

THE CIRCULAR.

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DEVOTED TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF JESUS CHRIST.

[EDITED BY J. H. NOYES.]

VOL. I.

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TERMS AND MEANS.

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From the Spiritual Magazine, September, 1847.

The Glory of Unity.

BY MARY E. CRAGIN.

Diversities of character among men, where the love of God is absent, is an ever fruitful source of dislike, contention and hatred. Each one sees in another some quality of heart or intellect which is worthy of love and imitation, but which he does not himself possess. It is plainly seen that the highest benefit of all, would be found in a union so close that each would partake of the riches of the others. But the spirit of envy, of selfishness, or of pride, forbids the bans; and the result is, that the world is filled with little rivulets of happiness, which true enlargement of hearts would swell into copious streams. Paul beautifully illustrates the variety of effects produced in different individuals by the operation of the same spirit, where he compares Christ's church to the human body, having many members, with various offices, yet all forming an harmonious whole. The idea is fully carried out in the whole of the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, that while there are necessarily diversities of operations, yet that it is the 'same spirit which worketh all in all.' He abundantly proves that there is no just occasion in the case, for haughtiness or contempt in some, or for envy and discontent in others; for each member, in its place, is indispensable to the good of the whole. God, as a wise master-builder, makes the best article he can out of the materials which he has to work with; and to be discontented with our allotment, is as absurd and unjust as it would be for the clay to remonstrate with the potter against his judgment in its formation.

There is a good sense, it is true, in which we may covet the gifts and excellencies of others, and may supply our deficiencies from their fullness; and in turn we may impart of our fullness to them. When once the heart has forever settled the question concerning the position we are fitted to fill, and has become satisfied with God's allotment, the barriers which have been raised by envy and discontent will be thrown down, and there will be in every such heart a just appreciation of the merits of others. This will prepare the way for a mutual exchange of the commodities of each. There will be no poverty in the family of God—for the riches of one is the wealth of all: nor discontent—for giving and receiving constitutes a most essential element of the happiness of heaven. Great diversities of character, therefore, among the members, will be the means of attraction which will draw them still more closely together. Selfish love, which seeks merely its own gratification, would naturally look for those qualities in others, most in unison with its own. But in this consists the difference between mere earthly affection, and that love which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. Those who set fellowship with God high above all fellowship with man, will resolutely court the society of those who possess the traits of character in which they are deficient themselves, that they may thus partake of their fullness, and become as attractive to God as possible. True contentment will suffer others to bear the palm without grudging, and trust God to enable us to fill with honor the place design-

ed for us, however small—content and glad if God is glorified.

We see that while the external manifestations of love may be the same, yet the point of attraction between the sons of God, lies far back of any thing visible to the external senses. It is the strong sympathy of hearts drawn out, not primarily to each other, but to him who is 'the chiefest among ten thousand, the one altogether lovely.' Their love to each other, is but the effect of their having one center—one life.

It cannot be too often called to mind, nor occupy too prominent a place in the heart of the believer, that the miracle by which God means to convince the world of his power, is the unity of the church. Christ placed a proper valuation upon things when he prayed for his disciples 'that they all may be one, even as he and the Father are one; that the world may know that the Father hath sent him.' Unbelief can find out a way to get by all other miracles but this. Multitudes who were witnesses of Christ's power as displayed in healing the sick, casting out devils, and even raising the dead, perished in unbelief. In spite of abundant evidence to the contrary, the chief priests condemned him to die as an impostor. But when his prayer for his disciples was answered, and we find them of one heart and one mind, with one accord in one place, praying for the same thing, then was wrought the miracle which gave them omnipotent power; and they went forth conquering and to conquer. The world is the same now as it was 1800 years ago. Those in whom Christ's spirit dwells, may now, as then, make the same proofs of it, and all to no purpose. Unbelief will attribute to magnetism, or sorcery, or something similar, a power that can raise the dead. But when it comes to perfect unity—when all selfishness, all desire for pre-eminence, and all ambition to be the greatest, is sunk in a hearty desire to do the will of God—then, and not till then, will the world be constrained to confess that God is with us of a truth. Let the eye of the church be directed then to this point. Seek first the love to God which involves entire submission to his will, and the faith which can remove mountains will necessarily be the result. The love—the unity—the drinking into one spirit—is the origin of power; and what this world calls miracles are its effects. Let us as a body lay hold of the former, leaving it with God to direct its manifestations; and we shall find ourselves right in the same position in which the disciples were on the day of Pentecost, and the same glory will attend our movements.

