

THE CIRCULAR.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.]

DEVOTED TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF JESUS CHRIST.

[EDITED BY J. H. NOYES.]

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TERMS AND MEANS.

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Communism.

The spiritual influences of selfishness make it difficult to clearly conceive of a state of society free from selfishness—such as true communism. The instinct will go before the understanding, in our reachings after such a state. We have a natural feeling that communism is the heavenly condition, and therefore the true and ultimate state of human nature. And yet we find it very difficult, in what may be called the *obscurantism* of selfishness, to define communism. Any penny-a-liner can knock you down flat on that subject, with a stroke of his pen, in such a world as this. If you undertake to define the state of the angels, or the commonwealth of the day of Pentecost, he will cut you off with the assertion that selfishness is really indispensable to human nature—that a social condition which involves the abolishment of selfishness, is entirely Utopian, and not to be thought of. And not only so, but he will go on and defend on philosophical grounds, as an absolute, ultimate necessity, the individualism and individual-property system that now exists. He will defend the selfish principle on philosophical grounds, as though it was the ultimate state of human nature, and there was no possibility of its being changed. You will find he has the up-hill side of you in the whole argument; your mind does not work well in the presence of such influences, and it is difficult to make out a satisfactory defense. Nevertheless, if there is to be any defense, somebody must force through this obscurantism, and learn to conceive of and defend true communism—communism with God, the angels, the primitive church, and the whole family of God. And for our part, we are willing to work up-hill in this undertaking as long as it is necessary.

People in this country love and defend Republicanism, or individual liberty. And yet it is allowed by all reflecting men, and is even received as a popular doctrine here, that liberty such as this country enjoys, requires a *certain stage of civilization*, as its condition and basis. It is well understood and conceded among us, that a nation must have a certain amount of *education* and of *religious principle*, in order to be fit for the self-government of republicanism. On these grounds, there are not many who would favor the direct, gross extension of democratic institutions to the ignorant nations of Europe, and to the heathen that are behind them. There are but few, indeed, who would maintain that even France and Ireland are prepared for republicanism. It is on these grounds too, that slavery is justified, so far as it can be justified. The South is able to maintain a somewhat plausible argument against emancipation, on the fact that the colored population, by reason of ignorance and vice, are unprepared for free institutions.

It appears, then, that we have one very good thing—a thing that everybody praises, and calls glorious—which yet cannot be realized and enjoyed under all circumstances; and which, put in motion in improper circumstances, would be very disastrous; as, for instance, the working of republican institutions in France in 1789,

was as disastrous then and there, as it has been glorious in this country.

The people of this country, if they have learned that principle, should have good sense, discrimination and logic enough to generalize from it, and admit that there may be an ideal state, which is entirely desirable, and entirely practical under right conditions, which is yet incompatible with existing barbarism and selfishness. They should apply the same principle to this superior state, that they find applicable to republicanism; and expect disaster or success according to the conditions and circumstances in which it is attempted.

We think we have made room now to say, that as liberty—republicanism—is a higher and happier state of human existence than slavery or despotism, but cannot be enjoyed except by the civilized; so, that communism is a vastly higher state than mere liberty, though it requires a still higher degree of civilization for its enjoyment.

Jesus Christ was most manifestly a communist. He said to his Father, 'All mine are thine; and all thine are mine;' and then directly upon that, prayed that all believers might be one, 'even as he and the Father were one.' That certainly is a prayer for communism. His relation to the Father is that of a thorough communist. And for a moment, as it were, on the day of Pentecost, his communism manifested itself between believers; 'all that believed, were together, and had all things common.' It seems to us to be self-evident to the instincts of mankind, if not to their understandings, that communism is the state of heaven, and that communism is the only possible development of the heart of Christ, and in fact, of human nature. It would seem not to require any argument, (inasmuch as men's convictions are already formed in spite of themselves,) to demonstrate that the relation of all believers in Jesus Christ, as they gather around him in a perfect state, is a family relation—a marriage relation—in which they can say to him and each other as he says to the Father, 'All mine are thine, and all thine are mine'—a state in which they come into the inheritance of all things.

There cannot be any mistake then about the main point; and that is, that communism is a higher state of human existence than mere liberty, and individualism. And if you say that communism, thus defined—communism that proceeds from vital relations with Jesus Christ, such as exists in heaven, is *too high a state*—too far out of our reach to be thought of in this world—then we ask, why do you use the Lord's prayer, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven?' For evidence that it is *not* impossible for communism to be realized on the earth, we point to the day of Pentecost, where all must see there was a development of it—a small, but actual beginning. And who knows but that at this distance, mankind have advanced so that what was then possible only for a moment, is now possible on a larger scale, and for perpetuity?

Again, we appeal to still lower and more familiar facts. People have clear ideas of the *family relation*: and the family relation is a state of communism. Every one praises and delights in the idea of family; it is referred to as all that is left us of paradise, and the basis of all good in society—the family relation. Well, that is communism, so far as it goes. If there is any distinction between the family state, and the broader condition of society, it is just there. In the family, *communism* reigns; and abroad, *individualism*. Now it cannot be very difficult to conceive that the family relation should be *extended*—should unite families, and spread through all minds, so that a whole nation, and at last the whole world, should be-

come one family. Let simply the spirit and principle that makes home delightful, be extended, and you have the element of universal communism. It is the spirit that realizes unity of feeling and interest—that excludes from between brothers the barter and buying and selling of aliens, and keeps alive the solidarity of kindred life; this is all that makes home delightful; it is the family spirit—it is communism. We have little beginnings of communism the world over; wherever a family is, there is communism. There is communism between the mother and child—communism between the husband and wife, where there is love and decency—and communism between brothers and sisters, until they become hardened, and scattered. The whole essence and virtue of the family spirit, and of 'home, sweet home,' is communism; such as exists in a partial, shadowy degree. It does not seem altogether improper and Utopian, to think of condensing families—melting them together, and extending the feeling of consanguinity—which is a truth that extends through the whole race, though it has been long ago forgotten in the scattered condition of mankind. We see nothing but that it may be looked for and hoped for as possible, in this world. But whether it is attainable or not, we claim that it shall be admitted to be a *superior state*. If it is too high for us—so high that any attempt after it is Utopian—so be it. But we certainly ought not to deery it for that reason, any more than the Hottentots should deery liberty because they cannot attain and sustain it. If we would think them fools to deery liberty on philosophical grounds, because it is not adapted to their condition, why should not the angels think us fools if we deery communism, simply because we are not prepared for it? Putting aside the personal reference, and looking at the subject simply, the least a person can do, is to admit that communism is a superior state—as much superior to mere individual liberty, as liberty is higher than slavery. Now let us look for a moment at the *conditions* of this state.

