

THE  
FREE CHURCH CIRCULAR.

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The Truth shall make you Free.—John 8: 32.  
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VOL. IV.]

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[NO. 5.]

Home-Talk by J. H. N.—No. 56.

[REPORTED FOR THE CIRCULAR, MARCH 7, 1851.]

GOD OWNS ALL THINGS.

Christ said, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.' He has taught me to feel that it is my business, and my only business, to bear witness of the truth. And now comes the question, What is the truth? Truth in the abstract, may be any truth without respect to order; but what is the truth concerning God, which lies at the foundation of all other truth, and the one which I am bound to bear witness of and maintain? It is certainly likely to be one that the world denies pretty extensively, practically if not theoretically. In looking round for the truth which seems to me to be the juice of all other truth, and the one that I am bound to bear witness to, I have decided upon this—*God owns all things.* By running out that idea in various directions, it will be seen that it contains the whole of our theology. It is really the whole of our testimony to the world—GOD OWNS ALL THINGS.

The condition of ownership suggests two ideas, the idea of *right*, and the idea of *might*. A man is said to own things, when he has a right to them on the one hand, and

on the other hand he owns them if he has power to hold and keep possession of them. Now as to God's ownership, consider both ideas. In the first place he has a *right* to universal ownership.—On what ground? I should say that he has a right to all things, on the ground that he is the being who has life and wisdom enough to make a right use of them. 'The tools to them that can use them,' is the rule. God has a right to the keys of the universe, because he knows how to use its treasures. I consider that a man who would take land and ruin it, or any other valuable and destroy it, let his formal title be what it may, has no right to it. There can be no rights whatever to a destroyer. It is only the useful builder, who makes things that he takes in hand better, that has any just right to them. We need not go back of that principle; that is sufficient to establish God's universal right, and to deny the devil's right to any thing. The simple fact that Satan is a destroying being, vitiates his title to every thing. In other words, good has a right to every thing; and all the feelings and understanding of all beings, even of the devil himself, when unbiassed by personal interest, would vote for God's having possession of every thing. Call a vote of the universe, from

God down to the devil, including all intermediate beings, upon the question whether evil shall have possession; and if it was understood that the decision would not affect their titles, but it was simply an abstract question, every being would say that the principle of life and edification has the right to everything, and the principle of destruction has a right to nothing. Then as to the *power*, which goes to make the idea of ownership, God has that, because he has energy that exceeds all others. He has a *right* to all things, and *ability* to enforce and execute that right.

With this preliminary, let us see how every thing else follows. We are to assert the truth, to bear witness of the truth: and suppose that this is the truth that we are called to bear witness of. In the first place, this is the truth by which we are going to cast out devils, and turn them out of the world. For if in a case of evil possession, we march right up, and think and say that God owns all things—the devil has no right here—our spirit will go with our words, and execute that word. It was in the spiritual affirmation of that truth, that Christ cast out devils. When he found a man possessed of a devil, his spirit marched in like a police officer, and asserting God's right, ejected the unlawful tenant. I say that that truth will apply to the ejection of all the evil in the world.

Then another branch of truth, and a very extensive and important one, is the training of our passions. We have found that all the difficulties in respect to our passions, and the cause of all their disorders, lies in their wrongful possession of things. The gospel calls us to forsake all things—to give up God's things. The whole gospel of self-denial consists in surrendering up things that we are holding un-

lawful possession of. Here comes in the truth that God owns all things; and every man has a right to demand of all his passions and affections, that that truth shall be established in every one of them, until he holds nothing against God. Let a man be faithful to that truth, that God owns all things, and he will wrench himself from all his adhesions to this world. Let him hold himself to that truth, and he will find out where he is holding any thing without God's leave, and will yield it up. If he asserts that truth with his whole heart, it will be the guide of all his passions. It will lead him to all self-denial: the immediate effect of it will be to surrender every thing to God. A man claims his own life, irrespective of God; but God has more right to take your life than you have to take the life of an animal that you have bought, or brought up. You have no right to your own life—no claim upon it against God. So of your children; so of your wife; so of your food, and every thing you have an affection for. Not one of your passions can take hold of its object in unbelief, without its being demonstrable that it is a wrongful hold—that it is assuming possession that will sometime have to be surrendered. I advise every man to take this truth, and proclaim it through his whole life and nature, that God owns all things. Again, the principle of community of interest, in which we are all so much interested, grows right out from the doctrine that God owns all things. Then, this doctrine teaches us the only possible way in which we can possess and enjoy any thing; i. e. by first surrendering what we have taken hold of wrongfully, acknowledging God's right, and accepting every thing we have as his gift—holding it afterward as his gift, with the understanding that God never abandons his

right to any thing. This truth touches every thing in fact, that can be thought of; and well understood, will be the compass that will give us direction at all times, and we can reconcile every thing by it.

Ownership in the spiritual sense of the word—that is, ownership in its most perfect form—is the possession of a thing by unity with it; as for instance, my body owns my arm, a tree owns its limbs, and so on. All conjunction is ownership. All construction—all organization of things into each other—is ownership. Mutual ownership exists wherever there is conjunction of a certain kind. But forasmuch as God of right owns all things, and not only has the right, but is able to assert that right, and is determined to do that same in due time; it follows that there is in reality, no such thing as ownership in fee simple—no ownership that is absolute, except that which is established by God's coming into conjunction with the thing. All conjunctions of things material or spiritual, that have not God in them—that have not the perfected assertion of his right by the union of his spirit with them—all such conjunctions are destined to dissolution; (and I do not know but we can argue from that, the dissolution of the material universe.) In the case of all natural relationships, be they what they may, I ask—did you come together with God in the matter? Did God himself take possession of the conjunction? If he did not, you were only put together for a season, and will certainly have to be separated. You were only put together as the trees are: there is conjunction in the trees and animals, but they are put together only for a season—there is no permanent unity there. It is only of the nature of a lease—it is not a fee

simple. So of all your affections which are not the absolute assertion of God's right; and God at last will freely assert his right in its execution. You have a wife, or children, and call them your own. God comes to you and says, You and your children are mine, and you and they have got to part. If you had looked about you, you had every reason to understand from the beginning that you were only put together for a season.