Not unfrequently persons' writings are better than themselves; but the reverse is true of Mrs. Cragin, and all she says about love and unity was more beautifully represented in her actual life.—She excelled in the gift of serving, and won the prize as a 'servant of Love.' She forgot self in this service. It was a passion with her—she was an enthusiast in seeking the fulfillment of Christ's prayer that his followers might be one. If she could promote love, it compensated to her for any amount of personal discomfort and sacrifice. This passion made her extremely adroit in shifting habits and forms, and often very happy in circumstances that would have been naturally disagreeable. She had the spirit of the gold-digger who can put up with any thing to gain his object, and make sport of circumstances that would be unendurable except for the gold in prospect. Persons of fixed habits are said to be 'set in their way'—she was flexible. Habits are very unfriendly to love—they are often wedges of discord. My neighbour and I have been educated differently, our habits interfere, and hinder us from loving each other; now we must choose between our habits and love. Mrs. Cragin always chose love. The freedom we have to change our personal habits and conform to new circumstances, will measure our power of fellowship, and of course our influence. Paul was an adept in the practice. He could make himself all things to all men. His principles were sacred, but

habits and forms he always made subordinate to edification. Mrs. Cragin had something of his zeal. She was delicate in her tastes, and her standard of manners was refined; but after all, she thought etiquette was a trifling sacrifice to love. Her nerves were rugged, and her sensibilities obedient to her good will. She would seek through the sympathy of love, to bring about similarity of tastes. The fact that you were unlike herself would be an incentive to her to cultivate your fellowship, because she thought such associations the most improving. A memorandum from her note book will illustrate:—'When tempted to think evil of —, and chafe against her peculiarities, remember the design of God in putting us together was to modify one another. I am learning through her what I so much need to learn, consideration. I thank God for this companionship.'

She had the opposite spirit to that so common in the world, which widens the breach of friendship by evil-speaking and scandal. She would pour in oil to every such wound, and foment love instead of strife by her skillful representation. If she knew of a case of heart-burning or disaffection, she would get the parties together, and have the matter all opened—and in the element of her spirit reconciliation was inevitable. Sincerity she knew was the handmaid of love; and she used criticism with the utmost freedom. But it was difficult to make a quarrel of her sharpest criticism—she would beguile you into immediate good nature. It was a favorite principle with her, that the piercing of the life which criticism effects, only opens the avenues of love.

Her heart was large, and sought its satisfaction in the happiness of many. She could not be absorbed with her own; and she loved to see unity, as a person loves music or beautiful scenery. Society around her was her canvass, on which she painted the beautiful conceptions of her heart—full of the love of God; and she enjoyed with the emotions of an artist her success in producing the effect of harmony. We always think of her as a 'gift,' such as Christ gave to the Primitive church, for their edification, unity and perfection.

Christ's Words.

Eighteen hundred years ago the Son of God was manifested in this world. The fame of his mighty works was spread throughout the land of Judea. At the sound of his word devils fled; and by its charm disciples gathered around him. Walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw two brethren, Simon and Andrew, fishing. 'Follow me,' said he, and they straightway left their nets, and followed him. There was a power of fascination in his words which the honest fishermen, and those who loved the truth, could not resist. He went through the cities and villages, singling out an individual here and there with the simple words, 'Follow me.' This emphatic call was not restricted to the honest fisherman. Mark says that on one occasion 'as he passed by, he saw Levi, the Son of Alphaeus, sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.' A rich young man came to him, desiring to know what he should do to inherit eternal life. Jesus beholding him, loved him, and said unto him, 'Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow me.' The young man went away sorrowful. The fascination of riches was so great, that it seemed impossible for him to break the charm, and obey the call. To Peter he said, 'Follow me,' signifying that he should follow him in the cruel death of the cross; and this Peter afterwards did.