It is allowed that the conditions requisite for liberty, are *education* and *religious principle*. We do not expect any nation to be able to sustain republican institutions, unless there is a good religious conscience—fear of God, and free schools. And with these conditions, we suppose that any nation may enjoy the liberty of republicanism.

Now, corresponding to those two conditions, the prerequisites of communism are simply a *higher state of religious experience*, and of *education*; that is, *salvation from sin*, and *inspiration*. Salvation from sin, is the abolishment of selfishness. Now all the arguments against communism, are based on the assumption that it is proposed to undertake it with material in the present state of selfishness. They say communism cannot be established, because men are selfish. But the question remains, Is it necessary that men should be selfish? Is there no way to *abolish* selfishness? If there is not, communism is estopped. But it is at least supposable that Jesus Christ, who expressly said that he came into the world to save people from sin—who is called 'the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world'—it is at least supposable that he has in store grace and wisdom by which selfishness can be abolished. We have not yet fathomed the unsearchable riches of his grace. The world, with all its light, is bound yet to be modest in its pretensions to knowledge of the Bible, and of true religion;—and if it is supposable that salvation from sin is a proposal of the gospel of Christ yet to be discovered and realized, then the most essential condition of communism may yet be seen in the world.

The other condition of communism, we have

said, is an advanced state of education, or *inspiration*. Well, the signs of the times are clearly pointing to the universal recognition of inspiration, as the gift of the present age to the world. Who does not believe that Kossuth is more or less inspired? The invisible world is certainly pressing upon us in various ways. And who knows but the same spirit that was in Jesus Christ and upon the apostles, will yet come upon all flesh, so that 'your young men shall see visions, and your old men dream dreams, and your sons and daughters prophesy,' and inspiration be a universal blessing?

With these two conditions—salvation from sin, and inspiration—which are in fact only advanced stages of religious principle and education, mankind will be prepared for something better than liberty. Your common schools, and your lower form of religious experience, are sufficient for the establishment of *liberty*—republicanism. But is it not rational to suppose, that with the great advance in education and religion that we contemplate, mankind will be prepared for something higher than mere republicanism?

What is the higher state, that must come in for the final liberation of mankind? We answer, It is the state of heaven—the spirit and principle of the day of Pentecost; that is, *COMMUNISM*. We do not ask mankind to believe in the possibility of communism in a state of selfishness—in the ordinary state of mankind. But we do ask them to believe in the possibility of a higher form of civilization—a more perfect work of the grace of God in men's hearts than they have yet experienced, abolishing selfishness; and a more perfect education, by the reception of inspiration. Then on that basis, with the hope of such conditions, we ask them to believe in the possibility of communism, and to aspire unto it. We ask mankind at least not to be illiberal toward those who are seeking this state, and who believe in its possibility. It would be ungenerous and absurd for the French or the Irish people to try to level us down to their impotency, and to batter us with arguments to prove that we cannot possibly maintain republican institutions, because they have found it impossible. Every true-hearted Frenchman or Irishman will say to the American nation, "Go on. Whether we are able to maintain republican institutions or not, we are glad to see that there is a people who can; and we know that their advance will help us." So, we ask the world not to judge all by the general condition, but to encourage those who are pressing forward in improvement, to go on. If we ever expect to see the heavenly state on earth, if the world is ever to advance beyond liberty to communism, there must be a beginning somewhere; and probably at first it will commence with a few.

We believe the people of this country are really much nearer a preparation for this new step in civilization, than is generally imagined. It is evident that the expansion of liberty in its present form of individualism, and its present stage of religion and education, has been successful, and has reached its maturity with a large class in this country; and hence, that if progress is to go on, this is the next step before them. There will be no further possibility of going forward, without accepting that for which they have prayed—the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven.

The progress of mankind in social and political elevation, may be clearly divided into four distinct stages—Despotism, Constitutionalism, Republicanism, and Communism. The three first are now exhibited in different parts of the world; the fourth, on a great scale, is yet to come. Russia, in the East, clings to the despotic, absolute principle. The other parts of Europe have advanced so far as to demand

Constitutional governments, and some are looking forward to Republicanism. In this country we have gained Republicanism; and persons may think that we have thereby reached the highest point of development. But surely there is another stage before us.

All this talk about socialism that is filling the ears of the world, is evidence of a transition toward that future stage. It does not belong to Republicanism. The business of Republicanism is, to set men free—to keep them from injuring each other, and then let every man take care of himself. This is all. Hence the movement of the popular mind towards combination, as in Odd Fellowship, Protective Unions, &c., is a sign of transition beyond Republicanism. Kossuth shows himself to be a communist of a very radical stamp. Those who read his speeches, may see how passionately he identifies himself with his 'poor Hungary.'—This is communism.

Fourier's ideas about the 'age of Harmony,' will be mere dish-water, before the year 1852 is past. It is the age of communism that is coming. All the signs are on hand. If there was no God, or if things were going on forever by the laws of Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, we might then calculate as Fourier did, that it would take three or four hundred years to introduce the 'age of harmony,' and much more the age of communism, which he scarce looked for at all. But we live in new times, and under another king; salvation from sin has gained a foothold in the world, and is known to be a possible thing; and inspiration is known to be a possible thing; and with those two points established, we have already the main conditions of the age of communism.

It is objected that communism is not consistent with freedom; 'it is the grave of liberty,' they say. We affirm, on the contrary, that it is resurrection from the grave of liberty. It is the grave of liberty only in the same sense that republicanism is the grave of despotism and slavery; i. e., by the substitution of something additional, and better. Marriage, so far as there is love, connecting two persons together in vital relations, is also the grave of liberty; but it is the birth of happiness. The truth is, this everlasting talk and pother about liberty, is after all a hobby of the brain, rather than a matter of the heart. Communism is the emancipation of the heart; and so of all these elements of happiness which belong to the heart, which under the rule of mere liberty and logic lie struggling and suppressed.

FOR THE CIRCULAR.

Old Testament Studies.—No. 3.

Joseph, like his father, was distinguished for deep, earnest faith, unhesitating obedience, simplicity, and liberal-minded policy. He seems to have been in a special manner, the offspring of Jacob's first, and warmest love. There is but little account of him after his birth, until he arrives at the age of 17, at which time, he was engaged with his brethren in feeding his father's flocks. The preference of Jacob for this son of his old age, is manifested in making him a coat of many colors, and in various ways, all of which excited the envy and jealousy of his brethren; which feelings were farther increased by the relation of his dreams, until in their hatred, they were ready to slay him.—But by the interference of Reuben and Judah, his life was preserved, and he was finally sold into Egypt.

