

THE
FREE CHURCH CIRCULAR.

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

ONEIDA RESERVE, APRIL 8, 1851.

[NO. 7.]

Home-Talk by J. H. N.—No. 58.

[REPORTED FOR THE CIRCULAR, FEB. 3, 1851.]

DELUSION AND ITS TESTS.

When we see what a vast amount and refinement of delusion there is in the world, the temptation is to wonder and be discouraged, or, at least, in some sort to find fault, and almost impeach God's goodness for suffering such a state of things to be. But for my part I am saved from that temptation. I see it is a fact without mistake, that the power of darkness has been allowed to manufacture delusion to an enormous extent and in endless varieties, and of almost infinite subtlety; and I take that fact as good—as a part of the 'all things' that work together for good to me. I have covenanted to endorse God's administration in advance, without understanding all the principles of it, and this I find forms a part of his administration. I therefore put my name to it without hesitation or doubt, approving of God's policy in the matter, and expecting in proper time fully to comprehend it.

Whatever other use it may be for God's purposes, I see it is an excellent thing for my education—sharpening to my wits. Every new delusion that attacks mankind summons me to a more

perfect exercise of my perceptive powers. I get good out of it. It gives me a more perfect possession of myself, and a greater opportunity of testing the faithfulness of God and the power of truth to compete with the power of darkness.

I acquiesce with the arrangement of God by which such a vast amount of delusion has been manufactured, as I acquiesce in the tempestuous and perilous character of the ocean. Awful and threatening as the ocean is, it is and has been the best school the world has ever seen, in which men and nations have been exercised to courage, adroitness, sagacity, and promptness in adapting means to ends. So of the great ocean of delusion on which we find ourselves. The exercise with it, is making a sailor of me. Its rocks and quicksands and surgings, are training me; and I most heartily acquiesce in an arrangement which is educating me to the highest sincerity, in the perils and tempests of delusion. The ocean is friendly to the sailor—not in a direct way, but in the way of training him to conquer difficulty: it is a friendly enemy to him. The sailors' life is one of warfare with rocks and waves and icebergs. His eye is on them as enemies; and they train him. He rises and glories over them all, and would not dispense with one of

the dangers of the sea, because he loves to set himself to the task of combating and conquering them.

I count all the delusions the devil ever invented, as friendly enemies; and, as they roll up one after another, they stir me as the waves of the sea, to exultation of spirit. 'The combat thickens—On ye brave!' is the tone of my spirit as they roll upon me from time to time. And I find myself in a state of serenity and equilibrium in regard to the whole of them, from the delusions of the heathen where the most disgusting objects are worshiped as God, up to the refined delusions of Swedenborg. I look upon them with a spirit of serenity, and am freely disposed, and have a quiet purpose to study them philosophically, as a matter of science. For the *truth* about any delusion is co-extensive with the greatness of its snare. That is to say, conceive of a snare as wide as the Atlantic ocean, and as minute and intricate in its meshes as gauze; and corresponding to every thread in that delusion, is a thread of truth about it in the mind of God. Follow it out, and there is a thread of scientific truth corresponding with every thought in the web of error. As the Spirit is given to lead us into all truth, I mean to follow the Spirit into minute acquaintance with every form of delusion, and so at last have a mind co-extensive with all delusion. I have before me doubtless a rich field, and I count myself blest in having such an amount of material to investigate.

I propose to take a general survey of the field of delusion to-night, and fix on some points by which we may judge summarily, and relieve our minds of a certain class of doubts: so that we may place ourselves in the attitude of students, and may examine calmly, not as devotees, nor yet as standing in fear of delusions, but

as students. It is necessary that we stand clear, and have full command of our faculties, in order to come to the investigation of religious delusions with decision and success. If we live partly in fear of them, or suspicions that there is some truth about them that we overlook, we are not in a condition to investigate; and it is equally opposed to investigation, to be in a state of bitter opposition and bigotry. We may say bigotry is fear. A person in a state of what is called bigotry, is afraid to investigate that which he feels such a repulsion to. A bigot against any system, is a narrow minded man, under a principality which holds him in a corner, just as really as the devotee of that system. The only condition for investigation, is one of thorough sincerity with no fear either way—the fear that makes the devotee of a system, or the bigot against it.

The first principle to adopt, as a just test of any doctrinal theory, is one derived from what we know to be a fact in human nature—that *spirit* is primary. God is a spirit—the center and most important element of the universe is a spirit—the great operations of our own interior, we know are primarily spiritual. These facts, set in order, argue certainly that any true theory—one coming out from God, the center—will be primarily spiritual in its character. By this test we throw out of account all systems that are principally theoretical or intellectual. This has a broad sweep. For instance the system of our Theological Seminaries is cut off at once, as a false system. For if they admit in some degree to the churches, and on special occasions, that the spirit is primary, yet the proportion of this element is so small among them that it is not worth insisting on. It stands out clear—open to the first im-

pression of the senses—that their system is a non-spiritual one. It is not from God. This test also lays out of view as not to be considered for a moment such a system as Universalism.

We assume then, that a true system will certainly have in it a primary and controlling development of spiritualism. And observe, by this test, the *religion of Christ and the apostles* is fully approved. The spiritual there comes out in due proportion, so that it is seen at a glance.

We come now to look for some test by which those systems which have a large development of spirituality in them, may be judged. This is necessary; for at the same time that the religion of Christ is approved by the test we have applied, so also is Mahometanism. And so are all the systems of modern fanaticism; Millerism, Shakerism, Mormonism and Swedenborgianism. The communications of the 'Rappings' may pass this test of spiritualism: so that it is necessary to find some other fair test that will relieve us of a great many of the spiritual systems that are abroad. And I shall now propose the test of *intellectual* development.