Have Christ's words ceased to be uttered? or have they lost their charm? Nay! 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christ's words shall not pass away.' (Matt. 24: 35.) They still possess their original power, and they are still spoken by the same Divine and irresistible voice. The fisherman is still called; and the rich man still sorrows at the words, 'Sell all thou hast, and follow me.' Indeed, Christ is now speaking in trumpet tones to every heart, and to the whole world,—demanding an acknowledgment of his lawful rights as Sovereign of the world. His word has gone forth,

'I am King;' and it will not return unto him void. It will ring through the earth till one universal shout ascends to his throne—"Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." w.

The Child Life.

When Christ said 'Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,' it is evident that the trait he had in mind most prominently, was the *humility* and *simplicity* of children. His disciples, with worldly-minded ambition, had asked him, which should be the greatest? but he pointed them to the meek mind of a child as an example of willingness to take any position, however lowly. 'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 18: 3.) This trait of humility in children is the foundation of all that we love in their character—their obedience—confiding faith in their elders, &c.

Children's love to one another is a beautiful symbol of Christian love. Two little children will love each other dearly, and in their innocence no fear or distrust comes between them. They have no dissimulation, no secret keeping; what one knows, the other is sure to be told. There is perfect community of knowledge.

It is true that midst all the beautiful traits of children, some seeds of Satan's sowing are early developed, showing themselves in selfishness and ingratitude in regard to their little possessions, not being willing to share them even with the brother or sister they love most; and then entirely forgetful of their parents' kindness in the gift.

Still their selfishness is not to be compared to that of after years, and the child's character altogether, is infinitely superior to that of a man of the world, in whom Satan has longer had his reign: and to such it was that Jesus spoke.

Separating the wheat from the chaff, the humility and simplicity of children are the characteristics that we should look at in striving for a childlike spirit. In that spirit alone we can attain the high virtue of *charity*. Indeed, humility and simplicity constitute a very essential part of the many characteristics of love. Jesus was a beautiful example of the spirit of humility. 'As the Father said unto me, so I speak.' He claimed nothing for himself, but referred all he was, and did, and said, to the Father.

E. H. D.

Growth—Greenness.

Youth make the same mistakes in their approaches to pleasure, that persons often do in regard to music. Finding in themselves a capability of enjoyment in music, they learn a few tunes, and without any knowledge of the *science* account themselves wise. But when they do this, the color has turned with them from *green* to *brown*. They have lost the beautiful ideas of growth, the fresh imaginations, and enthusiastic hopes which belong to the greenness of youth. The moment a person becomes contented with present attainments in anything, and seeks rest and enjoyment in his present amount of knowledge, instead of digging into the science of the thing, that moment his color has turned from green to brown. This is a point where every one makes his greatest mistake in regard to pleasure. We have no business to account ourselves *wise* in any sphere of things; for we are but 'babes and sucklings' at best, in respect to every department of knowledge. Go back, then, and assume the simplicity of a child; and approach pleasure in the spirit of greenness and expectation of novelty, accounting the treasure-house open, and infinite mysteries in all directions. Go back to the spirit of *growth*; and growth is greenness. In the place of all specific tastes for this and that pleasure, go back, and strengthen your taste for *growth*—seek it with your whole heart, and apply it to every part of your nature. It is the essence of eternal life.

THE CIRCULAR. BROOKLYN, JULY 18, 1852.

The Circular and the Cause.

The object of this paper is to give expression to true faith in Christ, and so to be the organ of his advancing movement in the world.

We know of no other paper which is established for such an object. There are religious papers, and reform papers, political, commercial, and literary organs, but none of them committed to the idea of Christ's actual sovereignty in this world.

In this situation of things, the Circular enters the field with a confession of Christ's personal sovereignty in all concerns, which is the blazing fact to whoever can break away from the charm of dead externals and look into the spirit of the times.

The object of this paper is to stand by that nomination of Jesus Christ, to stir up the world to its reality, and call out the slumbering loyalty that every where exists towards his name.

Talk about the Nomination.

It was shown in our last No., that Jesus Christ is already king of the world de jure, and de facto, and that it only remains to make him king de nomine, or by the voluntary recognition and allegiance of men.

It may be said at first sight, 'If Jesus is really king, what more do you want—why do you talk about electing him, and the glories of his prospective kingdom?'