That is simply the truth that we are asserting, in demanding all these sacrifices, as they are called, in the Association. It is only restoring stolen goods, for you to surrender these claims. It is simply acknowledging an ownership that always existed; there is no great generosity about it. The generosity is certainly all on the other side: for if after we have given up our claim, God chooses to give us back things, and especially a hundred-fold, the generosity is certainly all on the other side. A man who grows a tree has a right to cut it down at last, and put it to other uses besides growth. God also has a right to set going things that he intends to destroy. There are no organizations which have in themselves any right of perpetuity. It is only those organizations which are selected by God, to assert his special right, which have any claim to perpetuity.

Any body that heartily submits to the doctrine that God owns all things, will find that it embraces the doctrine of election and foreordination. They will have to side with Paul. He says, 'Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?' 'Hath not the potter power over the clay, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?' This doctrine teaches us to be chary of forming conjunctions. If we do not like to have our conjunc-

tions broken up, we must take care that they are made by God, and have the sanction of his ownership in them; otherwise they will be sure to be broken up.

There is nothing really gained by cheating. You can, to be sure, get temporary possession unlawfully, of that which moth and rust will corrupt, and which thieves break through and steal; but you cannot get absolute possession of any thing by cheating. To obtain any thing permanently, it must be a fair business transaction, and one which has the sanction of God. 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' The meek are the very persons most likely to be cheated and imposed upon, but they will finally have the ownership of all things. The wicked are hovering round, and stealing here and there, while the righteous make friends of the owner of all things, and get their names put in his will.

All the arguments that are used against slavery—the ownership of man—are just as good against the ownership of anything. A man has no right to own a man; but God owns all things, and it is just as really infringing upon God's right for me to own one thing, as another.

The fact that God owns all things, is the very best ground of faith that we can have. It is the very best ground of hope I have that I shall come to something. God is a good farmer, and will take good care of every thing that comes under his superintendence, and will make the most of it that he can. A farmer will not frown upon his corn and discourage it. No more will God frown upon a heart that sincerely seeks to serve him. 'Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.'—But every heart that humbly acknowledges his ownership, will be accepted by

him. He is just as eager to have such a heart flourish, as a farmer is to have his corn grow. 'Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.' 'I am the vine and my Father is the husbandman.' It is the fact that he is going to get good out of us, that insures his favorable attention to our spiritual life.

### True Sense of Honor.

I always feel happy and thankful when God enables me to do a difficult duty.—I do not feel sore and hardly dealt by in being put up to it, and as though God ought to give me considerable credit for it, and be thankful to me for doing him such a service. On the contrary, it is I who should be thankful to him for permitting me to do this thing in his name, and to do it right.

The idea that constantly comes up in my experience, is this: I am not to think of God's ways as hard, nor allow the devil to keep up a grumbling in my spirit against the Spirit of truth; but when God summons me to a duty which to a babyish spirit would be disagreeable, I feel like joyfully girding myself for sport, and for coöperation with a beautiful, pleasant companion. I will not imagine in my heart, nor allow the devil to imagine for me, that the Spirit of truth is an austere, disagreeable companion. And if I take the business it sets me about as hard, severe, and distressing, it is a constant implied whisper to the Spirit of truth, that he is a hard master; and I cannot allow that in my heart for a moment in any thing. I know how unjust that feeling is by experience; because I have been myself regarded as a cruel, hard man—hard on worldliness—rather a task-master. I feel that it is perfectly unjust to look on me in the spirit of fear

and dread, and think of me as severe and gloomy;—it is unprofitable to those who entertain the idea, and unjust to me. I will do as I would be done by; I will not treat the Spirit of truth in that way.—My will is set—eternally set—to rejoice ever-more, and rejoice in the truth.—‘Though the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.’ And I will not force it either, in an insincere way, and make a will-work of it; but my sense of truth, my sense of what is just, pure, and of good report, my sense of honor, demands that I treat the truth as I would like to be treated myself; and I can do it heartily. There is that in my spirit that will obey this sense of honor cheerfully and joyfully.

For instance, the love of children is one of our strongest passions, and cultivated as it is in the world, is full of exclusiveness and idolatry. God, by his spirit, is trying to train us truthfully in regard to it, so that this affection shall not be a baby, but rise into manly good sense. What is the truth, fairly calculated in the light of heaven, with regard to our children? It is that they are not ours. We call them ours by courtesy, as you may say, but they come under the same general principle that other things do; God owns them, and never makes over his right in them, so that we have exclusive ownership in them. It is only a joint ownership with him, according as we join ourselves to him, by faithfulness and obedience. That being the case, all is as clear as the sun at noonday. Job took the right ground—when his children were all taken from him in one day; he

said, ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’ But if blind affection had been allowed to speak in the matter, the first thought would have been, ‘These children are mine exclusively; and God, if there is a God, has robbed me.’ But this is as false as all the rest of the atheism of this world. Job’s doctrine was the simple truth—not some meritorious concession on his part towards God, of an extraordinary supererogatory character, but ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.’ It was all good to him—nothing but good. God had a perfect right to take them away; and ‘blessed be his name.’ When we have said that, we need not plume ourselves on our marvellous generosity toward God; we have only done our duty in acknowledging the simple truth, and we ought to be ashamed if we ever thought any thing to the contrary. We should be obliged to God, thank him for what we have had, and acknowledge his right to his property. I feel that it is a privilege for me without claiming any merit about it, to acknowledge the truth, and conform my feelings and spirit to it.