Forasmuch as God is light, and his spirit is the spirit of truth—the spirit of science; and as the perfection of human nature involves perfection of the understanding—involves education and high intelligence—it is apparent to me, that any system born in ignorance, thriving in ignorance, and adapted to a low, brutish state of human nature, one which despises science and education, or does not value them in due proportion, is to be laid aside. Such a system could not come out from God. The idea cannot be allowed for a moment. And neither does *this* test criticise the primitive Christians. For, as I have shown heretofore, Christianity came into the world after

long preparation. It was not till after a good deal of attention had been given to learning, and people had become accustomed to read and write, that Christ appeared. Not only the Jews, but the Greeks and Romans, were in a high state of advancement in these respects at the time of Christ's coming. And, you will observe, the gospel made no progress in any of the nations beside the Jewish, Greek, and Roman. It made no progress outside of the refined circle of mankind, who had been trained to serious education. It found its channel, and had its triumph, only among those who had learned to think, and read and write. I should say that primitive Christianity, looking at the time and circumstances of its origin, the state of the nations within which it flourished, and its own internal character, is strictly approved by this test. It requires intelligence; instead of despising education, it takes it for its preliminary, preparatory course. We may call the Primitive Church a higher school than any the world had at that time. It took in those who had passed through the schooling of the world and carried them forward into a higher course. It stood in the relation of a college to the academies of worldly learning.

But this test *does* clear the field of Mahometanism, of Mormonism, of Shakerism, of most of the hodge-podge spiritualisms. We need not stop to consider any of them at all. And if we want any stronger test, or a reduplication of evidence, we may proceed to raise the test of *moral* development. This is the right order, first the spiritual then the intellectual, and now we may raise the moral test. And we shall find on applying it, that most of the fanatical spiritualisms are thrown out by it as they were

by the intellectual test. We are sure that any truthful system—one that is really good—that came out from God the central light—will make people sincere, honest, and moral in the best sense of that word. By this test Mormonism and Mahometanism are condemned. Shakerism is very satisfactorily condemned by the previous test. We should not perhaps find fault with the Shakers on the ground of morality, or with their theory of morality as opposed to the world on various points. But an interior system of morality requires justice of character, an orderly state of the passions, abstinence from violence, &c., which is not found true of Mormonism, or Mahometanism. By this test both fail; and though Shakerism may not, yet as we have seen, it is still more clearly condemned by the intellectual test; for as a system, it avowedly renounces and repels intelligence.

The three tests that have been proposed, will also sweep Catholicism out of our way. The Catholic religion does not present enough, either of spiritual, intellectual or moral weight, to bring to bear any serious claim to our respect as a system coming out from God.

Well, after we have swept the field as with a swivel gun by all these tests, we still have left Swedenborgianism, and associated with it at present, A. J. Davisism and the 'Rappings.' These systems may claim to be well proportioned developments of the spiritual, intellectual and moral. What are we to do with them? How are we to judge where they come from? Here we shall have to dive deeper, and work slower and more closely to central truth. It will be more of a problem to dispose of these: the others we can pronounce upon pretty summarily; but now we come to systems which

propose themselves to us with a splendid fleece of wool upon them. If we can find out a way to judge these systems, I think we shall have no further difficulty, but shall be able to handle the most specious and refined delusions that Satan ever produced—his masterpieces of respectable spiritualism. Get a fair insight into one great system like that of Swedenborgianism, and it will put us into a position for judging a great many individual characters, like Charles H. Weld, who are affiliated to the same great spiritual dynasty of which Swedenborg is the centre. You will find that Swedenborg is the head of the principality of *respectable* spiritualism; and his system will finally swallow up all stragglers. Any one who takes to spiritualism, and at the same time loves intelligence and morality enough to keep them out of the lower form of spiritualism, unless they come into firm connection with Christ, will be sure to land in Swedenborgianism. Swedenborg, it is true, as head of the principality, has a good deal of rebellion to encounter; he finds that he can't keep his troops in order; many of the eggs which he hatches as hens, prove to be ducks, and turn out as A. J. Davis has, claiming independent perception. But they are still affiliated; and doubtless multitudes who deny that they belong to the system, and profess a good deal of independence of thought, are yet under the spirit, and really subjects of the Swedenborg dynasty.

Well, what is the test to be applied to this system? A system of truth, which Swedenborgianism professes to be, tho' spiritual in its nature, is still nothing but a *description of things seen*—a description of facts. It is of the nature of a geography or directory—or like a statement of things seen to exist in New York city, or of any other scene that a man

may look at. It is a *description* of things, nothing more. A theory of truth does not originate in man's mind, but is the report of his perceptions. Now in order to know whether a theory professing this character, is a theory of truth, it is necessary to know *the means of perceiving* which the man who describes had at the time of his story—whether he had good eyes, and a good position to see. If a man tells me that he has seen God, it is no use for him to go in his description beyond the simple range of his observation. I care nothing about his guesses, inferences, or theories about God, but only his perceived facts. Then, if he tells me what he has seen—describes facts—I am bound to attend to him. And I inquire, in the first place, whether he stood near God; whether his position and local facilities were good for seeing. I want to know further whether he is an honest and competent witness; and, if honest, whether his eyes and perceptive powers are good for seeing what he describes. Well, I see further, that in spiritual things, in phenomena pertaining to the deep things of God and the universe, *light* is required in order to accurate perception and accurate discrimination, as much as in the world of sense. If a man attempts to describe the City Hall to you, and you ascertain that he never saw it by daylight, was never in the city except in the evening, when he could only see it by lamplight, and in shadowy outline, you are sure that he cannot describe it correctly. Now apply the same principle to an attempt to give a description of the universe of truth, such as Swedenborg's. He professes to give an accurate, circumstantial account of God, and the foundation facts of the universe, on the ground that he has seen the things themselves. But