The simple answer is, that the sovereignty of Christ, though real, so far as he is concerned, cannot become thoroughly beneficent and saving toward men, until it is accepted and understood.

ceived inhabitants, he must wait till he can diffuse information of his power, character, and design, and so get them to confess his sovereignty, invite his advance, and separate themselves from the usurper.

The application of this illustration will readily occur to the reader of the New Testament; and he will see that as in the case supposed, the abolition of sin and misery from the earth, is the appropriate result, not alone of the de facto sovereignty of Christ, but of our active acceptance of it.

The New Testament, for instance, declares that Christ 'has made an end of sin,' and 'abolished death;' thus that he is completely master of those principalities himself; but it needs that we should know it, and should open ourselves to personal relations with him, in order that we may appropriate his victory, and realize its consequences in the earth.

But you say that such a confession of Christ, involves prodigious changes—the dissolution of existing governments, laws, &c., for which men are not prepared. We say no; the true and saving acceptance of Jesus Christ, as the head of this republic, or of the world, would involve no violent changes.

What is wanted, then, is simply the popular endorsement of Christ's sovereignty, to let in all its benefits upon the world. That, let us say, will be the first step towards genuine, successful reform, in respect to intemperance, slavery, and the other evils, on which reformers have been so long at work.

There are three well known military rules to be observed by our people in their movement against disease and death. 1. Maintain the offensive position. Let no apparent advance of the enemy throw you back into an attitude of mere defense.

2. Not stand for skirmishing in the outworks, but push for the citadel. Attack the center. Our personal experience with disease is only a radiation from the great central principality—it is a work of the outposts where neither victory or defeat determines anything.

our minds as Christ did to find the seat of power—to attack death itself, and break up the black prison house where he holds his captives. Christ himself has opened the way of conquest, has faced the tyrant in his stronghold; and by his resurrection from the dead has left a breach in the pale kingdom that can never be closed up.

3. In all our conflicts with evil, we must still keep our attention primarily on good. In opposing disease and death, we must seek mainly to cultivate life. Death is to be swallowed up in victory.

NOTE.—There is inculcated in the world, a kind of traditional respect toward death, as though it was a semi-divine manifestation, only to be spoken of in terms of reverent resignation. The plain language that we are accustomed to use in speaking of death and its works, does not fall in with this prejudice, but we believe our language, and our confident faith in the abolition of death, are both justified by numerous passages of Scripture.

Kossuth's return to Europe.—Kossuth left this country for Europe, on Wednesday last, in the steamship Africa, bound to Liverpool. His departure at this time, was unexpected, and the leave-taking confined to a few personal friends.

"The American interlude in this great man's eventful career is ended—for him triumphantly. He has walked amid burning plowshares and never faltered. That he may have sometimes spoken hastily, indiscreetly, is probable; who that ever underwent such an ordeal has ever utterly avoided verbal errors? But through all his wanderings, his audiences, his addresses, his responses, he has so borne himself that Hungary and Liberty may well be proud of their foremost champion.

Progress of an Idea. "If," says The London Times, "we live in an age of political apathy and religious discord, it must be admitted that at no time since the commencement of the world, has private enterprise derived so much assistance from the principles of union and association.

Thus the great idea of Association slowly makes its way in the world, and gains the most weighty suffrages, as its practical efficacy is more and more demonstrated. At present confined to commercial and other enterprises, it works the grandest miracles, and day by day achieves new victories, and renders easier and surer the march of humanity toward the entire subjugation of outward nature, and the reduction of the globe with all its powers, elements, climates, countries and soils to perfect cultivation, health and beauty, and complete subservience to the uses and needs of man.

The writer of the above article, has, in the main, given us a very fair presentation of the working of the principle of Association. There is one point, however, which he has presented, from which we beg leave to dissent. He looks upon the various Associations which are springing up on every side, as only the body; the soul of which will develop itself hereafter.

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the soul—the real essence of the Community principle, is CHRISTIAN UNITY; and that this must first be established in the hearts of individuals, in order to ensure success in Association. This was the soul of the Oneida Association. Thorough unity with Christ, and all who believe on him, was the foundation on which it was erected, and to which all its subsequent success may be ascribed.

We have no faith in the existence of any body, without a soul. This, from the very nature of the thing, is impossible. As well might we try to make a watch run without a mainspring. But we think there is a soul in this movement toward Association, though perhaps unknown to the participators therein.