Thus the purpose of God was accomplished, and the hated dreamer realized in due time the fulfillment of his dreams. It was so manifest that God was with him, that his master could not fail to see it; and he was shrewd enough to promote a lucky man, and avail himself of the attendant blessing.

Joseph's fear of the Lord and integrity of heart, is beautifully exhibited in the affair with his master's wife, in resisting her repeated attempts to seduce him. Her revenge upon him was only another means of working out the destiny of our hero, and of raising him from the condition of a slave to that of a Prince in

Egypt. His reference to God, acknowledging him as the source of his wisdom, and the only interpreter of dreams, is very striking and beautiful. We see nothing of the spirit of embezzlement in him. He was not one of those characters whose religion unites them for business and the active duties of life. But we find him first overseer of the house of Potiphar, afterwards keeper of the prison, and finally ruler over Egypt: all of which offices he filled with great tact and fidelity.

Besides being a man of great genius, he was also endowed with a large share of personal beauty, which to ordinary men would have proved a snare instead of a blessing. He was a man of fine feelings, and strong affections; the emotions of his deep, loving, heart were beautifully manifested in his manner of receiving and making himself known to his brethren, as also in the affectionate inquiries after the health and welfare of his father and younger brother. In short, he was a believer, a hero, a statesman, and philanthropist, of the right stamp.

Oneida Community, Jan. 1852.

THE CIRCULAR.

BROOKLYN, FEB. 1, 1852.

A General Convention.

As Conventions for the purposes of Reform are the order of the day, and as it is very desirable that such conventions should be accessible to all adherents, which is not the case with any local gatherings, we propose to our scattered friends, a *Concentric Convention*. What we mean, is a gathering of spirits, on the plan suggested in Col. 2: 5; and in our late article on "Concentric and Extrinsic Vision," in the 11th No. of the Circular. A Convention of this kind will not only admit every believer, however distant and embarrassed, but may be attended by delegates from the Primitive church, and from Hades—the two other worlds with which we are cultivating interesting relations. We will not enlarge, for the present, on the feasibility and hopefulness of this project, but will simply name the 20th of February next as a good time for the gathering, and so leave the subject to the meditations of our readers, till we have matured what more we have to say.

Voice of the Press.

The New York Observer gave Perfectionism a prominent notice last week. The editor apparently disapproves of our principles, but he gives his readers considerable valuable information about our social doctrines, Associations, publications, &c. His method of exhibiting us to disadvantage, consists in culling from our First Report such detached expressions and sentences as best suit his purpose of making an unfavorable impression about us. We frankly confess that we have followed his reverend example, in culling the following scraps from his article to suit our purpose.

He informs his readers, that "the founder" of the new order, "is a graduate of a New England college, a student in two theological seminaries, and now, the editor of a paper published in this immediate neighborhood," meaning the Circular; that "the center of the sect is in the town of Lenox, Madison Co., N. Y., where about 150 persons live together in one house;" that "the sect is by no means confined to Oneida and Madison Counties," but has incipient churches "in New York, Brooklyn, Newark, N. J., and in many other places;" that "the adherents of this sect, were but recently members of orthodox, evangelical churches, some of them well educated, and most of them respectably connected." In regard to the principles of the new order, he says, that "the Bible is their nominal Constitution," and that their social doctrine, startling as it is, "is taught, and the attempt is made to defend it from Scripture." "There is no shrinking," he remarks, "from the boldest and frankest avowal of their faith and practice. On this point [he thinks] the Oneida Associationists are honorably contrasted with the Fourierites of this city, who refuse to be held responsible for the consequences to which their doctrines inevitably lead." He gives a pleasant account of the reforms which our ladies have instituted in hair-dressing and costume, and sensibly says in respect to the latter, that "this is plainly the germ of Bloomerism."

We regret to see in the conclusion of his article, the mortifying and gloomy admission that "the first half of the 19th century," with all the labors of the N. Y. Observer and other salt-sellers, "has made no improvement on past generations in morality." We hope the world is doing better than he imagines.

In the language of the editor, we may observe in closing, that with our sense of decency we are able to give "only the vaguest and most distant intimations

of what is set forth" in the article we have sketched. We have confined ourselves to its most truthful statements, leaving out what is scurrilous and suggestive of obscenity.

Dr. Dewey on Association.

Dr. Orville Dewey, in a late lecture before the Mercantile Library Association at Hope Chapel, criticized various modern reforms. The Tribune reports one of the heads of his discourse as follows: "The next reform considered by Dr. D. was described as the change of the Family for the Phalanstery. For my own part, said he, I should not like to live in a Phalanstery. I should fear epidemics, both physical and moral. The freedom of individual action would be lost. The great motive to action derived from personal responsibility, would be neutralized. The plan of the Phalanstery is to guarantee a livelihood, at least, to every member, whatever his character or capacity. This would be fatal to industry. If a man were expelled for idleness or vice, it would be the acknowledgement of failure. Hard necessity is the nurse of virtue. If you make all men comfortable, there is no knowing what mischief would ensue. Besides, the people would lose all freshness and distinctiveness of character. When I was at the Andover Theological Seminary, said Dr. D., as soon as we heard the declamation of a student, we knew what College he came from. The Phalanstery would produce a similar monotony. Every thing would be dry, jejune, insipid, tame, horribly dull and uninteresting. There would be no excitement—I could not endure it."

This seems to us sophomoric talk, of the greenest kind. Every word of this tirade is as good against the family combination, compared with solitary blessedness, as it is against the Phalanstery compared with the family. In fact, old bachelors that are dead enough to defend their solitude, always talk very much in this way about the terrible liabilities and insipidity of married life.

The argument from the danger of epidemics, if good at all, is good against the family institution. The itch, or any other contagious disorder, when it gets into a family, generally goes through it. The same may be said of schools, of factories, and of cities. In fact, all improvements of communication—our railroads, and steamships, our commerce, and comity of nations, our books and newspapers—just so far as they consolidate human life, give circulation and power to epidemics, physical and moral. Is, then, the spirit of the age which is annihilating space and hastening on to universal solidarity, a demon of destruction, which must be conjured down for fear of epidemics? Our trust is, that facility of intercourse will be found to give circulation and organized strength to good, as well as to evil; and then assuming, as we do, that good is stronger than evil, we see before us outbursts of epidemic blessings, prevailing over epidemic curses, till death shall be swallowed up in victory. We predict that Association, by organizing war against evil, and directing the power of the many by the wisdom of the best, to the solitudes of ignorance and barbarism where contagious diseases breed and perpetuate themselves, will have the honor of exterminating epidemics.