If I have children that I feel an affection for, and interest in, it is no merit in me, but a privilege that God gives me, to recognize him as the owner of them and me; and he may dispose of us just as he pleases—it is not for me to talk of giving them up to him, because they are his originally. It is for him to talk of giving them to me, if there is to be any such talk about it; and the truth is, if I am in a state to talk of giving them to him, and at liberty to direct all about it, and withhold them, unless God can spur me up to a very generous act, I shall probably find out that God can take them without my leave, as he did in the case

of Job. This is poor talk—this self-complacent recounting of our exploits in giving up property to God. If I can have the privilege and opportunity of having all my interest in my friends, children, lovers, and every thing else, put in the keeping of God—if I can feel that he has a care over them, and I nothing to do, but to be a faithful child to him, I think the favor, and generosity, and magnanimity, are all on his side.—*Home-Talk, Aug. 18, 1850.*

### The National Spirit.

[*Extract from Remarks occasioned by the confession of a member of the family, who had been tempted with a spirit that craved special attention, and suffering from a feeling of neglect.*]

We have resolved ourselves into a family, and consider that the *family relation* is a superior sphere—a wider, truer, more natural field for the expression of affection, than worldly marriage. But the family relation, after all, is not the true, final scale on which to found, and form, and express our relationships. We are certain that we are part and parcel of millions—of the whole family of God. Those who are connected with us in the same spirit, are to be multiplied beyond enumeration. And we shall have to rest ourselves, as to our permanent relationships—as to the element that we live in permanently—in the *national spirit*; the spirit that makes us feel like brothers to millions and millions whom we have never seen.

If we get our affections elevated to that platform, we shall quit this hankering for special attentions—for any attention except what comes fairly in subordination to this principle. It is true, eternity is before us, and there will be no limit to the series of special friendships that may be formed. But every one must devote himself to paying atten-

tion to such persons and things as the national interest demands. No personal feeling on either side can be allowed to come in. The national life must govern in respect to special attentions; and individuals must content themselves with what it distributes to them, knowing that with God, and all who have his Spirit, there is no respect of persons.

If we rise into the national spirit, we shall be enlarged into a state to receive the attentions and communications of the primitive church. That is the spirit they are in: they love one another, not by marriage or family ties, but by national ties. That is the prime condition and element of unity with them; they are all condensed in the feeling that they are one nation.

We must not be content with ourselves till we do not need an introduction to any person that belongs to the family of God; till we can pass right into intimate fellowship with such a person without an introduction, for a day or for a minute, and then part with them outwardly for the ages of eternity, and think nothing about it—learn to love them with the bliss of heaven, and then not see them again for time out of mind. How are we going to mingle with and enjoy the whole society that we are a part of, if that can not be done? It can be done; but only by recognizing *Christ* in all his members. We feel acquainted with *Christ*, and we find him in all his members; so that we may pass into any degree of fellowship with them, and for any time, without an introduction, or any hankering for future and special attention. For the fundamental fellowship, which his life dwells in, remains eternally. Must introductions take place every time we meet *Jesus Christ*?

We must not be content till we get

on to the national elevation—get into a spirit where we can love without acquaintance. We must live in that element that will send love clear beyond acquaintance. Love is an internal thing; acquaintance an external, superficial thing. So long as we can love only where we are acquainted, and where there is opportunity for special attentions, we are in a childish state. See the spirit in which Paul wrote to some of the churches that he had never seen. He told how he loved them, and said, 'I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.'—Not seeing their face in the flesh, was nothing against love. External acquaintance was no measure at all of his love and labors, and real internal acquaintance with the members of Christ.

We are only nibbling round the surface of things, while we depend on acquaintance and attention for the flow of love.

## CRITICISM.

### SPIRITUAL LAZINESS.

In criticising Mr. ——'s present state, it is necessary to look a little into his past history. It appears that possessing good talents and advantages, he was yet very unsuccessful as a business man—a fact which cannot be wholly accounted for without examining and judging his own life. He would occasionally, under the influence of a peculiar self-will, pursue some object with great ardor, and hurry on beyond the bounds of prudence and good judgment, and then of course soon meet with a rebuff which threw him down, and the object of his wishes escaped his grasp. Then came on a chill, and he gave himself up to discouragement and inaction. This process was repeated so many times, that he finally gave up the pursuit of more than a bare living, and settled down into a chronic state of grumbling at the world, and spiritual and intellectual laziness. The consequences of this state were manifested in the loss of his rightful supremacy

as head of the family—in habits of self-indulgence, and the prevalence of bodily infirmities, which drew largely upon the care and sympathy of his family, and lowered still more his manly energy.—Yet below all this accumulated rubbish was a spirit which perceived and embraced the doctrine, that Christ is a Saviour from sin. He was roused sufficiently to clear himself from the world, and accompany his family (who are among our most energetic members) to the Association. At times since coming here, Mr. —— has appeared to wake up from his lethargy of spirit, and put forth efforts of faith—but they have been rare, and almost spasmodic, and have made but little impression on his general character. He has let in the spirit of discouragement, which is unbelief, and he is bound, as it were hand and foot.