did he stand in daylight when he saw them? and was his eyesight good? For if he has been peeping into things in the dark, and seen only a shadowy outline of them, I cannot trust his description. I want to know where Swedenborg stood when he saw, as he said, the universe, Christ, and the principalities and powers of heaven and hell. And whether he saw these things in broad daylight, or only at a distance, and through a dark and misty medium. I may admit that he is intentionally honest in his statements, and yet, unless I know where he stood, and that it was broad daylight with him, I can never be sure that he saw things correctly.

The central element of the universe is light; and on the other hand, there is what Christ calls darkness—outer darkness, and a prince of that darkness. Now it may be that Swedenborg's view was taken from that quarter. The universe may perhaps be seen and described, from the region of outer darkness: and if so, the description of course is not trustworthy—the position of view is not a good one. Any dogmatism on this subject, must be grounded on actual sight; and such sight, in order to have any claim to our respect, must at least *profess* to have been taken from a central position. If a person professes to have stood in the central light where God is, and to have there seen things which he can describe, his claim is worthy of respect, and we will proceed to examine it; but if he does not make such a profession in regard to his position as a spectator, his revelation, whatever it is, may be laid aside at once—we need pay no attention to it as a matter of authority.

Now Swedenborg, Davis, and the 'Rappings,' do not profess, any of them to stand in the central light. It sweeps

broad, but correctly, to test things in this way. Look into Swedenborg's writings, and you find that he does not profess any acquaintance with the apostles or with the man Christ Jesus. His word continually is, 'the *angels*' showed me this, and told me that. Now we have the best evidence—better far than in the case of any other system—that Jesus Christ and his apostles were, and are now, in the central light. But Swedenborg, though he professed to be in open communication with the inhabitants of the spiritual world, had nothing to do with the apostles, more than is implied in a bare cursory mention of them once or twice. And when one of the 'rapping' characters, the spirit of Cornell, was examined, he, too, confessed that he had not seen the apostles: they were in a state invisible to and beyond him.

Observe, Christ came professing to be in the bosom of the Father—in central light. That is where we know truth comes from; and we know if he was there, that he was in the position to give us the truth. He and the apostles were in central, broad daylight, if they were where they professed to be: and that their claim was true in this respect, is sufficiently proved by an inspection of their works and character. You will find more evidence of this kind, a great deal more, than can be produced for the truth of any other system. The whole tenor of their words and works goes to show that they were, and are now, in central communication with God; and if we cannot have perfect certainty in such a case, we must go by the highest probability, which manifestly rests with them, and sustains their profession. We find Swedenborg, on the other hand, without any such profession as Christ had, saying merely that his eyes were opened, and not that he was in the bosom of the Father. And with this fatal lack of profession on his part, we do not find the evidence of works and character to support such a profession if he had made it. There is, then, no evidence of his standing where he could see with precision the

things that he reports; but by his own tacit admission, and by all the personal evidence in the case, we are sure that he viewed things from a very imperfect position: we cannot trust his report.

But after a man has satisfied us as to his position for seeing central facts, then we may proceed to test him in regard to specific truth; and here, again, it is demonstrated that Swedenborg did not stand in clear daylight. Take, for instance, the subject of the Second Coming. He saw nothing of the facts on that point any better than the churches do—saw nothing of the truth that we see, clear as the sun in the heavens. On the other hand, he saw things about it that are absolutely untrue—talks about a coming that took place in 1776, and applies the predictions concerning the Second Coming, in the same loose way that the churches do, and evidently was in the same dimness that they are, in regard to the whole subject. We need not go further. We find in his system no proof whatever that he was in a situation to describe the invisible existences correctly; and in this specific case, we are furnished with the most complete evidence that he was not in communication with the Father, or with any of those who are in communication with him.

I do not care how honest he may have seemed to be—he has not seen the truth, or any thing like it. You may say it is not necessary to be in central light to see truth. This is admitted in regard to a certain range of truth. You can see the things in this room by the light of that candle. So by the light that is given men, a great many true things are seen; truth in mathematics and the sciences—sufficient truth to lead them on to the perfect light. But you cannot see an expanse of fifty miles by that candle. When you come to regions and countries, the light of the sun is required to describe them. And the great expanse of universal truth which Swedenborg pretends to describe, requires the light of the eternal sun, to give a correct description. It cannot be seen by candle-light

nor by star-light. As Swedenborg professes to have received his communications from 'the angels,' the most that can be said of him is, that he saw the universe by star-light.

What has been said of Swedenborg we may say of the 'Rappings.' We have watched them in all candor, and shall continue to do so. But before taking their communications as gospel, we must ask for their credentials. I want to know where they see things from. And thus far we have found them like Swedenborg—not in the bosom of the Father—not even professing to be there, or in communication with those who we know are in that central place. I don't care how specious and exuberant their revelations may be, or how much apparent truth they may pour out on the world; until they give evidence that they are in central light, and acquainted with Christ, the Apostles, and those who stand round the throne, I am sure they are undertaking what they can't do, to see and describe the universe by candle-light. We call them delusions: and as those who are determined to become sailors, and conquer the perils of the ocean of delusion, we may settle it as a principle, now and forever, to pay no attention, in the way of respect, to any system which does not bring credentials of positive communication with the center.

