steady, persevering diligence, studying closely,' &c. &c. 'A plodding diligence brings us sooner to our journey's end than a fluttering way of advancing by starts.' Perhaps we give the word a deeper and broader meaning than lexicographers would allow; but we often take the liberty of making words serve our purposes beyond their technical sense. If it implies slowness, it does so only in a superficial sense, and not when *depth* is taken into the account. It is a spirit, which, when it sees an object worth obtaining, will set itself about the work, determined to accomplish it, sooner or later, by perseverance, without any idea of flagging, or growing discouraged by obstacles. It has no reference to time, but pursues its end, *satisfied with improvement*, and willing to gain little by little. Eternity is before it, and it enjoys *the present*, because it loves the chase as well as the game. It is the Franklin maxim turned towards wisdom, which says, 'Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.'

This spirit implies a cultivation of the power of attention and continuous thought—the very opposite of dissipation of mind. It is the opposite of all that antinomian laziness, which wants salvation and education, and every thing we need, brought to hand *ready-made*. We can buy a perishable garment ready-made, but every thing vital and immortal *grows*; beginning with a seed, and attaining maturity by imperceptible growth,—by infinitely small degrees. We know that the plodding spirit alone has accomplished any thing great in the field of the arts and sciences, and human achievement in the outer world:—and it is equally indispensable in obtaining spiritual wisdom, and objects which

pertain to the inner world, and our more substantial interests.

In looking at the honor and glory which reward magnificent achievements in any field of enterprise, we are not apt to think of the long, *plodding* process, and *severe application*, which were concerned in their performance. Take for illustration, the great canal from Albany to Buffalo. We see and enjoy its usefulness—we admire it as a stupendous work of art—but are forgetful of the years of plodding toil expended by thousands of laborers, as the means of its accomplishment. Look at nature all around us. Is she not a ceaseless, untiring plodder, teaching us lessons of patient continuance in well doing?

The Bible too, will furnish us with numerous examples of plodders, who were as diligent in their faith-works as nature herself. The 11th chapter of Hebrews is a description of a host of Old Testament plodders. Take the case of Noah:—was not he a veteran plodder when, being warned of God of things not seen, he worked an hundred years in preparing an ark to the saving of his house, &c.? Abraham too; behold his plodding faith in such language as the following: 'who against hope believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations, &c.; and staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.' Christ and the apostles were all plodders. Was not Christ pre-eminently a plodder while about his Father's business? In coming into the world, he entered upon a task that required many years of unceasing plodding to accomplish. While multitudes are glorifying him in a fourth-of-July sense, as the Savior of the world, but few have ever conceived of him in his true character, as a practical man, applying all his genius and powers, Napoleon-like, in carrying forward the mighty work given him to do.

Paul must have conceived of him as a plodder, in describing him as the 'author and finisher of our faith.' The invention and construction of railroads, magnetic telegraphs, and even navigating the air, are trifles when compared with the work of *growing* a faith strong enough to destroy the devil and his works, and raising a soul to God. This faith of Christ's, that inspired the apostles with so much enthusiasm in speaking of it, was worked out, and put together link by

link, in Christ's daily plodding experience, as the following language abundantly proves:—"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him," "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." "For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." "Wherefore *in all things* it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, &c. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Does not such testimony represent Christ as a plodder in achieving the work of salvation?

The conditions of our receiving salvation require one to be a plodder of the most diligent kind. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, says, 'By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life;' but we must be diligent to make that gift fruitful. Justification may be compared to soil, on which the fruits of the Spirit are cultivated. We have a good illustration of this subject in a movement at the present time in Congress, to get a law passed to offer as a free gift a portion of her soil to every person who will settle upon it, and make it productive. The revenue to the government would consist in the increase of the general prosperity, arising from the cultivation and productiveness of her soil. So God, by the gift of his Son, has secured something equivalent to a free-soil law to all actual settlers, offering a homestead as a free gift, on the condition that the said occupant shall cultivate it and make it productive for the support and education of his family—thereby contributing to the prosperity and happiness of the general government. Now this condition necessarily limits the free [soil] gift to a plodding class, and cuts off all antinomian speculators on Christ's justification. I once

heard Mr. Noyes say that he had tried to find out what he had a genius for, and concluded at last, that his genius if he had any was a genius for *plodding*. We think his history for the past sixteen years affords abundant evidence that he has been an indefatigable plodder of the Bible stamp. g. c.