What he needs is, to see, and begin a life-and-death struggle with his old habit of life, which has been the snare of the devil to him all his days. His life, spiritual and physical, seems foul; he has lain down so long under old habits of imbecility, suffering evils to settle upon him without vigorous efforts to resist them, that the original color and quality of the man can hardly be seen. He needs *airing*—he needs *washing*—'the washing of water by the word' of truth and criticism, daily and constantly applied, to purify and sweeten his life, and give circulation to the blood of Christ.

Mrs. —— is an example in contrast. She is nearly as old, has had a similar experience in encountering the world, but her spirit has refused to lie down under evils. She has kept up her courage and energy; and since coming here has heartily embraced every opportunity of bettering her spiritual and intellectual state. She has bathed herself in *truth*—has exposed her life to its cleansing operation as fast as she could; and the consequence is now, her spirit is comparatively clean and vigorous, and a good savor of faith emanates from it, acceptable to God and the Community.

## The Free Church Circular.

HARRIET H. SKINNER, EDITRESS.

ONEIDA RESERVE, MARCH 20, 1851.

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

The Report on Antinomianism was accompanied with the following note:—

"DEAR H.—You perceive the above is no way fitted for publication. I have written it hastily, from imperfect notes of a conversation in which the whole family took part.  
Yours, G."

We venture however, with this apology for the reporter, to present our readers with what has been extremely edifying to the Association; and may be recommended as 'better than it looks,' if its appearance deserves the criticism implied in this note.

Judgment in the Association, has been searching out lately, and burning on the spirit of *New York Perfectionism*. The New York members are particularly engaged in examining it, and criticising its influence on their spiritual character. The personal injuries they have to revenge, arm them to be its special enemies and destroyers.

We were happy to see in a private letter the following lively expression from Mr. and Mrs. Allen, whose transfer of relations from this world to the kingdom of God, was recorded in our last paper:—

We hardly know how to express our gratitude for the criticism which we received from Mrs. Cragin and others while in Brooklyn.—Verily it was like excellent oil, doing our whole souls good; and we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory—knowing most assuredly that our steps were ordered of the Lord. We are often led to exclaim in view of the spiritual blessing we have received, 'What hath God wrought.' We now see plainly, that no one ever forsaketh all that he hath for Christ's sake, without receiving an hundred-fold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting.

It does one's soul good to see this endorsement of Christ's paper—showing so plainly that the discredit which it suffers in the world, is altogether the fault of those who try to get the hundred fold, before they sell all. The moment the conditions are complied

with, the promise is forthcoming; but those should not complain who keep in the uncomfortable transition, where they are giving up and giving up, and yet just reserving enough to spoil the conditions of the promise, and forfeit their title to the better portion.

The fact that we can, without any sham, pass out of this world, and have our citizenship in heaven—lay up our treasures there, and have all our social relations there, is of great interest, and we delight in every thing that looks that way.

We are also much pleased with expressions we receive from friends abroad, of their appreciation of our system of Criticism. It shows that they have an understanding heart, and know what is good, and are urging their way with us, by the flaming sword, into the paradise of God.

### Experience.

Who does not remember their school days with pleasure? Certainly, all who had the taste for study, and improvement natural to the youthful life. Finding all that is pleasant in these memories, surrounding us in our present situation, we cannot but express our gratitude and happiness. The propriety of calling our organization a *school*, is more and more manifest. The principle which was adopted from the first, that *Education* is the only business of the children of God, is working itself through, and possessing the general feeling. We are delighted to see all around us, a self-sustained ambition, to 'get wisdom, get understanding,' and 'take fast hold of instruction—an ambition that combines the curiosity and improbability of children, with the purpose and faithfulness of mature years.

To relate a little personal experience:—About a year ago, we were very much impressed with certain ideas expressed in the Circular in the following words:—'The Spirit of truth is a spirit of memory. If we go to work right, we can learn any thing we wish to easily, and *never forget it*. The reason why we forget things is, that we *jump* in acquiring them, and leave the space between our actual, present knowledge and what we learn, not cleared up.' A view of this truth induced us to give up all uninspired study, as poor economy. We did not know



for ourselves what to take next, or how far we had *built up to*, in the true order. The Spirit of truth only knew what would be really profitable for us to attend to next.—We heartily committed ourselves to this teacher for direction, in confidence that it would accept an obedient scholar. This course put an end immediately to all imitation of others, obliging us to watch our own interior instincts. Another effect was to exclude entirely the stimulus of vain glory and emulation which is so apt to corrupt the genuine thirst for improvement. Then it provided against a natural tendency to over-estimate intellectual attainments. We felt, in committing our education to the Spirit of truth, that we should be led into attention to the different departments of heart and intellect, in the order of their value in the sight of God; and learn how to make the intellect serve the heart. We knew this teacher would certainly keep the ‘charity that edifieth,’ ahead of all other wisdom.

Every way it proves a most satisfactory experience. Our taste for learning is chastened and purified, while it enjoys gratification with new zest; and we feel sure that there is a consecutive idea and order in our studies now, which will make them permanently available and fruitful.

#### Indignation against Antinomianism.

[AN EVENING AT BROOKLYN.]

After reading the Report on ‘Excitement and Influx,’ Mr. N—— proposed to test the principles there set forth, by an experiment, in which we should rouse ourselves against the spirit of Antinomianism.