I attend to Swedenborg and the 'Rappings' as a matter of study, with the sure assumption, at the same time, that they are delusions of the devil—views of the eternal taken from a wrong position—charts of universal truth worked out in the dark. I say, I assume that they are delusions, and study them as such. I will avail myself of such partial knowledge of things as they can get by carrying a candle, but I utterly refuse their theories as true charts of the continent of universal truth. Sunlight is necessary to make a true chart. When A. J. Davis or the 'Rappings' profess to come from Christ or the apostles with a message, they will present the first demand on my respect that I can acknowledge;

then I will put them to the test; and if they give as good evidence as Christ and the apostles did, that they actually come from the presence of the Father, then I will believe them. But until they do so, I shall pursue 'the even tenor of my way,' seeking acquaintance with Christ, and expecting to get the true chart from him, and shall refuse all others as snares.

I am willing for myself to stand this test, and do not wish people to receive my communications till they have evidence that I am in communication with Christ and those in the bosom of the Father. There is one thing, I *profess* to be in such communication; and so far at least, come within the rule. I profess to be in communication with Christ, and to describe things from his position: the labor of my life has been to come into such fellowship, acquaintance, and communication with him and his associates, that I might know for myself, and be able to describe things correctly, as they appear in the central light. So far, my *profession* is correct. Then it is to be inquired if my works back it up—if there is good practical evidence of its truthfulness. And on sufficient evidence that my works do sustain my profession, then my theory, however irregularly presented, off-hand, by piecemeal, and without the overshadowing magnificence of popular revelations, is still to be received with attention. A fool could stand and report verbatim what Christ said to him, and in so doing, could give a better chart of the universe, than Swedenborg or Davis; and on sufficient evidence that I am in the position I profess to be, persons who go through any process of reasoning on the subject, will come to the conclusion that they had better listen to me.

I don't know but we shall have to apply still closer tests than those I have mentioned. I don't know but wonder-workers will arise, professing to come from Christ and the apostles. They have not done so yet, but as the crisis of judgment approaches, it would not be unreasonable to expect impostors—false

prophets and false Christs; who would deceive if it were possible the very elect. If Swedenborg produced a picture of the universe by starlight, others may arise, who will give us a picture of it by moonlight; and claim for it the authority of God. It will be well to prepare ourselves against such operations; girding ourselves with truth—putting on the whole armor of light.

They must in the first place, be approved by deeds. Any palpable deficiency in the spiritual, intellectual, or moral, will exclude them without further criticism. A system coming from the center, we may be sure will be thoroughly spiritual, highly intellectual, and beautifully moral. Apply some of the sharpest tests that are in use among us, and all the systems that have been named, are found to fail signally in the point of morals.—The truth that we live by in reference to freedom from egotism, selfishness, and sin, would sweep them all away in a moment. These tests would fully answer for us, though they would not do for popular use.

A remark might be made on 'the rappings.' In these communications, the tendency of both parties, is to run into the channel of natural relationships. Those who communicate, are generally relatives; and this medium is used for passing a great deal of natural affection between dead and living friends—fathers and children, &c. Most all the questions take the turn of inquiry as to the welfare of relatives, and the spirits generally answer favorably. Now by the severe test that we are put under, and by the explicit test Christ gives, in regard to forsaking earthly relationships, and placing the spiritual entirely over them, these spirits are shown to be nowhere near Christ. We are far nearer to him than they, so far as the evidence of this test goes. We consider it very childish to be hampered with the bondage of attachment to earthly connections. The supremacy of spiritual over natural relations, is perfectly familiar with us, and is treated as a matter of course. Swe-

denborg and Davis both carry marriage, their wives and children, into the other world. That single fact shows that they are babies that have never been weaned. We know that a person is not really weaned—has not entered the first stage of what we call the second birth—till he has at his tongue's end that saying of Christ, 'Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? He that doeth the will of God, the same is my mother, and sister, and brother.'

The Free Church Circular.

HARRIET H. SKINNER, EDITRESS.

ONEIDA RESERVE, APRIL 8, 1851.

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

THE THIRD ANNUAL REPORT of the Association is printed, ready for distribution. It has already been forwarded to many of our subscribers of whom we knew enough to warrant its welcome; and it will be furnished on the same free terms with our other publications to any other subscribers who may apply for it. It is a pamphlet of 32 pages, and the nominal price of it, 12 1-2 cents.

FOR THE CIRCULAR.

Freedom and Progress.

Newark, March 26, 1851.

TO THE EDITRESS:—I find myself in circumstances at the present time, where it seems expedient for me to publicly define my religious position. I have been for the last ten years a nominal member of the 'Free Church' of this city—now almost the only church of that name living, if even this may be said to live. I have permitted myself to be so regarded, as I saw no particular reason why I should have any concern about the matter. But this church has recently installed a new pastor, and I suppose he has awakened them to a sense of their past remissness and put them

upon taking up the stitches they have dropped; and in consequence I received a note a few weeks since citing me to appear before the session of the church for trial. In declining to appear as cited, I thought it proper to present a statement of my position and views to the pastor: a copy of which I herewith enclose to you, and also a copy of the notice I received. Some two or three weeks after this correspondence, as I have been informed in an indirect way by some who attend the Free Church, my name was publicly announced with others who were declared to be no longer members of that church on account of neglecting the ordinances, &c. Being therefore publicly represented as no longer in my former religious standing, I think it is proper that I should as publicly as possible explain my present position.