Several of our members, who find themselves deficient in the 'plodding spirit,' which Mr. Cragin has described, have recently taken up the study of mathematics. This study, it is well known, is an excellent drill of the attention and patience, and a remedy for mental dissipation. [Ed.]

The Reign of Life.

When persons decline receiving the truth about the redemption of the body, and particularly if they have a spirit of repulsion and opposition to it, we cannot help saying in ourselves—Well, every one to their taste. Let those who choose death have it; if any prefer to die, we have nothing to say. But tastes differ, and give us the liberty to choose *life*. The Gospel has brought life and immortality to light, and abolished death. Christ has made provision for the body to redeem it from corruption, and we will not refuse his salvation. He has bought us with a price—body and soul; and both shall glorify that mighty power, whereby he is able to 'subdue all things unto himself.' The enemy has run riot in both, and Christ shall have both for the display of his conquests. His life shall have a chance to compete with the subtlety of sin and death, and expel the poisonous infusion, leaving not a trace of its mischief in the whole fair creation.

A member of our family, who has already lived the allotted age of man, as it is usual to say, received a letter, not long since, from a cotemporary friend. The aged writer moralizes on the certainty of death, the uncertainty of the day and hour—concluding with an exclamation of thankfulness that *their* day of grace has been so mercifully prolonged. There seems to be a spirit in the letter, which is disposed to pursue our enfranchised mother, and make her feel, if possible, her bounden obligation to pay the *debt of nature*—a debt all overpaid by him who was made a curse for us. And we have noticed in others this disinterested loyalty to the king of

terrors—this jealousy of any attempt to escape his jurisdiction. They pursue the fugitive as the slave-catchers do, with a certificate of sale, and deny his right to freedom.

Nevertheless, our faith in the redemption of the body, as the complement of salvation from sin, grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength. The doctrine and theory develops itself in more and more consistency and beauty; and all that it needs of fact and illustration to confirm it, is transpiring in our experience. To our aged friend, the quickening power of Christ's resurrection is more of a reality, than the beckoning monuments of the graveyard; and she has utterly renounced the reprobate doctrine that 'since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning.'

CRITICISM.

SPIRITUAL DISCORD.

Mrs. — is a special bad singer in the community choir: her discords are too palpable and distressing to be endured. She has a grumbling, discontented spirit. There is every thing here to be thankful for—every thing to make us happy—all outward preparation, and a large share of the inward preparation, for contentment: but the presence of this cross, grumbling spirit is a serious discomfort to all. We can live in it, but it is uncomfortable, just as it would be in a cold day to go without a fire, or have the outside door open—we could endure the chilly air, but it would be perpetually an unpleasant appeal to our senses. So there is a continual chill and irritation of our spiritual senses from Mrs. —'s spirit at present.

It is manifest that *insincerity* and *discontent* are utterly opposed to all our objects of existence. Living in the world, with *money* for our object, we could get along, and live in an ocean of grumbling and discord;—but where the object is happiness by means of fellow-

ship, love, communion of life with God and heaven, and each other—which is our object—it is utterly incompatible with the presence of insincerity and discontent. If we are to be a happy family in the presence of God, and around his throne, insincerity and discontent must leave. No matter what excuses may be made for discontent—whether it is constitutional, or inherited, or educated by circumstances—it is hateful as hell, and cannot exist in the presence of God and his angels. It is just as if we were organizing a singing choir, and one of the singers should have no ear for music. His discord would just defeat the object in view: and it would be necessary for the leader to single out that person and criticise him, and, if there was no prospect of improvement, to expel him from the choir—excuses would be out of the question. There must certainly be some change in Mrs. —, or the character of our singing will be materially injured.

The *contrary spirit* is strongly developed in her character, and is probably the occasion of a great many of her faults. The attitude of this spirit is a constant assertion of individualism. To assert their individuality, persons sometimes think it necessary to *differ* from everybody else—to be opposed and contrary to those about them: exactly reversing all the rules of fellowship. The fact that others propose a thing, instead of being made an occasion of agreement and sympathy, only suggests opposition, and provokes them to take the other side, without respect to truth. Sometimes persons have the wit to see that this spirit is a very disagreeable trait; and they dress it with a covering of amiability and benevolence, while yet the whole force of the spirit remains; and just as diabolical as though it had no wool. There is, under

all their seeming sweetness, this everlasting assertion of individuality, the contrary spirit; which reverses all the processes of fellowship, and takes pains not to agree with others; and will go out of its way to disagree with what is said and done. This is the case with Mrs. —.