I can see, said Mr. N——, that Antinomianism is a desperate evil; it is the devil. And yet we are not very much excited against it—there is no great influx of the antagonist spirit. I propose that every one in the room stir themselves up against Antinomianism, and contribute to the discussion, and so get up all the indignation they can. The more machines are turned, the more electricity will be excited, and if all exercise themselves in

this way, we may get up a tremendous thundergust of spirit against it. It is at least a fair chance for experiment, to test the law of excitement and influx.

I will begin by calling up the old arguments of past hatred—the causes of wrath which belong to recollection. It is plain as daylight, that the spirit of the experience described in the 7th of Romans is Antinomianism. The churches have a great deal to say against Antinomianism, and use that word as an epithet of disgrace against us; and yet, in adopting the 7th of Romans as their text and standard, they show that they are steeped in Antinomianism themselves. What can be more complete Antinomianism, than a confession and allowance of sin, while they claim to be under the grace of God? Observe, they profess to be living not under the law, but under the New Covenant. They call themselves by the name of Christ, whose office was to save his people from their sins—they acknowledge in word his death, resurrection, and ministry, and claim to be members of him; and still they can only say, ‘When I would do good evil is present with me. The good that I would, I do not, and the evil that I would not that I do.’ Their only confession is, that they know their duty, and would be glad to do it, but continually fail to do it—find it impossible, and expect to find it so. The meaning of such talk is just this: ‘I can do nothing of myself, and God is not faithful enough, and has not grace enough to do for me: and so I must expect to live along in sin, till he in his sovereign mercy, at death or some other time, sees fit to save me. What can be more complete Antinomianism than this? The Churches are full of it. And we, as Perfectionists, have always berated them unsparringly for their doctrine and experi-

ence in this respect. We have rebuked and rejected them from the beginning, for lying down under the 7th of Romans experience, and not getting the better of sin. As Perfectionists we stand dead set against that spirit in the Churches; and we may stir up to begin with all our accustomed repugnance, all our past hostility to the churches, and turn it in against the spirit of Antinomianism; for that is at once the secret of their position, and the most deadly element of their opposition to Perfectionism.

Another great matter of hatred that may be thrown in to increase the excitement against Antinomianism, is the perception we have got of spiritual wickedness in individual cases. All that we have said against Charles H. Weld—all the hatred and horror which his character has inspired, is really against Antinomianism. For that is the very essence of his spirit. He is a living embodiment of the 7th of Romans experience, carried up to the highest pitch of spirituality and refined deceitfulness—confessing impotence under the grace of God. There is where he stuck when I first knew him: he saw the truth clearly, but could not stir—could not confess Christ, and rise up to his duty; and there he has stood ever since.

The essence of it is laziness—laziness perfected by all manner of subtleties, and plausible excuses. An antinomian theory in his case, and in all others, is really intended and used as a protection of laziness. When a person gets into a state of weakness—impotence of life produced by self-abuse and sin—or if they are so by inheritance—whatever the cause may be—their weakness and impotence of life, and aversion to serious self-exertion must be justified and protected; and the person must go about to

find some theory that will make out such a state of things innocent and necessary. In that view a whole theological theory may be constructed—a man may show himself a zealot in religion and theology, and a loyal advocate of the grace of God, when really his sole object is to protect his own laziness. I believe that is true of T. D. W—— of B——, F—— and others. They would not confess it, and probably they are not thoroughly conscious themselves that such is their motive; but Satan takes advantage of their predisposition that way—they have a strong feeling of the irksomeness of real spiritual exertion, and the devil takes advantage of it to shape their ideas and theories in accordance with their feelings, and so they surround themselves with an antinomian wall of protection, against the stimulating influences of the spirit of God. Their spiritual laziness, or death, is the devil's soil in which to sow delusions—it puts them in close sympathy with Satan.—Laziness is the real nature of his life; and all his turning and twisting and seeming industry, is only to protect himself in it.

Here is the great war between God and the devil—between life and death. What is laziness, but death? It is darkness, and the mother of darkness—and Antinomianism as a theory, is an attempt to justify it. It is darkness pretending to be light—laziness and death, claiming permission of Christ and peaceable alliance with his spirit.

*Mr. S.*—I have suffered a great deal from this spirit. It has made me feel at times, as though it was a hard thing to serve God. Now I see that the spirit of discouragement is mere laziness—too lazy to overcome and inherit all things.

*Mr. N.*—See what a representation this antinomian spirit gives of God. It is true,

looking at things in a secondary way, we talk about the influences of the devil—of persons and circumstances around us, &c.; but, after all, the true and whole-sale view is, that God Almighty is always dealing with us—arranging our circumstances, and disposing our situations with exact reference to our resources.—For if that is not true, we could have no reasonable hope of salvation. There would be no ground for the consolations of that promise, ‘All things shall work together for good.’ ‘He will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able,’ &c. How could he say that, if we are at liberty to suppose that the devil and chance have an equal share with him in disposing of our circumstances—if it is not the true view that he has control of the whole of them, and that all our surroundings, and the various influences which affect us, are to be referred to God’s arrangement. But the antinomians say that God pitches in the hay faster than they can mow it away. If I hire a boy to go on the scaffold and take away hay, and then pitch it in to him in unreasonable quantities, and at an unreasonable rate, so that he can justly complain of being over-tasked and in danger of smothering, I am condemned as a cruel man. Well, if it is true, as the antinomians say, that they cannot serve God—that temptations come upon them too strong, and misleading circumstances surround them that they are unable to cope with, then it is true that God pitches in hay to them faster than they can mow away. I say, curse the spirit that will accuse God in that way.