All the Doctor says about 'freedom of individual action,' 'personal responsibility, monotony of character,' &c., we have diligently considered with the light of actual experiment, which he has not; and we find assurance, as we have often set forth in our publications, that the reverse of his opinion will stand as the final fact—that freedom, enterprise, genius, and variety of character, are to be sought, not in the institutions of spiders, but in those of the bees. Our people, one and all, find excitement enough, at least, in Association, and congratulate themselves especially on having escaped the 'dry, jejune, insipid, tame, horribly dull and uninteresting' life of single familism. The change they have made in this respect, has been like removing from the country into the city.—The Doctor seems to us to be looking into the geometry of Socialism from the wrong side of the *Pons Asinorum*.

Solitude a Cause of Insanity.

The Philadelphia Ledger states that the proportion of deaths in the Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania is about 9 per cent., and that 65 cases of insanity have occurred within the last six years, in an average of 300 prisoners. The Times remarks on this as follows:

"The various societies for the Abolition of Capital Punishment are respectfully invited to give these facts a moment's reflection. In Pennsylvania the solitary system has been fairly tried. It has been tried in England, where the results correspond with those in Pennsylvania. And the results are a prodigious increase in the rate of mortality; and what is unspeakably worse, a startling development of insanity. Especially are these facts notable in the longer terms of confinement. It is precisely upon those cases, which advocates of life-imprisonment long to create, that the punishment bears with the keenest severity. The records of mental alienation embrace but few of the actual instances. The flagrant cases alone find a place there. Were the investigation extended to all those upon whom the protracted horrors of solitude had done their work, in producing partial imbecility and mental numbness; utter obtuseness of moral sense, and indeed of all the other inner and outer senses; the representation would be more nearly adequate.

This view of a seemingly charitable enterprise is to us a painful one. Any thing but the infliction of death, if any thing will serve as well. But in the alternative between the rapid shuffling off of the

mortal coil on the scaffold, or the long, dreary decay of mind and sense and feeling in solitary cell, our benevolence leads us to choose the former. Death or insanity is a fearful dilemma, but insanity is surely worse."

The evident tendency of solitary confinement to produce insanity, suggests the inquiry whether solitude brought on by other causes than imprisonment of the body—for instance, by egotism, selfishness, shame, bashfulness, &c. &c.—may not be found to be a busy breeder of insanity in society out of prison. Unsocial habits induced by any of the above causes, not unfrequently subject their victims to an oppressive isolation which is quite equivalent to solitary confinement within stone walls. 'It is not good for man to be alone.' Social circulation, i. e. the communication of the individual life with general life, is evidently essential to the health of the mind; and we are inclined to think that the largest class of insanities in all the hospitals, viz., those which are attributed to masturbation and like causes, may rationally be traced to the poverty of life brought on by isolation, rather than to the direct operation of the physical vice. Here are hints for reflection, which will probably lead to the conclusion that the abolition of selfishness by faith in Jesus Christ, and true socialism, is the best of all preventives and cures of insanity.

The Forrest Verdict.

The result of the Forrest Divorce Trial, which, as our readers probably know, was entirely favorable to the plaintiff, Mrs. Forrest, and gives general satisfaction, is a fair subject for a little further comment.

It seems to be one of those cases in which the sportsman suffers by the recoil of his own weapon. In law proceedings Mr. Forrest is the aggressor. He was the first to take the law, and as he has chosen it as his hobby, nobody will be disappointed to see him thrown. After harrassing the different courts and the public ear for a long time with complaints of his wife, he at length gets his public trial, and is fairly beaten—is pronounced by the jury guilty of the very things that he charged upon Mrs. Forrest, while she is acquitted. Having begun the game his own way, and finally got the legal settlement that he crowded for, he has reason now to be satisfied.

This verdict is a victory of refinement and civilization over the spirit of barbarism, that lurks about in society, and forms a stratum of our population.—It is a blow at what may be called rowdiness—the spirit that loves liberty for the sake of mischief. Mr. Forrest is more or less a representative of this element, as is shown by the cast of his associates and principal constituents. Many will recollect his connection with the Astor Place Riot, which was instigated to put down a rival actor, and ended in a 'Massacre.' Since the difficulties with Mrs. Forrest he has assaulted different persons in the streets; and the whole management of the affair on his side shows a game of intrigue, carried on with vile persons, by base means, for an unmanly object. We are glad to see it rebuked. Italianism in this country has had a pretty hard run of luck lately, and we consider this verdict of the New York public, in the face of Mr. Forrest's fortune and influence, a sign of its continued criticism.

The result of this case is favorable to Woman's Rights, and in connection with that, is a pretty distinct sanction of other innovations, or at least of the right of progress in respect to our social theories and opinions. Mrs. Forrest avowed, in a letter that was offered in the evidence, her dissent from the common legislation of society, and her belief in the freer, harmonious theories of Fourierism. Her associates and friends, seem to have been persons of somewhat cultivated taste, but tinctured with Socialism, and inclined to liberality and progress. The judge alluded to this, in his charge, with evident disapproval, but the jury by their verdict, have left her justified. We think it is an instance in which the good sense and humane instinct of the people discriminates between two spirits, even where the specific conduct of the two is about alike. Undoubtedly both parties in this suit, allowed in themselves a certain freedom of life; but in her case it was coupled with decency, humanity, and a show of principle, that was lacking in him. This verdict, therefore, acquitting Mrs. Forrest, is properly a vindication of decency and principle, and an emphatic condemnation of brutality and slave-driving jealousy. Will some of our old Putney friends make a note of that!

Finally, rising above the agency of mere human folly to the design of Providence, why is not this long and world-watched suit, the real 'protracted meeting' of the winter? Mr. Finney came on and labored here several weeks to get up one of the old fashioned sort, without any success. But here has been a protracted and searching operation on the heart of society, well calculated to convict the world, of deep-seated social wrong, and of its necessity of salvation on that point. Let us hope that it will lead to thorough repentance and conversion.

PROGRESS OF ASSOCIATION.—We learn that the North American Phalanx, in Monmouth Co., N. J., has just declared a dividend of 4 per cent. upon its capital stock for the past year. This is the first cash dividend made since its organization, which took place some

ten years ago. This dividend is made after paying a competent reward to the laborers in every department of the institution. The Phalanx has struggled through great difficulties arising from want of sufficient capital and other causes of weakness attendant upon the organization of new relations of industry and social life. These difficulties have been met and manfully overcome, and we congratulate our friends in the institution, upon the attainment of their present substantial and secure condition, as well as upon the happier mode of life and larger means of personal improvement, which their Association enables them to enjoy.—*A. T. Tribune.*

Turkey and the Turks.