Rules for Conversation.

1. Speak slowly, distinctly, and loud enough to make sure that a person who is properly attentive, and is not deaf, will have no occasion to say—"What?" and so make you waste breath in repeating.

2. On the other hand, be properly attentive, so as to have no occasion to say—"What?" You have no right to make your neighbor waste his breath in repeating.

3. Speak as much as possible in the affirmative form. Do not put your common remarks in the form of a question, as thus: 'It is thus and so—isn't it?' which compels somebody to answer. You have a right to speak, but you have no right to compel your neighbor to give his opinion on every thing you say.

The Law versus Life.

'The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the Law.' (1 Cor. 15: 56.) The Law, therefore, drives the machinery of death.

FACTS. Before the flood, when there was little or no law, men lived nearly a thousand years. The Law began active operations in the age of Noah: the flood was its first awful enforcement on the religious conscience of men; and from that time human life rapidly declined. Moses introduced a systematic code of laws, and very soon after his time the average age of man settled to its present standard. See Rom. 5.

Philosophy. Law wears out life. 1. By forcing it into will works, which are as unhealthy and exhausting as fungi on plants. 2. By finding fault with these sickly works when they are done, and so introducing disease into the conscience.

Love—and Money.

The following, from the Washington correspondent of the Tribune, gives an entertaining sketch of social life at the Capital, and shows how nicely money-making and match-making are made to work together, enabling shrewd persons to get a wife and get rich by the same operation:

All the regions of the Union forward to the Capital, together with the better halves of the members of Congress, a cargo of daughters, nieces, young marriageable friends, rich and poor widows, &c., &c., etc. This secures a pretty considerable assortment of fair ones, and thus an immense torrent of flirtation rolls continually through parlors, public and private, in the hotels, the galleries of both the Houses of the Congress, the rotunda, the Capitol grounds, the avenues, evening parties, picnicks, drives, and all other encounters and points of meeting, such as studios of artists, churches, and so on. Occasion in general is very easily afforded for the like, on account of the wholly uncontrollable liberty enjoyed by American girls. Few flirtations are carried on, only for the sake of flirtation. It is a hunting party, executed by all the interested, the marriageable gentlemen, and the misses and ladies. Some individuals hunt for distinction, others for connections, generally all of them, however, above all, pursue the great arcanum of society—money. The match-hunting Mammas or Aunts equal in pertinacity any celebrated English of the same species; still there is here less cunning, audacity, or impudence. The game is more open, the parties to it less acrimonious, and every body can safely peep into the cards. All is rather harmless, and a certain primitive naivete spreads over the performances a rather childish charm. The final aim is, after all, what the French call the bon motif, or matrimony, which makes the whole maneuvering, inoffensive and not dangerous.

Poor members of Congress, officers of the Army and Navy, young clerks in offices, newspaper correspondents, form the principal pack of the heiresse-hunters. To this ought to be added a squad of Diplomats, high and low, poor creatures whose hunger is stimulated the more, since one of them, some time ago, carried away a very well stuffed prize.

Washington, as well as Georgetown, possesses standing beauties of its own, mostly daughters of official individuals—generally penniless, but not less eager after matrimonial establishments. All these various elements make the race very amusing for a spectator. In this conflict of chasing, catching, abandoning, and snatching up, one can detect the inward play of the passions, and finally draw this conclusion: that if the outward manifestations acquire variety, and differ from each other in different

counture Th are v their were witho dolla real camer from happo hund a scor to the increa creasing W sixty ga or sands been, father and co hundr plants galler tween ter da about ion ing to Edr I tice o sover 'Shal As ment sugges enthous of the their r campa to this the no Christ pect th With to go i would ermen sufficie of par confide for him policy, with th suffrag merits. ty to th On t persist have o whole compr ed in Upon t neighb would t to them one of have to We s general our can shall en 'Equal not only abolition a Home anticipa be no r propri will hav Our of stabil The exp history, perity, u sion of manenc Divine a ensue p this is w probatio compreh

countries, and states of society, inwardly human nature is every where alike.