She talks a great deal about her sufferings in the Association: and distributes around her a feeling that it is a very hard thing to serve God. It is quite common for her to say, 'I don't know what to do. I am criticised if I do this, and criticised if I do that; and criticised if I do nothing. I cannot tell what is right. I don't know how to please God.' This is very false and ungenerous. She has looked at her own sufferings, and sought her own ease instead of improvement, and the good of the church, and the glory of God. She thinks more of *herself* in the matter, than of the Association; but the fact is, the Association have suffered more than she has suffered. They suffer every time they criticise her. It is an annoyance; and the infidel effect which her spirit produces around her, deserves consideration as much as the sufferings on her side.

Her love of self, the absence in her character of an ear for harmony, appears in little matters, that daily occur in social contact. Her inattention to other's rights and tastes, her obtuseness, and want of delicacy, often compel others to a rudeness in return, that is disagreeable to their nicer feelings.

Yet Mrs. — has prided herself on her *refinement*. What is true refinement? We should not call ourselves refined, till we can tell what pleases persons, and what displeases them, *without a word being said*. True refinement is a state in which we perceive *spirits*, and are courteous toward *them*; and not merely

in words and actions, but courteous in our *thoughts* and *feelings*. If a person wants me to behave in a certain way, and has a will—a feeling that wills me to do thus and so—I am coarse if I do not perceive it. We can understand each other's wishes without words, and know when we please and when we do not please, just as certainly as we can perceive the harmonies of chords in music. Mrs. — has the faculty of fluent speech, and a lady-like exterior, which passes in common circles, but will not pass here. She may be full of the prettiest kind of talk and lady-like manners, and yet be coarsely offending us in spirit. A person who is destitute of this sense to good and evil in spirits—a sense which may be called *new*, as it is not ordinarily open—cannot help offending, in a circle where this sense is cultivated. Let their propriety of manners be what they may, they will be coarse; and if they persist in self-justification, they cannot help feeling that they are dealt hardly by—unreasonably criticised. They will complain that they cannot do right, and wish they had some *rule*. But the law of harmony in music is just as unreasonable; the sense that recognizes it don't know why—it can't expound itself; and persons without an ear, might complain that harmony is very unreasonable—that they don't know when they offend. It is the condition of things, and we are no more responsible for the laws of harmony than Mrs. —. In the nature of the case, those who have this sense will criticise those who have not, and thus put them on a course of seeking for it. It is vain to try to please a spiritual circle, without a thorough cultivation of this interior sense, which constitutes the only true refinement—the refinement which adorns the angelic world.

Enemies to the Truth.

The worst kind of enemies and abusers of the truth, are not those who openly neglect it, and stand far off from it. The world neglect truth—one goes to his farm, another to his merchandise; and when the truth comes in direct contact with them, they show themselves enemies to it, but they make no offensive war upon it. If the truth lets *them* alone, they let *it* alone. They are neglecters of the truth; but those who come up to it, and receive it, who have to do with it, and then deal treacherously with it—they are the worst enemies possible of the truth. They avail themselves of acquaintance with the truth, to assume to be representatives of it, and so make it odious and disgraceful by attaching to it the odium of their own follies. The general curse of this worst class of enemies to the truth, lies in this: that they receive from the Spirit of truth communications and intelligence that are, by the very necessity of the case, only texts, or seed truths, and then make their own comments, and mix them up with their own imaginations. God gives them a text, and they preach from it in their own understandings. I know from experience the abuse which can be suffered in this way; and I can sympathize with God. For instance, sixteen years ago God revealed to me the Second Coming—a doctrine which has a terrible sweep, of course, and gives play to the imagination to an unlimited extent.—Well, Boyle took that seed thought from me, but neglected me, and refused to have any thing more to do with me, and went to peddling it out mixed up with his own foolishness. So, many a bright idea, fresh from heaven, is attached to a false, abusive system, hatched in hell.—I have found myself, not only abused by

the misrepresentation of principles received from me, but by men's not giving me the credit of a discovery, and going along with me in it. If God gives me a principle, he has given me the privilege of seeing it through. There is a natural justice in the principle of patent rights. If a man makes a discovery, he ought to be allowed the privilege of working it out; and they who avail themselves of his discovery ought to give him the credit of it. There is some limitation to this, of course; but, after all, there is a substantial principle of justice in the thing.