God knows how to place circumstances around us adapted to our case just as we know how to adapt employment to a boy; and if we don’t mow away our hay, if we let it accumulate and get smothered, it is

not because he pitches it in too fast, but because we are lazy and take up some antinomian theory which justifies us in doing nothing. And in these circumstances, it is good that he lets it come in and piles it up in smothering quantities, that he may wake us up. Don’t think it is the devil that is pitching in the hay. It is not he that is on the load—nor human beings, nor principalities nor powers. It is God himself that is pitching in the hay; otherwise, we could have no assurance whatever of salvation. The whole gospel is a declaration that no more hay shall be pitched in than we can mow away.

*Mrs. N.*—I think in this view, we can count it all joy when we fall into temptations. Certainly count it all joy when the hay is pitched in just as fast as we can mow it away. We shall get through the sooner—the exercise will wake us up and put us in a good state of perspiration.

*Mrs. C.*—If there was no Christ, it would not be surprising if we fell into this slack antinomian way of thinking and feeling. But with a Christ who we know is omnipotent, it is a shame to be discouraged, or to think we can’t do, and do cheerfully, what God gives us to do.

*Mrs. S.*—I have been very full of that spirit—perfectly saturated with it. But I feel now in love with the opposite spirit. I feel as though I had lately been put on a tread-wheel, where I am forced to go. And as *Mrs. N.*—says, the exercise and exertion of obedience, raises an agreeable glow. Now, when temptations come up, it is a real pleasure to chase and drive them away, instead of lying down under them as I used to.

*Mr. N.*—That is the true view of it. Get above your task. God gives you your task, surrounds you with circumstances adapted to try the strength of your

faith. If you can't cope with them, and master them, it is because you don't put forth your strength. We get our very life and growth by putting forth our strength. It throws us into sympathy with eternal life.

*Mr. H.*—I believe the last remark is true, and have been impressed with the idea before in an indefinite way. Those spots in my experience have been the most satisfactory to me, where all my strength was called out, and I was wide awake. Though I saw there was a good deal to mow away, I was also conscious of strength to meet it.

*Mr. N.*—The reason for this lies in the philosophy of the article we have just read. When we put forth our energy to the mightiest extent possible in faith, we are turning the machine. We strike a chord of vibration that connects with the Almighty himself: there is a return influx of omnipotence. Our excitement of ourselves is not the whole. The temporary excitement made in faith, lets in a permanent infusion of omnipotence. Our life remains at the point which it was strained up to. To this lazy antinomian spirit, it is the hardest of all work to lay a-bed. It is terrible hard work to do any thing; and come to try it, it is hard and wearisome to do nothing. It is not the labor of what it does that tires; it is actual weariness of existence itself.

Paul says, 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' There are a great many passages of which that is an example. Now the question is, how can that be done?—how can we be strong in the Lord? Is there any propriety in such exhortations? The antinomians would say, 'Your strength is just what it is—if God has given you strength, well and good; if not, you

can't help it—you can't be any stronger than you are.' But Paul says, 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' Do something that will make you strong! If you ask what you can do, I say, produce a self-excitement in the right direction; and that will bring on you an influx of omnipotent power: put on might.

*Mr. B.*—'Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.' I have felt the force of that passage. I feel that God has given us all that is necessary, and we have no business in an idle spirit to ask for more. I feel bound to work out my salvation with what he has given me, and believe I can do it.

*Mr. N.*—In dealing with temptations—mowing them away—we may look out the secondary causes of temptations, see where they come from, and who is the inlet of them. But we have no business, in tracing them to their author, to do so with a view to excuse ourselves, or make complaint of others. If we do, we are making use of the truth as a direct means of discouragement. It is dropping our pitchforks, and admitting that the devil pitches hay, and that it is useless to work. But that is charging God with unfaithfulness. We should take care how we use the truth: its proper use is to strengthen us in the conclusion that God arranges all our circumstances. This will take away all grudging and bitterness against individuals who have tempted or injured us, and, on the whole, fill us with thankfulness.

There is no rational hope of salvation except as we can believe that God pitches in the hay. We cannot rationally hope to escape being smothered on any other hypothesis. If it is left to chance, or to the will of human beings, we are at least as likely to be smothered as not. The

only rational hope is, that God pitches in the hay—and the whole of it—not a part. If he pitches in as much as he thinks is reasonable, and the devil slyly throws in as much more, we shall certainly be smothered. The broad ground of faith and the Bible, is the one we must stand on. That refers all things to God, and promises that all things shall work together for our good.

We may be sure our circumstances are not beyond our strength, but just such as are adapted to it. God is not a hard master; and if we fail of disposing of our circumstances, it is because we are lazy.

*Mrs. N.*—I can see that I have sometimes thought the devil pitched part of the hay, or that I was a kind of battlefield for temptation.

*Mr. N.*—You must make this distinction: the devil is the hay which God pitches in. We may call every thing that affects us, hay—the devil and all; and God pitches it in, in proportion to our strength. Did not he pitch Satan into Job?—not more than Job could dispose of, it is true; and he never has in our case. We have always mowed it away, and always shall.

This turns the very engine of Antinomianism against itself. This doctrine that ‘all things are of God,’ is the special strong-hold of Antinomianism. They say, ‘Because all things are of God, we need not do any thing to help ourselves: let circumstances determine our course.’ We turn that right round the other way, and say, ‘Because all things are of God, we are sure our circumstances are not too strong for us: we can do right anywhere and everywhere.’