The male hunters, natives, strangers, foreigners, are very often thrown off the track in the fervor of their pursuit. This happens when at the start they were not discriminating enough, but began the race without ascertaining most positively the worth in dollars and cents of the chosen one. To find out her real value is the more difficult, when the fair prize comes from the distant banks of the Mississippi, or from some place far off in the South or West. It happens very often, that such a fair owner of a few hundred acres of more or less cultivated soil, and of a score or two of human chattels, is here inflated into the proportions of a rich heiress. Her value is increased by common rumor, in proportion as increases her remoteness from her birth-place. Reaching Washington, she is set down as worth forty to sixty thousand dollars; pushing forward to Saratoga or Newport, she is weighed by hundreds of thousands. Wealthy to that extent no visitant here has been, with one exception—an only daughter, whose father measures his possessions by square miles, owns and counts human beings by hundreds, and sells by hundred thousands of sacks, the rice from his own plantations. An accident made me overhear in the galleries of Congress, a conversation carried on between the above-mentioned maiden and two first-water dandies of the House. The one was speaking about bacon and cabbage, the other about an election in Kentucky. I hope this was vastly entertaining to the lady; at any rate it was innocent.

Another Response.

Syracuse, July 11, 1852.

EDITOR OF THE CIRCULAR:—

I saw in *The Circular* of July 4th, a notice of the nomination of Jesus Christ to the sovereignty of the world, with the question—'Shall not that nomination be ratified?'

As we are now in the midst of the excitement of a Presidential campaign, the thought suggests itself to me, why can we not be equally enthusiastic in putting forward the claims of our candidate as the two great political parties of this country are in presenting the claims of their respective candidates. The results of our campaign are of momentous interest; not only to this country, but to the whole world. 'Shall the nomination be ratified?' From the truly Christian portion of the world, we can but expect the sincere and hearty response, *It shall!* With true Christians, it would be superfluous to go into a disputation upon the platform he would be likely to support, or the course of governmental polity he would pursue. They are sufficiently acquainted with the candidate, not to require any pledges of him for the support of party, or party measures. Their faith and confidence in *the Man* is such that they will 'go for him,' regardless of any question of platform, policy, &c. They are ready to enter the arena with their candidate, basing their claims for the suffrages of the people upon his own intrinsic merits. His acts heretofore are ample security to them for the future.

On the other hand, we can say to those who persist in the demand for a platform, that we have one broad enough to accommodate the whole world upon its surface. Although as comprehensive as eternity, yet it is unparalleled in simplicity. Its base is Infinite Love. Upon the corner stone is inscribed, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself;' and, 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' In this platform there will not be one objectionable plank—nothing that will have to be gulped down with a wry face.

We shall not be at a loss in pointing out the general features of the governmental polity of our candidate. Under his administration we shall enjoy the greatest liberty and freedom—'Equal Rights' will also be enjoyed; we shall not only have Slavery abolished, but also the abolition of disease and death. We shall have a Homestead-Bill which will far outreach the anticipations of the most sanguine. There will be no restrictions of the elective franchise, as *property qualifications*; and naturalization laws will have become obsolete.

Our cause possesses the only true element of stability and permanence to a government. The experience of the world as presented in history, shows us that no apparent national prosperity, no advances in science and art, no extension of dominion and territory can ensure permanence. A recognition of, and obedience to Divine authority, is the only thing that can ensure permanence to a government. While this is wanting, we shall remain, as it were, in a probationary state. Now I am sure that the comprehensive merits of our Platform, and the

unimpeachable wisdom and integrity of our candidate will not leave the smallest loop-hole for truthful objection to his becoming Sovereign Ruler the Nations.

Yours for the Sovereignty of Christ and sustaining the 'Campaign Paper.'

CHAUNCEY HAMILTON.

[The series of "HOME-TALKS" (continued in this paper from the Oneida Circular) will be understood to be off-hand conversational lectures, spoken at our evening fireside, and phonographically reported by Wm. A. Hinds.]

Home-Talk by J. H. N.—No. 108.

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

COMMUNICATION WITH HEAVENLY SPIRITS.

If I should express the greatest desire of my heart, it is that Christ may dwell with us intimately, and if possible personally. We will desire nothing before the time, or contrary to the will of God. But if the time has come, (and I think it has,) when the veil between this world and the spiritual world is to be removed, and the invisibles are to break in upon us, there can be no reason why we should not exceedingly desire the presence of Christ and his great interior family among us. There certainly should be nothing in our hearts that would in the least prevent this event from taking place: there should be nothing among us that is repulsive to the spirits of heaven.