There are many spiritualists who deal with God just as Boyle dealt with me. They get hold of some principle, either by inspiration, or by connection with some one who has true ideas direct from God, enough to set up a capital, and then they go to work and corrupt it, and deal treacherously with it, and peddle it out as their own. These are the worst enemies of the truth, who take their text from God, and make their own commentary, and use it for a devilish purpose. They allow God to teach them principles, and turn their back on him in the exposition of them. They let God start them in the faith, and then dismiss him, and go on in their own understandings. I see there is a natural temptation in myself, and in every body else, to this very thing. The spirit of the world predisposes people to deal thus; and God has had to labor with me a great deal on that point, to teach me not only to start with him, but to take him with me all through the course—to not count it enough that he has given me an idea; but count it fair and respectful to him, that he should, after giving it to me, expound it to me. It is wrong and foolish to take glorious truth from him, and expound it according to our own understandings, and apply it to

our own purposes. And we need an instructor just as much in evolving right principles as we do in the first reception of them. A true spirit, that is honest and faithful with God, will be always returning to the source whence it obtained light, and always renewing the invitation to God to instruct it. It is a general principle among men, that if a man steals a patent he is incompetent to evolve the idea contained in it practically. If a man is shallow enough to steal, he is too shallow to work out important ideas. I think this will be found true in spiritual things, that a man who steals ideas, and attempts to work them out in his own understanding, will be sure to fail.

The two classes of enemies to the Spirit of truth may be illustrated in this way:—Here is a man who opens a store: part of his neighbors refuse to trade with him at all; another part trade largely—run up a long account, and then quit trading with him without paying. Who are the worst—those who do not trade at all, or those who trade to cheat him?—*Home-Talk.*

Justification and Sanctification of the Body.

Redemption properly divides itself into two parts—justification and sanctification. In the case of the soul, it is a fundamental doctrine with us, that justification is absolutely essential, and preliminary to sanctification; i. e. we must first get reconciled to God, and so have peace in our consciences, before we are in a condition to grow in grace. There is no such thing as growing in grace, and in assimilation to Christ, which is sanctification, except we are in the genial element of justification to begin with.—Condemnation and self-accusation are like a poisonous, deathly atmosphere, which precludes growth.

That is the Bible doctrine of the sal-

vation of the soul; and that doctrine is just as true of the body. We need to be justified here also, before we can be sanctified; i. e. evil thinking in regard to the body, must come to an end, in order to have it healthy and improving. Precisely the same principle that we applied to the soul, must be carried out into the physical department. It will be well for persons to go back and read articles on justification as the condition alone in which sanctification is possible. The spirit of the devil, which is a spirit of accusation, actually works in reference as much to the body as the soul; and just as mischievously and poisonously. When you find a person under an accusing conscience, judging and condemning himself in a sickly way, you say he has the *hypo*.—Well, it is the same spirit which criticises the body in an evil way—always condemning it, watching its symptoms, and expecting its dissolution. It is one and the same accusing spirit, that sees evil and not good, whether it looks at the soul or the body. In those who have a natural turn for self-inspection, this poisonous spirit works in all directions. Justification of the body, then, is important, very important, to health, and is an essential branch of general justification. As the soul and body are identical, we cannot separate them in our treatment. They have an important reciprocal effect on each other. A man who seeks justification, must extend it to the justification of his body, as well as his soul.

How shall we go about this? We will first make the same exception and modification in reference to the body, that we do in the case of the soul. We insist that justification does not preclude *criticism*, and that, while on the one hand we must abhor the poisonous spirit of devilish accusation, on the other hand we must throw our spirits open to *truth*, with eagerness for improvement. As we let in the healthful spirit of criticism, in the discovery of faults and facts with regard to the soul, so we must make room for the same healthy discovery in regard to the body. There must be no attempt to

deceive ourselves; but we must be thoroughly truthful in the examination of our bodies, and open them to criticism and improvement. And we know by all experience, that this is perfectly compatible with our justification. Bearing this modification in mind, we want to see what is the truth and power that God can let in to justify our bodies. As ignorance is the breeding-place of the devil, so a true understanding may help us to let in the grace of God to this end.