I left the 'Free Church of old times' because it proved itself to me not to be a school of progression. I will now say that I have joined the Oneida Free Church because it has shown to me that *it is, pre-eminently*, such a school. For some years after withdrawing my fellowship from the former Free Church, I stood in an isolated position as to outward church fellowship, not being able to find any visible organized body which to my view bore the marks of the true church of Christ. In this situation I found it my privilege to assert and rejoice in my identity with the invisible 'Church of the first-born' and with its invisible, living head, Jesus Christ. But since then I have had an opportunity to examine the writings of Mr. J. H. Noyes, and to form an intimate, personal acquaintance with him, and the Free Church connected with him; and have become perfectly satisfied that they are an organization repre-

senting the true life of Christ in a visible form: and I rejoice in the privilege of acknowledging my identity with them as such.

Yours sincerely, WM. R. INSLEE.

THE CITATION.

Newark, Feb. 11, 1851.

WM. R. INSLEE—

Dear Sir:—I am directed by vote of session, to cite you to appear before them, and show cause, if any you have, why we should not proceed against you on a charge of neglect of Christian ordinances, and of the duties involved in the marriage covenant.

CHARLES BEECHER,
— Moderator.

REPLY.

Newark, Feb. 12, 1851.

REV. C. BEECHER—

Dear Sir:—In reply to the citation which you have sent me, I will state sincerely my reasons for originally withdrawing from the fellowship of the Free Church, and also my reasons for now declining to obey its mandates, or in any way to recognize its authority over me.

When I became a believer in Christ, my spirit entered a school of progression; I joined the visible church on the supposition that it was a class in that school advancing under the teachings of the Spirit of truth, towards holiness and the millennium. Robinson's famous address to the Pilgrims clearly and beautifully presents the progressive principle which the spirit of Christ infused into my heart, and which I believe is the vital principle of a true Christian church. My first connection was with the regular Presbyterian church; I left it because it proved not to be a progressive school. The Free Church, under the teachings of Fitch and Mahan, offered me new truth, and in loyalty to Robinson's counsel to the Pilgrims, I joined that church. The church which I left refused me a letter of dismission, and the Free Church advised and sanctioned my withdrawal, irregular as it was. In process of time, I

found that the Free Church also had ceased to be a school of progression. New truth on the subject of holiness presented itself to my understanding and heart, which the Free Church refused and persecuted. As I had left the Second Presbyterian church for their fellowship without leave, so I left them for the fellowship of Perfectionists without leave. I considered the principle of progression a 'higher law' than any church government or constitution. This is the answer of my conscience toward God, in justification of my original withdrawal.

As to the course I shall take with reference to the present citation to a trial, I might simply say, that I disregard the summons for the same reasons that justified my withdrawal; but other reasons occur to me, which I will briefly suggest. The facts of the case are these; I withdrew from the meetings and fellowship of the Free Church more than six years ago, and since that time have been well known in this vicinity as a Perfectionist. It is also more than three years since my connection with the Oneida Association, and my adherence to its social principles has been avowed and known. During all this time the Free Church has applied no discipline to me. It has seen the very delinquencies which it now charges upon me, for years, and has done nothing either to reclaim me, or to vindicate itself. It seems to me, therefore, that the church itself has substantially abandoned its authority over me, and sanctioned my withdrawal; otherwise, it has been guilty of such neglect of discipline as should in all conscience annul its charter. The reasonable view of the case seems to be, that as I withdrew, so the church without formality recognized the separation, and substantially dismissed me from their superintendence. In this view, the best course for the church to take now, is to erase my name from their books, and give themselves no further trouble about me. If they now wake up and pursue me with formalities which have been dispensed with so long, it will be fair to conclude that the spirit of the 'Fugitive

Slave Law' is at work in the Church, as well as in the State. At all events, I shall consider that the church has lost its claims on me by 'default,' and shall act accordingly.

My judgment is, that the Free Church, instead of summoning me, ought to put itself to the bar. The complaint which I believe will be substantiated against it in the day of judgment, is, that it is 'neither cold nor hot.' It has neither done justice to the doctrines of Perfectionists, by fairly examining them, nor has it been faithful to its own assumption of the falsehood of those doctrines, by disciplining and expelling Perfectionists.

While I decline submitting to the formalities of the church, I wish it to be understood that I am very willing to confer freely with you, or with any members of the church, in relation to my sentiments.

Yours very respectfully,

WM. R. INSLEE.

—It may be interesting to remind our readers that this Free Church pastor is the same Rev. Charles Beecher, who has distinguished himself heretofore for his independent, outlaw position toward church governments and schools of Theology, and is the author of two discourses published under the title, 'The Bible a sufficient Creed,' which were noticed, with extracts of considerable length, in the *Spiritual Magazine* Vol. 1st, No. 5th. In these discourses he takes the ground that the Creed system, which is supreme in all the evangelical churches, is no better than Popery—that it has the same effect to prohibit the Bible and freedom of thought, and that a Protestant apostasy as deplorable as that of Rome is in process of rapid development. He declares that spiritual martyrdom already threatens the man who dares to say, 'with the Bible alone he is perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work; and all the liberty the young minister has, is a choice of chains; a choice of handcuffs, whether he will wear the Presbyterian, or Methodist, or other evangelical handcuff.' This criticism of the ecclesiastical machinery was manifestly just—his plea for the Bible admirable—and from the character of these discourses we had rea-

son to expect his rapid advancement in Bible truth; but so far from progressing, it appears that he is actually leading his church back from the advanced position they had taken on the subject of holiness under Oberlin teaching, to the old Orthodox standard; and we fear that his chief claim to peculiarity, after all, will prove to be mere disrespect of ecclesiastical systems.