It is somewhat remarkable that by late events Turkey has become associated with England and the United States in the cause of freedom, against the world. In his dealings with Kossuth, the Sultan has set a shining example of liberality and good faith; and in fact, by his disregard of the imperial bullies of Europe, and his release of Kossuth, he has taken the initiative step in the whole present impulse of the times. And this is the land of the cimeter and the bowstring, of harems and dervishes. The Christian nations of Europe must look to it, or we shall have another illustration of the principle that 'the first shall be last, and the last first.' If, as we are inclined to think, the Mahometan principality has followed the example of Nebuchadnezzar's court, and migrated from Turkey to Mormondom, there is nothing to hinder Turkey from receiving Christianity, and coming out the foremost leader of civilization in all the East. Think of that, most Christian and enlightened friends!

We are pleased to see the drift of circumstances calculated to draw this country into a more intimate friendship and alliance with Turkey. There seems to be a providential purpose of that kind at work, and many things look exceedingly favorable to such a combination.

In the first place, it would be a protection to Turkey against the Northern Colossus, Russia, who only waits for a pretext and opportunity to crush and possess her; and on the other hand, it would be giving the most effectual help to Hungary. With England for a party to the compact, we could close the Bosphorus and shut up the Czar in his own Black Sea, so as to enforce non-intervention in the affairs of Hungary. Such an alliance with Turkey as we propose, would give us entrance and influence in the land of Palestine, which is to be a future theatre of great interest. It would introduce Turkey, who we think is ready to be converted from Mahometanism, to the truest development of Christianity, and the highest form of civilization and freedom. On the other hand, acquaintance and fellowship with that oriental race, with their primitive ideas and simple customs, might be beneficial to us. A beginning of courteous attentions and reciprocities has already taken place, and might be easily followed up to the result which we propose. Amin Bey, their late special ambassador, was treated with distinguished attention in this country, and went home well pleased. The sultan's noble conduct in releasing Kossuth, is every where remembered by our people in the enthusiasm of his reception. Even the 'Turkish dress' reform, which has been agitated so much, and adopted by many of our women, might be made a link of sympathy. Here certainly are materials enough to begin with, for an *entente cordiale* between the two nations, and we hope the State department will take account of it in their foreign policy.

Movement at Putney.

A correspondent at Putney starts us with the following news:

"You will be interested to learn something about the proceedings of a meeting, held last night at the Orthodox church. We cannot ascertain whether the meeting was convened for some other purpose, or whether a special notice was given. At least, there was a meeting held, and led in its deliberations by Israel Keyes, and attended by Elder Foster, Deacon Crawford, James Keyes, Mr. Page, and a few more. Israel was speaker of the house, and made some pathetic appeals to the audience in behalf of the young, and society in general, for protection against the invading foe, that by all means a stop should be put to the return of this great, corrupting evil and heresy—*Perfectionism!* Their papers, he alleged, would be in the hands of all, young boys, young girls, women and all; and then as to religion, if that was religion, let him not name it. Elder Foster was named as a member of 'vigilance,' but declined, saying that he wanted nothing to do with the office. Israel urged, in a strong, eloquent, and pathetic argument, the propriety of combining with his impetuosity and repulsiveness, in the campaign before them, the snavity and courteous deportment of such a man as Mr. F.—but in vain. Mr. F. declined positively.—We cannot learn what organization was adopted, or whether any resolutions were passed, except to appoint a committee of two, to take such measures as they should deem expedient, consisting of Dr. Campbell and Col. White; both of whom were absent, and we have not learned whether they accept their commission."

We were well aware that Israel Keyes did not like our late arrangements for reoccupying our homestead at Putney. But the expressions of good feeling, and the hearty invitations of return, which Mr. Miller met with among the people of Putney from time to time, induced him to think that Israel Keyes might not be the whole of Putney. Even admitting that he is like Israel of old, 'the peculiar people,' it was thought that the Gentiles of Putney might have a

voice in the disposal of the town. We cannot yet believe that he will make available tools of the orthodox church, which has been abused by him in former years almost as ferociously as Perfectionism. We are glad to see that he is aware that his Russian propensity for absolutism needs modification. We have hoped also that the railroad which has tapped the town since we left, has brought the people into liberalizing communication with the solidarity and progress of mankind. If we are mistaken in all this, and if Israel still remains the autocrat and true representative of all nations in the Putney world, we shall cheerfully retire before him, on fair notice, and wait for the advent of republicanism. But we fear he will have to stop the nails and break up the railroad, before he will possess his kingdom in peace.

A QUESTION.—Suppose after the United States and England shall have covenanted according to the Walker and Kossuth plan, to see that every nation is allowed 'to dispose of itself,' Ireland should put in her claim to that privilege. What is to be done?—*Rochester Am.*

Why, John Bull would admit the claim, of course! And so too, if the nation of South Carolina insists upon setting up for itself, or transferring its allegiance to John Bull, what can Uncle Sam do but assent to the arrangement? Nay, if the slaves of the South should themselves claim the privilege guaranteed by this covenant of 'disposing of themselves,' who is to hinder them?—*Milwaukee Sentinel.*

We cut the above out of the *Albany State Register*. There is just the rub with all that sort of folks. If we yield to the claims of justice, humanity and everlasting right in one instance, we may be called upon to do so in other instances, and where it is not quite so convenient to do it, or rather where our supposed self-interest, our passions and our prejudices, conspire to prevent our doing it.—*Oneida Telegraph.*

We should have no objection to the carrying out of this principle of the right of self-disposal, even to the allowing of Associations and families to choose their own institutions. *Ed. Circular.*

The Nature of Angels.

Extract from a Sermon by Rev. Wm. M. Stillwell.