Here, too, is the best weapon against evil-thinking; it is the only doctrine that

finally discards it. Take the doctrine that God pitches in the hay—and all of it—and then if you believe that God is good, there is no ground left for evil-thinking. Consider what a tremendous amount of hay was pitched in to Jesus Christ, and he mowed it all away in perfect good nature. Pilate and Herod, scoffing, and abuse—the nails on one hand, and Satan plying him with all the spiritual oppression conceivable, on the other—large pitchfork-fulls rolling in upon him, and yet he disposed of it all handsomely. Well, now in the account Christ gave before-hand of these transactions, and in the account of the disciples afterwards, it is always assumed that God pitched in the hay to the minutest straw. ‘Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain.’ Go through the account of the crucifixion, and you will find that all is referred to the determinate counsel of God. ‘These things happened that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.’ He recognized it, and therefore did not complain. He did not think evil even of those who crucified him, counting them only as hay. ‘Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ He did not find fault with them, or with God, or the devil, but quietly performed the work that was given him to do. ‘Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour.’ And he says about the same time, ‘Now shall the prince of this world be cast out’—as though he had said, ‘For this cause was I placed here, to mow him away; let him come on.’ This is a splendid view of things; I thank God for it, and trust we shall get strained up to the pitch of

faith that it points out, and shall stay there.

There can be no possible circumstances where we shall have occasion to abate our testimony; we can always be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. For, suppose at any time we feel dragged out and weak, Paul has provided for just such a case, and shows it is the very time to give scope to faith: 'When I am weak,' he says, 'then am I strong.' Suppose you are surrounded by tremendous circumstances, and the hay is coming in like a storm, and on the other hand you feel weak as death—that is all that can be said on the side of difficulty. Well, Paul would say of such circumstances, 'Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness. When I am weak then am I strong.' That state is favorable to faith, and therefore favorable to the influx of omnipotence.

Now I trust we shall be a united family on this platform. Our creed shall be that *God pitches in the hay, and therefore we are well able to mow it away!* There is faith and works properly connected and combined. The true relation between faith and works is in that creed. It cuts up Calvinism and Arminianism both. The Arminians will not admit that God pitches in the hay; and the Calvinists deny that we can mow it away. It is our old New Haven creed. I began with that, and took my stand against the church upon it. I stick to it yet, and shall stick to it. It has proved true up to this time. You see this is an expression of *faith*—not an expression of confidence in our own strength, but an expression of faith. It grounds our self-exertion on faith.

*Mr. H.*—Yes; and we are always sure if it is grounded there, it will be successful. It is due to God to say that I cannot put my finger on a spot where I have brought an issue of that kind, that I have not been successful.

*Mr. N.*—This is the creed of Perfectionists. We believe we can live without sin; and it is on this ground. The churches believe they can't mow away as fast as God pitches in. They teach that

God does not expect they will do so. This is Antinomianism. 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure. Antinomians make that the reason why they should not work out their own salvation; But Paul had the right of it. The fact that God works in us, is the reason, and the best of all reasons to a rational person, why we should work out our own salvation. We are connecting the two things together—that is to say, our self-exertion is grounded on faith. There is salvation. Our rest is to be attained, not by getting rid of work, but by getting rid of laziness. The popular way of seeking rest is to get rid of work; but I don't believe that any body ever found rest in that way. Let in the Spirit of Christ, and there will be no such repugnance to action. We have to strain ourselves up to exertion in order to touch Christ and get the influx. We must put ourselves to school, as apprentices to Christ, to learn his manly unflinching spirit. Get that, and we shall find rest, and not in any other direction

**BEAUTY.**—That which men call beauty, is the result produced in the mind by certain pleasure-giving principles in nature, which are more or less vividly felt and appreciated through our soul-instincts, but which are only fully recognised and understood by the aid of our reason, and by reflection. We say that the horse is a beautiful animal: we ask ourselves why? We compare it with other creatures, and other things; as the human form, the antelope, the greyhound, a vase, a leaf, a flower: we perceive that there is one circumstance peculiar to them all; the outline (as we call the extremities of things) is composed of curves. All motion is curvilinear: all the heavenly bodies are circular: the earth is a circle: the sea forms a portion of this circle. Water, therefore, which we are apt to say seeks a level, is not level, but even in a tea-cup, partakes of the great circle of the earth. Cut a canal ten miles in length, and make it a true mathematical level; it is impossible to fill it with water. The circle, in some of its thousand varieties of curve, enters more or less into nearly all natural forms. We perceive that, modified by another principle which is peculiar to the straight line, all curvilinear forms are pleasure-giving.

and are thence deemed beautiful. But why? The straight line runs into infinitude; it has not in itself the property of encompassing any thing: a cube of an inch might be but a portion of a cube of infinite dimensions; it has not the quality of completeness; two straight lines running parallel for ever could not enclose any thing. The curve, on the contrary, has this property of completeness, in its very nature. A circle of an inch diameter is a thing complete in itself; it is not, it cannot be, a portion of a larger circle. The mind cannot contemplate infinitude; the thought is beyond its grasp; the idea is never perfect: we cannot comprehend and know it. The feeling is sublime: there is awe, but not pleasure in it. Not so with the circle; no matter how immense it be, the mind can travel round it, and this instantly and without an effort: there is something distinct from all other things: something it can contemplate, comprehend, and know. This, we perceive is the reason why curvilinear forms afford pleasure.