Intercourse with Hades.

The Tribune continues to be a faithful, candid, and very reliable chronicler of the "Spirit Manifestations;" and the manifestations themselves are compelling more and more attention, assuming new phases, and confounding all attempts to disprove their supernatural source. We notice meanwhile, in every thing we read, the circumstance alluded to in the concluding paragraph of the Home Talk of this No., that these manifestations are the medium almost exclusively of intercourse between *relatives*, or very intimate personal friends. In fact, the doctrine which the spirits take the most pains to promulgate, seems to be the guardianship of departed spirits over their living friends. Every thing indicates that the Rappings proceed from a sphere of spirits very far from celestial or angelic, very little removed from the earth; they evidently had no wings furnished them when they exchanged worlds. The reported conversations are generally dry enough, but we will quote one passage which has a little relish to it, from a writer who says he has asked the spirits, probably a thousand questions, and never received but one answer that was incorrect.

'At the close of one of the meetings, at which questions had been put to the spirits, the communication, 'We must go now,' was spelled out alphabetically. Upon the meeting again of the same individuals, the question was asked: 'why had you to go then?' A. We had duties to perform. Q. Do you as individuals have duties to perform? A. Yes. Q. Is the performance of those duties necessary

to a greater spiritual development. A. Yes. Q. Do you learn these duties by your own intuitive knowledge, or are they pointed out to you by another? A. By a higher power than even directs you my friends. Q. Will you tell us what power you refer to? A. Do you not know that the spirits of your departed friends are directing you from day to day? Well, then, reflect; is there not a still higher power directing us, else how could we direct you? Q. Are there different spheres of happiness in the spiritual world? A. Yes. Q. Will the spirit rap the number? A. By rapping? Q. Does the spiritual development of persons in life determine the sphere into which their spirit enters in the spiritual world? A. Yes. Q. Are there higher states of spiritual life above the seventh sphere of which you speak? A. Yes. Q. what shall we call them? Spelled—'Celestial Heavens.' Q. How many are there? A. Three. Q. Did any spirit from this planet ever enter any of the Celestial Heavens immediately on the death of the body? A. Yes. Q. How many? Rapped—'One.' Q. Whose spirit was that? Spelled—"It was Christ's." Q. Into which of them did he enter. A. The third."

The same writer states that it is estimated there are more than a thousand persons who are mediums to a greater or less degree, in this country; and another writer remarking upon this says, he believes there are millions; that 'any person can find out whether he or she is a medium by laying their hand on a table in a calm state of mind, and calling on the spirit of some departed friend, and whenever they call on one that has any affinity with them the hand will be raised, and after once raising they may continue the experiment until some one of the phases of communication is established.' The new phases of spiritual manifestations lately reported, are raising the hand, making a deaf and dumb alphabet and writing through the hands of mediums; i. e., mesmeric exhibitions by the Spirits.

A lady writer, who bears the highest character, and is a poetess of honorable rank in this country, in a relation of her personal experience thus observes:—

'All the communications which I have received purporting to be from the same intelligence, have been consistent with each other,

often seeming to indicate a sequence which has afterwards been fulfilled. When alone with M. I have seldom asked what are called 'test questions,' and seldom requested or received physical demonstrations; yet proofs more convincing than any that I could have devised have daily been accorded me, and in the presence and at the request of other persons I have repeatedly seen evidences of an invisible power exerted upon material objects so strange and startling, that 'Henceforth I shall not smile at the most marvelous legend.'

'It seems to me very wisely ordered that these things should come to us for the present in a form which the duller and most unimaginative cannot question. I feel well assured that all we have yet seen is but initial—preparatory to more beautiful and impressive revelations and more efficient modes of communication.'

A. J. Davis has just published his dictum on the philosophy of spiritual intercourse. The Tribune in noticing his book, gives an extract, describing a vision and interview that the author had with a departed friend. The 'brilliant visitor' entertains Mr. Davis with a poetical description of the spirit world, in a style more attractive and exuberant than Swedenborg's delineations; but evidently from the same point of observation. The spirit had seen 'innumerable beauties,' and 'experienced unutterable joy;' and so far as the poverty of earthly language will allow, he professes to describe the 'home of the angels;' and yet he never mentions the name of Christ. Certainly from all that appears, he is as remote as the remotest fixed star, from that city where we are certain that Christ is the 'observed of all observers'—which has 'no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.'

Just for a specimen of the centrifugal character of Davis's spiritualism, we will give a passage from this revelation:

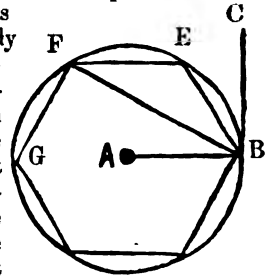
'Yea, truly, there are no bounds to this glorious Universe; there are no limits to the Infinitude in which it rolls! Accompanied by

friendly spirits whose attractions were analogous to those my spirit feels, I visited worlds upon worlds—have already gazed and walked upon more planets, bedecked with immortal life, than I had believed in being—and yet, my lovely companions, some of whom have lived in the Celestial Lands for many centuries, say 'that I have inhaled but the fragrance of a few of those flowers which grow on the margin of the Infinite Ocean!'

Nothing could be more in contrast than this trash and the revelations of the new Testament. Christ truly came down from heaven; but how exclusively his revelations of the spiritual world appeal to the heart—not to the senses. The kingdom of God cometh not with observation but is *within* you—it does not consist in 'unutterable magnificence,' 'numberless firmaments,' 'universes of immeasurable magnitude,' 'gorgeous truths,' 'celestial principles,' and what more that is inexpressible—but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Spiritual Geometry.