It is necessary in the first place to lay to heart and appreciate the goodness and ingenuity of God in making us. We should raise our imaginations in regard to his design concerning our bodies, and get a higher appreciation of their worth, and admirable adaptation to the object of their creation. We may look at them as works of skill and art, irrespective of their specific condition. That is one course of thought to get our minds on the track of thinking good in regard to them, and letting in a spirit of justification. Away with all thought and talk about our bodies, which represents them as vile and inherently worthless, which is all material for the spirit of accusation.

In my reflections to-day, a new thought came to me very clearly, and with a good deal of profit, with reference to the case of bodies which, specifically considered, may be more or less in a state of disease. Even here, we can by a little closer discrimination than we are accustomed to, justify them, and get at principles which will make us look favorably on them—we can treat the body as we do the soul. For instance, in any course of conduct which is substantially good, however rude in external form and appearance, the spirit of justification fixes its eye on the interior, the heart, and insists that the appearance and show in the matter shall not affect our judgment of character—and that is the proper course to take in regard to our bodies. Mrs. — is thin and poor, and people will say to her, 'You are in the consumption.' She does not commend herself to every body in the full plumpitude of health. But I ask her, What

is the real state of your sensitive body? Can you see, hear, smell, and eat well? Is there a good state of perception, as far as your body is concerned? 'Yes.' Then the substance of all you want is there. Where is the worth of the body? where does it reside? I say in the functions; and if the functions are all good, what more do you want? Don't judge the body by the amount of flesh, but by the state of the inner functions. Who cares for show?

This view of the matter is consistent with the discrimination we have to make, every time we approach this subject, between the visible body, and the real body in which sensation resides. I do not see as there is any getting away from the idea that the real body is a spiritual substance. The thing that sees, hears, smells, &c., is *the* body; and that is not flesh and blood. The real question is, What is the state of the true sensitive body? for that is the thing which is good or evil, to be approved or condemned. We need not look at the outside at all, but at the real essence of the thing;—and in that respect, I have to confess that my body is very good in all its functions and perceptions, and a great deal better than when I had more flesh. I do not say but that I shall have more flesh sometime: there may be things about my body to be criticised; but it is a good body, and has great capacity for enjoyment in it. I am in a state of peace with it. In my former experience with the consumption, I found that when I could fall back on my inner body, there was life in it. When outwardly there was nothing but distress and seeming weakness, I still found it easy to fall back into a deeper consciousness, in which I would awake to the condition of my real spiritual body; and so found, as it were, by a single leap, that I could pass out of perfect weakness into full vitality.

Now we come to the more difficult part of the matter. We wish to get at a general treatment of the body with reference to improving it. I admit in the case of G—— there is a good deal that is

open to criticism. Nothing deserving of condemnation, but that which admits of criticism, and of course requires improvement. Assuming that we go to work in a spirit of justification, which we have seen is compatible with criticism, we may sit down and look into such a case to see what there is faulty, and how to treat it. This process is the *sanctification* of the body. We have spoken of the two branches of redemption, and found that justification must go first in regard to the body, as well as the soul. Then we are in a condition to go about the sanctification of the body in a true element, and of course effectually.

Well, the first thing that my mind turns to, in reference to the interests of the body, and its improvement, is the stomach—the *power of digestion*. That is oftener out of order than any thing else, and the cause of all disease: when that department is rectified, then all is right. And the thought that interests me in regard to that matter, is this: the process of digestion is in its nature precisely the same as the process of the sanctification of our souls—or in other words, our assimilation to Christ is a process in which he *digests* us. Sanctification is a process of precisely the same nature with that by which we digest food; and the two processes may be made to throw light on each other.

Let us understand what takes place when we digest food, and what takes place when we are assimilated to Christ. Food in the stomach passes through two processes; first, the separation of that which is good from that which is worthless; and second, the refining and vitalizing of that which is retained as suitable for nutriment. Christ takes our souls into himself. If we are to become members of his body, it is to be by some process which introduces us into his body—by his *eating* us. Certainly this is as conceivable as the necessity which is laid upon us of eating him. He says, 'Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, ye have no life in you.' The process of drawing us into himself, properly corresponds to that of

eating. Now we may see what is the process of sanctification. It is first casting out that which is worthless and evil in us, and secondly, refining and vitalizing our spirits, after evil has been exorcised. There is this twofold operation in all cases;—and I have occasion sometimes to feel the difference between the first and second part of the process. I feel in many cases that the first operation has taken place—that evil has been cast out, and yet that the refining and vitalizing of the person's spirit has not been accomplished: there is a feeling of indigestion in my perception of their state. It is not because there is positive evil in them—the devil has been cast out, but they have not yet been taken to pieces, softened, and refined, so that they can be received into general circulation. Their case is like a potato that is not quite boiled through; there is 'a bone in the middle,' as the Irish call it. It is a good potato—nothing poisonous or mischievous about it; but the heat has not struck through it—there is a hard spot in the middle.