That there is another state of existence, and that those who have lived in this world shall also live when separated from these bodies, appears to have been an idea of all nations in the world; but various have been the beliefs concerning the beings who dwell in that state of existence. Some pretend to say that it will not do to let our imagination lead us into that world which has not been opened to us, and that we had better be content with little knowledge and have it by and by. I am not one of these; for where our Lord has given an idea to lead the mind, I believe we may innocently and profitably follow. He tells us there are angels. Now we well know an angel can be visible or invisible—which to me shows a body. It is nothing to say, 'Had angels bodies they would always be visible,' for that does not follow.—1. In the things of Nature it is not true: a cloud may be passing through the air, and not be visible until it comes to a certain point at which our vision will enable us to behold it, but to say there was no cloud because we could not see it, would argue a want of information in us of the works of Nature. 2. Again: A glass, which is a transparent substance, may be so placed between us and the light as to in no perceptible way obstruct the light, and we may suppose that there is nothing between us and the light, and yet our feeling will at once convince us of the fact which we might be ready to deny. So insects or animals may be of that nature or size that our vision may not detect them, although they are in the air we breathe or water we drink; and yet there is a power we know of through which they can be discovered. So may it be with angels. Our vision may not be sufficient unless under certain positions in which they may have the power to place themselves, as also they are under such laws as will not allow of their being visible, except for such purposes as Infinite Wisdom may see fit. Jesus took not on him the nature of angels, which shows that there is individuality, and where this is there must be substance; and this implies form and shape, with powers annexed. They have a desire of knowledge. These things the angels desire to look into.' They have feelings and purposes.—'Joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.' They have memory. Praise is their employment and delight; they are ministering spirits—have a charge of nations or individuals, as Michael the Archangel, a prince who had charge of the Jewish people. Of children, Jesus says, 'Their angels do behold the face of my Father in heaven.' So may every Christian be under a particular charge; as it is said, 'Ye must become as little children.' 'The angel of the Lord encampeth about them that fear him.' 'Think you,' says Jesus, 'I could not ask and He would give me legions of angels?' &c.

Table-Talk, by J. J. N.—No. 1.

[We take pleasure in serving to the readers of the Circular some of the extemporaneous remarks, that spice our table entertainments.—W. A. H.]

September 10, 1851.

The 'seat of war' is here at the table.—Here is where the unclean spirit thrusts itself between us and God's creation; and here is where we may eat and drink salvation—the flesh and blood of Christ.

The devil has managed to make the table, to a great extent a snare, when it should be the scene of a sacred ordinance. He wishes to be our guest, and enjoy with us the good things that God has made to be enjoyed with him. He wishes to infuse into us his greedy spirit, and get us into a quarrel with God's creation. He would have us set God off on one side as

holy, and, on the other hand, conceive of the bounties of creation as debasing. But the truth is that both God and his works are holy; and the mischief is not in God's creation, but in the diabolical spirit that thrusts itself between us and creation.

I propose that we raise a permanent determination in our hearts to expel the evil spirit from our table, and lovingly invite Jesus Christ to be our guest—believing that he will joyfully accept the invitation. Let us make this a subject of continuous thought—hold a protracted meeting at our table, until we are able to eat and drink in the spirit of heaven and purity. This will be done, not by forced abstinence, but by exercising ourselves in faith—by recognizing Christ in our food—by wilfully discerning the Lord's body—by mingling our food with 'thanksgiving, the word of God, and prayer'—by believing that what we eat will not only be food to our bodies, but a means of worship and edification to our souls, and medicine for all the ailments of our bodies. Then, the good things of creation, instead of tempting us to excess, will infuse temperance into us, and cause the influx of the spirit of heaven. And how much more beautiful it is to eat in the spirit of heaven than in a greedy spirit—and how much greater the intensity of enjoyment!

God loves matter: in the beginning he possessed himself of matter, and pronounced everything 'very good.' And his property should be restored: the devil and his angels should be stripped of all the good material they have sucked into themselves, and sent off into the inane. Let them take with them all this sanctity that consists in withdrawal from matter, which they have advocated so long.

Much of the trouble we have with our various passions comes through Alimmentiveness. If we desire the spirit of temperance to possess our whole nature, we must first have a chaste spirit in our Alimmentiveness. This is the front door of our life, and here is where we must invite Christ to come in, and take possession of the whole house. He says, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me.' (Rev. 3: 20.)

At the great gathering from all nations, on the day of Pentecost, there must have been some that were troubled with inordinate Alimmentiveness; but when the Spirit came upon them, all uncleanness was washed away, and they ate their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, at once.

CORRESPONDENCE.

FROM ILLINOIS.

Grand Detour, Jan. 9, 1852.

—I once more have a little that I can send to you, to aid in the support of the Circular. I feel thankful for it, and if I had more, would send it with pleasure. It is our luck here to be poor. But I thank God we are not so poor but that we should be glad of the going forth of truth in all its grandeur; and it seems to us that the Circular is aiding considerably in this work. The exact relation existing between you and us, I do not know as I could fully describe. At all events there is to me a curiosity in it; for just such thoughts as we have here, are sure to appear in the next Circular. I was saying to friend Richards a short time since, that I wished we knew what in your mind constituted a member of your body of believers; and we came to the same ideas that were expressed in our next paper, No. 6. I assure you it is cheering to get such news, under such circumstances.

And here, if it is not asking too much, I wish to say a few words, and ask a favor. Nine years ago, God converted my spirit—and brought me to the full belief that he owned all things. This happened during the campaign of the Mill-rites. I loved those people; but I could not see as they saw, and many times feared that I was wrong because I could not. After coming west, the selfish and isolated spirit that I beheld, caught too much of my attention; and while looking at that, I lost a great share of the youthfulness of my first love. But I always expected that things would again change for the better, and in this I have not been mistaken. Four years ago this winter, God undertook my case anew; and it seems to me that he is making thorough work of it. The spirit of truth has entirely weaned me from any ideas of salvation by works. I think I have well learned the lesson that faith in Christ is accounted to me for righteousness.

I can now look upon the spirit of the sects without any fear of halting, knowing that it is

theirs to sin and repent, sin and repent, just so long as they look to the works of the law for justification. Your people are the first and only body that has received my spiritual support as a whole, or my temporal support even in part. The first, because I could not give it, and the second because I had conscientious doubts whether I should be doing more good than evil. Now that these hindering causes are removed in your people, I feel a growing desire to be one with you. The distance between us seems to me, in the spirit of truth, to be removed in a good degree. The favor I would ask, if you will indulge me in it, is this: that I may flatter myself that you recognize me as one of your number. My wife and daughter, and Mr. Richards, are with me in this request. I do not know as it is best for us to make any promises what we will do; but we hope we shall be sincere with ourselves, and deal sincerely with every one in all circumstances.

Yours, SERA BAILEY.

FROM NEW YORK.

Baldwinsville, Jan. 18, 1852.

—You will see by the date of this, that I am writing from the place I left, four years since, to join the Oneida Association, then in its infancy. I feel this morning like thanking God sincerely, that I was considered worthy of a place there—and you as an instrument in his hands in bringing it about. You are already aware, that in the early days of Perfectionism this place was the scene of much fanaticism and excitement; and many things doubtless took place, that have caused the truth to be evil spoken of. But God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us, and by whom the hairs of our head are all numbered, hath not left this place without a witness that he still careth for it. I find many hearts here that beat in unison with ours.—Brother and sister Robinson, at whose house we are stopping, and with whom we find a welcome and quiet home, are wholly committed for the truth, as is shown by their monthly contributions, and their standing so firmly with our Association, against the ridiculous, false stories in circulation here. God reward them according to their works.