I am more and more in love with the *curved line*. You will observe it is produced by the action of two forces, individual impulse and central attraction. In describing a circle with a string, we have to use both hands, one to hold the string to the center, and the other to move the chalk round upon the board. Suppose in this diagram, a body at the point B receives an impulse, which acting alone would send it off in the direction of the straight line BC; but let it be acted upon by an attraction of equal force, drawing it toward the center A, and it will move in the direction of the curved line BE.



This is a grand illustration to show the

motion of spiritual character, under the perfect action of the two combined forces of individual will and central attraction towards God: it is motion in a circle. The great difficulty with Mr. S—— is his tendency to move in a straight line. When he is called to turn his attention to God, he obeys, and gets into a quiet state, in which he is receptive to inspiration. At that point he receives a true impulse—inspiration sets his individual will in motion. This is good so far; but the mischief is, he takes the impulse and moves off in a straight line, in the direction BC, for instance, not recognizing the necessity of continuous attention to central inspiration. Soon the impulse is all run out, and then he has to return to his starting point B. This is a description of the experience of a great many persons—of all who have not their individual wills subdued and made pliable, so that they can receive an impulse acting on their individuality, and carry it out with continual reference to inspiration. It is a great attainment to be able to move in a curved line. When you get so that you can move in an orbit which continually returns into itself, you will be in a state of rest. The earth and its orbit, viewed in relation to surrounding space, is in a state of rest, and yet in continual motion.

While the character of persons is such that they can only make straight lines, they are continually liable to run off into space, and lose their inspiration. Suppose for instance a body at B receives an impulse moving it in the direction BF; although it may appear at first that it is nearing the center, its direction in a straight line will carry it past the center, away into space. So of all straight lines; however near the centre their direction may lead them at first, it will carry them past into infinite space. There is no other way to go right but to find out how to move in a curved line.

The beginnings of spiritual experience may be illustrated by the lines of the polygon inscribed on the circle. Suppose a person takes the direction BE

and then under the influence of the central attraction he changes his course to EF, and then to FG, and so on round the circle, his experience would describe a polygon of six sides. Thus as his individual will becomes broken and pliable, and his receptivity to central inspiration is increased, his lines will grow shorter, and more and more approximate to the curve. A polygon of twelve sides is much nearer the curve than one of six; and the person may go on increasing the number of the sides of his polygon till at last its course will coincide with the circle. To describe a perfect experience, we suppose a person to start from B, with an individual will that would carry him in the direction of the straight line BC, but the central attraction A bends his course in the direction of the curve BE.

The antinomian spirit would say, if I cannot move without the liability of making a straight line, I will not move at all—I will stand still, and wait for central attraction. This attraction alone, would take him in the direction BA, right into the center. God does not want him there, and will not operate to produce such a motion. His will is that we move in a circle around himself, and form an orbit continually returning into itself. This requires continual attention to inspiration. It is like working by the day, instead of working by the job. Mr. S——'s way has been to get a job, and then go forward and execute it in the strength of the impulse acting on his individual will, without reference to inspiration. The true way is to receive an impulse, and then go to work by the day, under the continual influence and modification of the central attraction. This will bend the straight line of individuality into the curved line of duality.

To be able to move in the curved line involves a good deal of discipline of the individual will. We can see that our will must be broken all to pieces, before it can become perfectly flexible and obedient to the central attraction. We will not, however, despise the stage of experience where a person is only able to

make polygons, but encourage every one to perseverance, and to come as near the circle as they can. *Criticism* forms the angles of your polygon; it brings you to a stop on the course you are going, and gives you a new direction;—and it must be continued till you can move in a perfect curve, which is a very nice operation. Christ alludes to its difficult performance where he says, ‘Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life.’

You will observe that the spiritual mind following the curve, is constantly crossing and diverging from the track of the carnal mind, which takes the direction of the straight line. The angle between the line BC and the curve BE, is continually growing larger. The carnal man cannot follow the spiritual man—cannot track him. The devil cannot follow a curved line. The course of a spiritual man is thus described: ‘The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit.’ There is no charge to which a spiritual man is more liable in the world, than that of continually changing, so that it is difficult to tell where to find him. If he starts at B, it is expected according to the course of the carnal mind, that he will come out at C. It is only as we recognize the central force that is operating, and modifying his individual will, that we can calculate on his coming out at E. So if men do not understand the operation of inspiration in constantly modifying the natural action of the will, they cannot track those who are spiritual.

The curve represents most beautifully the state of a true will; it is flexible; it bends every instant—is all the time yielding. A stiff, hard will cannot produce a curve. Men are pulling and hauling between free will and passive subjection to God, and cannot settle the difficulty, because they cannot conceive of a curve. Methodists and Calvinists represent the two forces acting separately:

one goes for free will, and pushes off in a straight line, and the other remains still, in antinomian passivity. Neither of them understand how to make the curve.

Why is the curve the line of beauty? Is it not because it is the expression of two combined forces, that is to say, an expression of *love*? Look at a curve, and then examine your consciousness, and see if you can help referring it to the action of two forces. You cannot help referring it to a force binding it to the center, and to a force which would carry it in a tangent. The orbit of the earth around the sun, is an expression of individuality in unity. We may conceive of its motion as an individual affair, or as proceeding from its unity with the sun. It is in reality, the earth moving under the influence of an impulse that would carry it in a straight line, modified by the attraction of the sun. In another view, it is the sun itself turning on its axis. Conceive of the space between the earth and sun as filled with the sun’s attraction, as it really is, and then the whole sphere will be seen to be a part of the sun, and partaking of its motion. The earth is as really connected with the sun as the tire of a wheel with its hub. When we come to move in our perfected orbit, with the Lord our righteousness for our center, we shall be in that condition. On the one hand, it will be our individual wills modified by inspiration, carrying us in a course of righteousness pleasing to God; and, on the other, it will be God himself filling every thing, and turning on his own axis—one great wheel.