Now, then, if these principles are correct, faith in Christ as the sanctifier of the soul, is faith in him as a *power of digestion*; and this idea, when it really becomes intelligent, is actually receiving him as a power of digestion to our *bodies*. We find the Scripture continually representing his power in that way: 'He that believeth shall drink any deadly thing, and it shall not hurt him.'—'Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused; but to be received with thanksgiving, &c.; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' By the same word that sanctifies our spirits, the food we take into our bodies is sanctified. Again, our souls are saved by the power of his resurrection. What is that power? It is a power of digestion. That which brought Christ from the dead, is proved to be a digestive force, having almighty power, able to cast off that which is worthless, and refine that which is good, and assimilate all to itself. 'To know Christ and the power of his resurrection,'

is to appreciate and come into rapport with that power which proved itself equal to raising the dead, and able to digest death itself.

There are many expressions in Paul's writings, relating to the mighty power of digestion which there is in Christ. For instance, in the 3d of Philippians, he says 'Our conversation is in heaven from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall *change our vile body*, that it may be likened unto his glorious body, *according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself*'. I understand the power spoken of here to be the same as the power of digestion. What is necessary to be done to change our vile bodies? Evidently the same thing as to digest a hard potato. To digest our food there must be a power in our stomach—a subtle, insinuating power of vitality, that will choose the good and expel the bad. This is just what Paul says Christ is able to do with our bodies, namely, to change and vitalize them. We may say that power of digestion is the almighty power of the universe.

Every form of life has its own power of digestion. To begin with vegetable life: a tree is a digestive apparatus; its roots are searching out food in the material around it, selecting that which is nutritive, according to its affinities, and separating it from the coarser particles; which corresponds to the digestive process in our nutritive system. A tree is all the time sucking up—vitalizing and assimilating matter to its own life. This power in vegetables is weak. In animals it is stronger; they can dispose of food in greater varieties, and faster.—And in man, considered as an animal, there is a greater power of digestion than in other animals. As we ascend, the same thing exists in all the higher forms of life—in the church, in Christ, and in God. They each have a power of digestion suitable to their nature, i. e., the faculty of drawing up and vitalizing the good, and casting out the evil. We have got some idea of the higher manifesta-

tions of this power; and as we yield ourselves to it, our own power of digestion becomes equal to that form of life to which we yield. A son of God is a different being from the mere children of men: mere human life is weak in its power of digestion. On the contrary, the sons of God 'shall drink any deadly thing, and it shall not hurt them.' Here is a power of digestion beyond Graham's recognition. It is as much stronger than that of human life, as human life is stronger than vegetable life.

The practical application of these ideas is this. Increase your faith in this almighty power. Just so certain and so far as you yield yourselves to the power of Christ in your soul, just so far you will be able to digest your food. A well digested man is a good digester.—*Home-Talk, Dec. 10, 1850.*

—Instead of setting down any good we do to our own credit, and making it a claim on God, it really goes to the other side of the account, and gives God a claim on us. He has given us this goodness, these good works, and we are so much more in debt; have so much more reason for thankfulness and obedience to him. When his spirit leads us into noble, beautiful action, we can be pleased with it, and see that it is a happy thing for ourselves and the church; but not plume ourselves upon it,—it is God that has done it—he alone has made us to differ from the children of disobedience.

—The object of all talk is to produce an impression; and if you produce a wrong impression, though your words are perfectly true, what is it but a *lie*?

THE FREE CHURCH CIRCULAR

Is published weekly by the Free Church Association at Oneida Reserve, N. Y. The price of it, is \$1.00 for 26 numbers. Subscribers, however, will be left to judge for themselves what amount of remuneration agrees with its value and with their ability. It is offered *freely* to all who are interested in its doctrines.

Letters may be addressed to "The Free Church Circular, Oneida Castle, Oneida Co., N. Y."

LEONARD AND COMPANY, PRINTERS.