How changed the scene, in my own family, since the time when I was living here four years ago. Then, both myself and family were out of health, disheartened, afflicted, and I may add, tormented. To-day finds us healthy, encouraged, with happy, thankful, loving hearts. Can we ever be thankful enough to God for his goodness to us in giving us a home with that people whose God is the Lord? * * *

Yours, in much love, E. L. MATCH.

We publish without leave, and also, we hope without offense, the following letter addressed to E. H. Hamilton, Wallingford:—*Syracuse, Jan. 18, 1852.*

—I have an instinct to write a few words to you. There has been quite a long period of silence between us which I feel disposed to break. May this be a re-commencement of correspondence as brothers of the same church— heirs to the same eternal patrimony—one in Christ Jesus.

I returned a week ago last Wednesday, from a few days sojourn at Oneida, where I had a profitable and pleasant time, for which I would render thanks to God, trusting that through the influence of his Spirit, it will redound to my eternal salvation, and His everlasting glory. I was conscious of a union and fellowship between the Association and myself that I had never enjoyed before. I feel free to express my love for, and union with the Free Church, recognizing it as the Kingdom of God on earth—the nucleus of the ultimate 'Theocratic Republic.' Some time previous to my going to Oneida I was laboring under a heavy spirit of condemnation; but upon investigation, I found that the devil was the 'accuser of the brethren' and that, 'As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.' 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.' I was shown that it was the devil's delight to keep us in a state of constant litigation with ourselves. It makes no difference whether the plea is 'guilty' or 'not guilty,' only so as that he can keep our case on the docket, as unsettled. But, thank God, he is not almighty. I would confess Christ, an advocate, willing and powerful to save from all the pettifogging machinations of the devil.

I returned from Oneida, deeply impressed with the necessity of a reckless abandonment of all to Christ. My prayer to God is, that I may become dead to the world, but alive to Christ; that all my passions and affections may be possessed and sanctified by him. I confess Christ my ability—my justification—my sincerity.

Your brother, CHAUNCEY HAMILTON.

[The series of "HOME-TALKS" (continued in this paper from the Onelia 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. 80.

[REPORTED FOR THE CIRCULAR, JANUARY 24, 1882.]

THE 'AGE OF MIRACLES.'

Let us look a little at the old doctrine, or rather, I should say, the *new* doctrine—old to this generation, but new to the world—that *the age of miracles is past*. We will take a comprehensive view of the history of the world, and see where precisely on the map this doctrine lies.

To begin with, God commanded the light to shine out of darkness, formed the heavens and the earth, the sun, moon and stars, caused the earth to bring forth plants and animals, made man, and breathed into him the breath of life: all that, certainly was miraculous. So God's *first* dealings with the universe were miraculous. The creation was born of a miracle. It was a miraculous child, as much as Christ was. The first great truth that shines out of the whole frame-work of creation, according to the history we have in the Bible, is, that *God is supreme over matter*; and all natural laws are, in fact, the product of his miraculous power. Certainly, then, the creation started fair in the age of miracles. We may say that miraculous power was in full operation at the beginning, if it has stopped since.

Well, follow on the history of man. God talked with Adam in the garden of Eden; and when he sinned, and it became necessary to deal with him in a penitentiary way, God brought upon him and his race, strange changes—which were not the unintelligible working of certain laws, but were produced by a high intelligent will—changes affecting the life of man, and the course of nature in woman, and the whole productiveness of the earth. Here is a miracle again, of an opposite nature to the first great creative miracle.

Follow still along, and you will find traces of the age of miracles continued in each of these forms, through the patriarchal age.—Enoch was taken away without death. The flood came upon the world; a strange, unaccountable event, on any natural principles.—Noah was saved from it by revelation. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, walked and talked with God. Miraculous power manifestly continued in various ways.

Then come to the time of Moses, and follow the dealings of God with the Israelites; you find plenty of miracles—find yourself perpetually in the presence of the great Shekinah of God, every thing around you indicating his supremacy over matter. The age of miracles was certainly in full operation then. Well, trace the history of the Jewish nation through, and you find no cessation of miracles; and when you come to the times of Christ, there again the same power breaks out afresh, reminding one of the brightest ages in the past—the passage of the children of Israel through the wilderness, and of the creation. Christ again brought to view in perfect clearness, and by demonstration of facts, the supremacy of God over matter—renewing the impression of the great lesson of creation and the flood, and of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.

So far then, the world certainly lived under the age of miracles—for 4000 years, down to the age of the apostles. And then, we are to understand, that a total change took place; that God withdrew, and the world was not to look for any further manifestation of his supremacy over matter. But those who teach us this strange doctrine, expect the age of miracles to return again finally. They believe in a future resurrection and judgment.—They believe in the Second Coming of Christ—that he is to descend and turn every thing topsy-turvy by miracles,—change those that are living, raise the dead, &c. They are determined to have a great jubilee of miracles at the final catastrophe. To repeat—The world certainly began with a miraculous dispensation, and it is to end with one; and 4000 years of its progress has been confessedly under the age

of miracles; but here is a gap of two or three thousand years between Christ and the end—a parenthesis, in which, is the doctrine that the 'age of miracles is past.'

It appears to me that there is a ridiculous absurdity on the very face of this theory; for according to the views of those who hold it, the age of miracles is not past, but simply suspended; that is all they can say consistently. But that the age of miracles is suspended is very absurd and improbable. For let us consider a moment the philosophy of the case. Take the history of the world in the Bible, completed as it is by prophecy and admitted to be authentic, and consider the view we have presented, that the world was born of a miracle, and its affairs were administered by miracles for 4000 years, and its history is to wind up with miracles, and certainly we must conclude that a state of things in which miraculous power is excluded from the world, is itself a strange state of things. If we are living when the age of miracles is past or suspended, then certainly we live in a miraculous age. We are living in odd times of the world—in times that are totally different from the general course of its history.

When we talk about the laws of nature, we ought to remember that the first law of nature is the supremacy of God over matter. That is the source and foundation of the laws of nature; and the manifestation of that supremacy at creation and since creation, in the history of the Israelites and in the works of Christ, was only a manifestation of the first law of nature. This doctrine that the age of miracles is past, meaning the age of God's sovereignty over matter, and personal control over his own creation, is to us an abrogation of the first law of nature—a law written in the plainest, strongest hand, on the whole scroll of the universe. On these grounds, I should say that persons who teach that the age of miracles is past, do not believe in the Bible; they may imagine that they do, but they are unbelievers in the Bible history of the world.