If we look at history, we see that God walked with Adam and Eve in the beginning; Moses and Elias were with Christ on the mount; and 'after his resurrection many of the saints which slept arose, went into the holy city, and appeared unto many,' &c. &c. What has been once proper in regard to these things, will again be proper. The saints did not appear on earth after Christ's resurrection, to indulge curiosity, but for good, edifying purposes. Christ himself appeared to Paul for good purposes; and the angels appeared to the old patriarchs for good purposes. Why may not saints and angels again appear on earth for similar good reasons?

When the spirits of heaven do again visit the saints on earth, they will not make their appearance in the shape of 'Rappings,' or in any such mysterious manner. They are truly described by Christ, when he says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The inhabitants of that kingdom are like little children, full of simplicity and freedom. It is unjust to think of them as mystical ghosts, mere shadows in winding sheets. We ought to think of them as forms of innocence, simplicity, purity and light—forms of the ever-fresh life of God. The freshest life manifest in this world, in children, and in whatever is youthful and growing, should form our conceptions of the heavenly world; but the best forms of life we see, are only *approximations* to the heavenly state. So, let us not be afraid of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, or think of them as unaccountable or indescribable beings that we have no affinity with. If we love fresh life as we see it in little children, we shall love the manifestations of that same life as it exists in the kingdom of heaven.

It is difficult for persons to realize what must be realized some time, namely: that the things we are most familiar with, in this world of wickedness, are the things we need most to fear; and that the invisible God, the holy angels, and the great unknown, are what we ought least to fear. Fear should be directed toward the most dangerous and mischievous objects. Where are they? They are around us; they are in the streets; they are the things we are most familiar with, though the least afraid of. God and the glorious company that surround his throne, are not dangerous, and we have no business to fear them. It is altogether inhospitable and shameful for us to have feelings that would make it unpleasant for an angel, or any departed friend, to present himself at any time in our midst.—We may be certain that if our minds are filled with such false ideas about ghosts and spirits as exist in the world, they will keep away from us; and the same inhospitality will repel Christ's spirit from us.

Let us set our faces earnestly toward the spiritual world, and cultivate a desire to see the faces of those glorious beings.—Paul made great account of seeing the faces of his brethren. He writes to the Thessalonians, 'We, being taken from you for a short time in person, not in heart, endeavored the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.'—Christ made considerable account of personal presence. He said to his disciples, 'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.' (John 14: 2, 3.) Christ here plainly meant, that the disciples should dwell in his personal presence. His spiritual fellowship they already had, by the comforter which he sent; but this was only preliminary to a more direct meeting in the place which he went to prepare for them.

Fear was the great mischief-maker in the garden of Eden. God there walked with Adam and Eve, and they had direct fellowship with him. But after the serpent came into the garden, and they came under the displeasure of God, they were afraid of him, and afraid of each other; and sought to conceal themselves from God, and hide themselves from one another. Mankind, from that time till the present, have retreated further and further from God. The fear that Adam and Eve had toward him, has become more and more intense, and its working has increased the distance between God and man.

In reading the Bible, we find that *after* the fall, angels still visited men, and talked with them; and Enoch is said to have walked with God. We do not hear of such events taking place now-a-days. It is even assumed by some that the age of miracles is past! And by that they mean that all special communication with God is past, and of course, that the age of the appearance of angels is past. This philosophy is abominable. Such thoughts seem blasphemous. To give heed to them, is to desert the 'faith once delivered to the saints.' We may indeed say, in one sense, that the age of miracles is past. It is past because human nature has retreated from God, and because it has become more and more difficult for God and the angels to present themselves in this world. That is the only reason why the age of miracles, or the age of angelic appearances, is past. It is not past because there is any law in heaven to that effect, or because any change has taken place in the character and nature of God: the change is all on the side of man. The age of miracles is not past in heaven, and with God; and it is past in this world simply because unbelief repulses all direct communication with God.