Nature is full of curves, but avoids straight lines. All the lines in the human body are curves. Where will you find straight lines in that? It is made of swells, and depressions, and undulating lines. There is infinite variety in the curve. The straight line is a monotonous affair; but there is no end to the various forms and fashions of the curve.

I begin to think that *Geometry* is the most central science. It seems to me it

branches out into other sciences more than any other. It is intimately connected with Astronomy. Arithmetic is only an expression of facts that are geometrical. It is the foundation of the whole science of Navigation: and I have no doubt it will be found that Geometry is the soul of Chemistry and Music. I do not know how much it has to do with the common mechanic arts; but it is my impression that it is the soul of them; that it has more to do with practical life—in the construction of all machinery for instance—than any other science. It is the measurement of circles, angles, cones, pyramids, cylinders, &c. I should recommend to any one who wants to get into the great hall that opens into all the rooms of science, to study Geometry.—*Home-Talk, March 14, 1851.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

Griswoldville, Mass., March 24, 1851.

DEAR FRIENDS:—We love to express our joy and gratitude for the heart-discerning, spirit-trying word which has free course, and is glorified among you; and comes to us in perfect rhyme with the operation of the Spirit in our hearts. It is true we feel its piercing between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, breaking up old associations and habits, and forming new ones: changes not very agreeable to corrupted nature; but blessed be the Lord who has opened our eyes to see that it is better to enter into life halt or maimed or blind, than to be cast alive into the lake of fire—that it is better to be scarcely saved, and alone; than to be damned with all the company of those who we once thought were our friends.

In view of what is to be done in us, and by us, we are often ready to exclaim that we are less than the least of all saints unto whom the word of this grace has come; and with our hand on our mouth, and our mouth in the dust, we confess that notwithstanding it has been fifteen years since we first heard the gos-

pel of holiness, we have suffered ourselves to be led away captive, and our souls to be fed with swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things; and have been overshadowed by principalities and powers, and brought forth corresponding fruit: and though at this time, we ought to have been one solid exposition of the gospel, we actually are in need of warning and instruction in the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. These are facts independent of accusation, or confession—facts that must appear in judgment. Now we are willing to let the time past suffice for ignorance and stupidity, and blindness, and henceforth walk in the Spirit.

We thank our Father—hallowed be his name—for raising up a standard of judgment and discrimination to wash away our filth, heal our wounds and bruises, and amputate our putrified limbs, and avenge us of our adversaries. We have already suffered so much, that the Deliverer is welcome to our hearts; and joyfully will we cooperate with him, in thoroughly purging his floor. We can say with Mr. Chapman, that through the Circular, we should rejoice to hear from any of those who were associated with us in the early days of our faith, for some of whom there is still a 'lingering, longing look.' If we could, we would tell them that we have renounced forever, the spirit of evil accusing, evil surmising, evil imagining and evil judging, and only look for judgment truth to make us free. 'We are sure that God pitches in the hay, therefore we shall be able to mow it away.' Yours in love,
LOREN & EMILY HOLISTER.

—We have much fellowship with the spirit of this letter. We think it represents the true 'plodding spirit,' which is not discouraged by the retrospect of past imperfections; and neither does it seek to ignore them, and flatter itself that it is rich and increased in goods and in need of nothing. It receives the criticism of God, knowing that whom he loves he rebukes and chastens, and is thankful for the chance still to overcome by zeal and repen-

tance. Other letters that we have received lately, breathe the same spirit.

We can hardly express our appreciation of the discovery that truthfulness is the secret of fellowship. We conceive of it almost as a physical impossibility that our lives should mingle, only as the sluices are opened by the frankness of sincerity. As was said in another place, 'why try to keep ourselves whole, when our life and hope and salvation lies in being broken? As Christ had to be broken to let his blood flow out, so we have to be broken to let his blood flow into us.' He says, 'Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him and he with me.' Our own experience agrees with that of the woman who said that God showed her, that opening the door of her heart meant, being sincere, and letting somebody who knew more than she did, see right into her heart. We believe that the Roman Catholic confessional is a form of godliness, that had some precedent in the practices of the primitive church, as is doubtless true of all the Roman Catholic forms; there is certainly no means of grace that we have learned to prize more, than the privilege of keeping perfect openness of heart with those who are spiritual. The habit has been perfectly indispensable to our improvement. 'Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that you may be healed.' 'Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another.' Our unity is the reason for truthfulness, and the effect of truthfulness is unity. Much might be said on this subject, but we will close with the idea which tempted us to begin, that whoever loves fellowship will cultivate sincerity. The question is not, what their past character has been, but is their heart now open? is it permeable to Christ's life? has the light pervaded it? If so, we know it will become pure and sweet; and the most perfect character, with a hard, whole heart, is deficient in the qualities for fellowship.

—We sometimes hear the expression, 'I can do nothing myself, I am compelled to trust Christ;' as though it was a desperate case—a desperate necessity, that persons would avoid if possible. The truth is, our need of Christ is our greatest blessing; instead of its being an exceptional state, and to be tolerated only in our last extremity, the greatest good we can find in ourselves is our emptiness and need of Christ.

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