[*Home Journal.*]

## CORRESPONDENCE.

*Southampton, Mass., March 10, '51.*

DEAR FRIENDS:— \* \* \* I am glad of the change you have made, by which I have the Circular every week; and feel it a privilege to give in my testimony in favor of the paper, its doctrines and sentiments generally. In reading last week the terms on which you propose to give the paper to subscribers, the thought came new to me that we were left to *judge for ourselves* what value it was to us. I thought that faithfulness on my part required me to make my own estimate of its real value to me, without being governed by the price, \$1,00 for 26 Nos. Another thought was, how many of the friends scattered abroad have ever complied with the terms on which you publish the paper: the judgment calls for the 'amount which agrees with its value and their ability.' A word to the wise is sufficient.

I love to read the paper. The 'Home-Talks' and 'Criticisms' come home to me, and vibrate in sweet harmony through my whole being. Self-examination and self-criticism have been steadily at work in me for about one year, as never before. It has been, and is now, a furnace work.

The word *refinement* is a sweet word to me. I feel an ambition stirred up to be prepared for a home relation to the best and most refined society in the kingdom of God. I suppose it is almost needless to say to you, that examination and criticism brings with it deep suffering and severe trials. I have found it so, but I am learning fast to take it joyfully;—every day brings with it the conscious evidence that I have a steady increase of joy and consolation, that these trials are working out for me the peaceable fruits of love and righteousness. It seems to me the time is come for me to rejoice in the Lord, confessing Jesus Christ as my salvation, 'the one altogether lovely.'

In looking over the past history of Perfectionism, I fully believe there has been much false instruction, and many corrupt communications received; and the minds of many thereby have been defiled. I have suffered through these things myself. I find it profitable to be corrected; it increases life and love, and makes me more happy, and I trust more faithful and obedient. I am thinking this morning that the third chapter of Zephaniah would be a good letter to send out in the Circular to its readers—a portion to all in good season. There are some brethren I used to love years ago, I should love to hear from through the Circular, and accept your offer to such, to use the paper as a medium of communication; and if this as a whole, or in part, is worth a place in your paper, I should be glad to call it a letter to them. It is the best I can do.

Desiring to be faithful and true to the faith once delivered to the saints—stirred up to duly appreciate the gift of God, which is eternal life—I remain your brother and friend, SARDIS CHAPMAN.

*Manlius, March 14, 1851.*

DEAR BRO. L.—I was glad to learn from your letter that you were prospering and overcoming your difficulties arising from false sympathies, and influences coming in from former associations, and I rejoice in your heroism in the work of self-clearing. I have come where I am

ready to obey Christ's injunction, 'if thy right hand, or thy right eye offend, cast it from thee.' I have had some of this work to do, and am prepared to progress in it. Our salvation depends on it, and on our clearing ourselves effectually from the spirits of the disobedient, leaving no channel of communication open for the influx of spiritual wickedness. I have come by experience where I can detect false spirits, by seeing what attitude they stand in, who they are for—there are only two sides, and 'he that is not for me, is against me.' And I find I have to set down nearly all my old Perfectionist friends in their present unbelief, in this company, and as more or less 'injurious,' according to their knowledge of the truth, and their unfaithfulness and treachery to it.

At this time my mind is clear to judge, not only the antinomianism, general unfaithfulness, and treachery of the old Perfectionists, but the specific working of a rebellious self-will, under the shelter of the Universalist spirit. I can see that it is that spirit, that claims so much sympathy for the body and externals; it is the spirit of the flesh warring against the Spirit of truth. It is a real spirit of irreverence and disobedience to God—thrusting forward the claims of humanity and benevolence in a blind way, against the rights and demands of God—showing its impiety and infidelity, by making its own standard of righteousness, and not bowing in veneration to God and his kingdom.

I want to separate myself from its abominations more thoroughly than ever, and from all those who represent it, as the enemies of the progress of Christ's kingdom on earth, and of all truth. It has been the bane of my life. I see, too, that egotistical self-will and pride prompt this class to justify themselves, at the cost of humble faithfulness to Christ;—and so their self-righteousness has become a perfect protection against his truth and grace. My heavens brighten up in proportion as I see clearly the nature of my past experience, my dead works, and the

connection I have stood in, and take effectual measures to extricate myself. I rely on the *present*, all-prevailing grace of Christ for present, future and everlasting salvation, and that I may 'be neither barren nor unfruitful, but always abounding in the work of the Lord.'

This region is a grand field to observe the working and final fruit of the influence we are separating ourselves from.—In some there is a sickly indifference to good or evil,—no power to devote themselves whole-heartedly to God's cause, neither a heart to go wholly into the world—'neither cold nor hot;' and over the whole this pervading, antinomian, Universalist atmosphere. I see no way of recovery from the snare of the devil, or hope of salvation to those under this paralysis, but to arise in the strength of faith, and repent of their unfaithfulness to Christ, and their treachery to his cause and truth. The judgment will prove that they have, by their life, betrayed him into the hands of sinners. But 'the wise shall understand;'—and I am persuaded that some are wise, and will yet do the truth. I wish to testify my growing attachment to the Oneida Free Church, and my increasing union and fellowship with it, through the love of Christ and communion of the Spirit.

Your brother, M. L. WORDEN.

—The prodigal son had wasted his portion in riotous living, and yet his father met him with kisses. It was because he was *penitent*, and said with a broken heart, 'I have sinned, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' If he had gone to his father in a self-justifying spirit, and tried to extenuate his offences, and retain his father's respect—if he had asked to be regarded as a son—he would doubtless have been rejected with disgust.

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