Let us inquire out the 'old paths.' We are conservatives. We go for the good old religion—for the *oldest* religion—the religion that believes in angels, in inspiration, and in a present, living God. This religion that believes the age of miracles is past, is a novelty, an invasion, a new thing. We feel bound to contend earnestly for 'the faith once delivered to the saints;' and we cannot take our standard from the Orthodox church, or from any church since Bible times. We take our standard from the Bible itself; and that tells us in the plainest possible terms, that 'the faith once delivered to the saints,' was a faith that looked for supernatural manifestations, visitations of angels, and immediate communication with God and heaven. 'This was the faith of the Primitive church. When the apostles were put in prison by the Sadducees, 'an angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth.' (Acts 5: 19.) When Peter was in prison, chained between two soldiers, 'an angel came, and smote off his chains, and led him out of prison.' (Chap. 12: 7—10.)—When Paul was at Corinth, the Lord spoke to him by night in a vision. (Chap. 18: 9, 10.) Such events as these were not startling anomalies in the history of the Primitive church. After Peter was delivered from prison by an angel, he came to the house of Mary, 'where many were assembled together.' When the

damsel Rhoda reported to them that Peter was at the gate, they were greatly astonished, and could hardly believe it; but said, 'It is his angel.' This conception did not astound them. Paul writes to the Hebrews, 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.' (13: 2.) Again, he writes to the Ephesians, 'Ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.' (2: 19.) Let us set our hearts on that kind of faith, and refuse all the impositions that have come in since the days of the Primitive church. And let us think of sin and death as *unnatural*—they are impudent intruders. Visitations of angels, communication with God, &c., are *natural* things. Sin, disease, death, and the present state of things in the world, are miracles—entirely out of the natural course of events; and undoubtedly the inhabitants of heaven look down upon them with great astonishment!

The greatest stimulus to faith the Primitive church had, was the expectation of the second coming of Christ. Under the pressure of that expectation they made ready for Christ, and looked earnestly for his appearance; it was a cause of continual rejoicing and excitement to them. (See Phil. 3: 20. Col. 3: 4. 2 Tim. 4: 8. Ti. 2: 13. Jas. 5: 7, 8. Heb. 10: 24, 25, and 36, 37, &c.) The same event is not to be again expected; but the substance of it, or something better, is coming, and is not far off. We may look for the coming together of the three worlds, the world of the living, the resurrection world, and the world of the miscellaneous dead; and may wait for the event as the Primitive church waited for the coming of Christ. We need not hesitate to study the language of the New Testament concerning the second coming, and regard it as substantially applicable to us at the present time. The same thoughts and feelings that they had are proper for us now. This is a blessed object—a glorious hope. One reason why I look for this great meeting to take place, is, that there is in our experience a steady progress in this direction: our hearts are all turned towards it in a wholesome, quiet way, and without fanaticism. We have been surrounded by 'Rappings,' and all sorts of mysticisms, but they do not turn our attention in the least from the simple truth as we find it in Christ. We are on guard against all 'Lo heres,' and 'Lo theres;' and it is perfectly certain that we shall reject every thing that is false, as it is presented to us, and be led along into complete submission to the will of God, and abandonment to the truth.

REPORTER'S NOTE.

The Gospel as proclaimed and understood by Primitive saints, was a Gospel of salvation from sin, miraculous power, angelic appearance and ministration, communication with heaven, victory over disease and death. The Gospel as now generally proclaimed and understood by its professed adherents, teaches that salvation from sin in this life is an impossibility; that the age of miracles is past; that the age of angelic appearance is past; that there is no further communication with the heavenly world; that disease is an inevitable necessity; and death a natural and inexorable law. What is there left of the Gospel 'once delivered to the saints?' Can Christ be 'the same yesterday, to-day and for ever,' when his Gospel has thus changed? Let gospel-conservatives bestir themselves, while there is yet *any thing* to 'conserve.'

Table-Talk, by J. H. N.—No. 24.

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We have more reason to believe in the efficacy of a form of words, in this matter of *confessing Christ*, than in respect to anything else. It is manifest that our children by confessing, from time to time, the attributes of Christ in them, such as, 'the spirit of obedience,' 'quietness,' 'attention,' 'love,' &c., have discovered the very essence of the gospel: they have learned a secret beyond all that wise philosophers have known. I think it may be truly said that many Doctors of Divinity have not reached the profundity of truth that these children have discovered. And we may well exclaim, 'We thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and pru-