Perhaps the strongest point in the whole philosophy of those who exclude God from the world and deny the faith of miracles to the present age, is their theory that death, the death of the body, is inevitable by the laws of nature—that in fact, men were made to die. Death with them is a natural process, and not to be referred at all to special penal arrangement, not to be regarded as miraculous, but natural,—any exception indeed would be miraculous. Well, I say that whoever holds that doctrine, does not believe in the Mosaic account of creation, does not believe in the resurrection and the gospel of Christ, and does not believe in the doctrine of a future resurrection. The original account of death is that it was a consequence of sin; that it is miraculous, strange, a diabolical anomaly for people to die. Whoever believes it to be a natural inevitability, certainly does not believe in the original account of it.

Then see how impossible it is for any one holding this doctrine, to believe in the gospel of Christ. Christ, as I said, demonstrated by facts the supremacy of God over all natural laws, by healing the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, and a variety of other manifestations. That is what he called his gospel. It was that he was doing when he applied to himself the language of the prophet, 'The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' Here is Christ's gospel described. But to come to the real pivot of the thing—he died, and the third day rose again, in the face of this natural law of death. Then he said to his disciples, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.' (Mark 16: 15—18.) Believe what? What was the gospel—the good tidings that the disciples had to carry forth? Christ had died, and apparently disappointed their hopes,—but behold the third day he appeared again

—death could not hold him. The omnipotence of God was manifested in his redemption from the bands of death, and by that came the promise of deliverance to all the victims of death. That was the good tidings the disciples had to preach. They understood now what Christ meant by the gospel. To pin the thing to that point, we have only to go to a passage in the 10th of Romans, where Paul says, 'If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that *God hath raised him from the dead*, thou shalt be saved.' There we have a clear definition of the gospel which Christ sent his disciples to preach. The glad tidings—the news of joy, that their hearts were full of, and that they longed to preach to all mankind, was the fact that Christ had *risen from the dead*. So you go through the whole New Testament, and you find the gospel there set forth is the resurrection of Christ: and the faith of the Primitive church, was faith in that fact. They believed it in their hearts, and the same power that worked in him to raise him from the dead, worked in them to raise them from moral and spiritual death. They knew no other power of salvation than that which raised Christ from the dead—God's *miraculous* power. This is as plain as daylight on the whole New Testament.

How can any one believe in this gospel then, who holds to the doctrine that the age of miracles is past, and the doctrine, more specifically, that death is inevitable—that God does not interfere with the power of death in this world, but it is man's inevitable destiny to grow up, come to maturity, and decay like the plants and animals. How can any one who holds such a faith believe in the gospel of the primitive church, which brought the tidings that death was conquered, and proclaimed the sovereignty of God over nature—over the most tyrannical power in nature, that of decay and death. Those who assert that the age of miracles is past, cannot believe that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is working still. Suppose Mrs. Cragin, or any one that we have known, should return. You can see it would introduce among us a miraculous fact, which would upset this whole doctrine of the supremacy of natural laws, and the inevitability of death. Just such a fact had taken place in the Primitive church; and if unbelief and the doctrine of natural laws has displaced that fact in person's minds, they cannot believe in the gospel that the Primitive church believed in. The very essence of that gospel, was faith in a fact which confounded all these laws, and led men to the conscious recognition of the sovereignty of God over their bodies and souls, placing them in conjunction with miraculous power. If you say that this power was manifested then, but we have nothing to do with it, it is all past, then I say, that the age of regeneration is past—the age of God's grace and sovereignty is past—the age of salvation is past; and the gap between the apostolic age and the judgment, is the age of damnation.

On the same ground it is safe to affirm, that persons who hold this doctrine of the physiologists that death reigns legitimately, that it is not a usurpation but a natural sovereignty, do not believe in the resurrection that is coming. Those who deny the supremacy of God over matter, have no serious belief in creation, or the resurrection, or the judgment—the beginning, the middle, and the end of this miraculous world. They have no serious belief in the great manifestations of God's power in the history of time. But we are bound to return to the freshness of old faith, and say—He that believeth in the supremacy of God over matter, or that believes in this great Bible theory of the miraculous birth, progress and end of the world, shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned; because he that believes in this theory recognizes a God, and recognizes him as a power of redemption from matter; but he that believes not in this theory, says in his heart, with the fool, 'there is no God,' and is an everlasting captive to matter, and must die like the brutes.

Christ brings out a principle in point, where he says, 'ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets;' showing that distance and time so alter a man's relation to facts, that he can show respect to facts afar off, which he would certainly have scouted and persecuted being in direct contact with them. Get a clear evidence that a man's faith is of this kind—faith that depends on the distance of facts believed—which will tolerate a remote fact, but not one of the same kind close by, and we can say justly and decisively, that that man does not believe in the facts he pretends to; for he is in precisely the same state of mind with those who believe not, being in the presence of them.

At the same time that we believe in God's sovereignty over the laws of nature, and open our hearts to faith in his personal interposition, we are getting into a normal state, in which we do not need any exceptions or extraordinary manifestations of his power. These very persons who deny the age of miracles, are after all more credulous than we; for when a person *dies*, immediately they have him swallowed up in miracles. Think what a rush of miracles must take place to work the change they expect at death, transforming a sinful man into an angel at once. No natural laws govern now—it is all miracle. But it is in the distance; out of this world. We do not believe in such miracles; we have our incredulity. We believe things are governed by natural laws after death as well as here. With all our elevation of faith, we turn our brightest and best into Hades; we do not send them right to heaven. So they believe in things that we do not, if we believe in things that they do not. They believe in miracles outside of this world, and in miracles past and future—everywhere, except on this 'little bank and shoal of time,' the present. They admit them beyond death, and back in Christ's time and the time of creation—there is no objection to them at that distance; but here is a little space where they must not intrude. It is like the mountains of Gilboa on which there was no dew.

The only rational meaning of this doctrine that the age of miracles is past, is, that the age of *faith* is past, which to a certain extent, is true. Where there is no faith there are no miracles. Faith must invite the power of God's sovereignty over matter: he does not thrust himself upon people's attention where there is no heart to receive him. Christ said, 'When the Son of man cometh shall he find faith on the earth,' intimating that at the end of the apostolic age, faith would be scarce.—All the faith there was in the Jewish nation, was gathered into the church and taken up at that time. Among the Gentiles, there were no faith traditions such as the Jews had, and but little receptivity, so that it was an extinction of faith almost. The remnant of faith has been very small from that time onward. The world has been buffeted back and forth between skepticism and fanatical faith, and but very little true faith has had any growth since. It began to glimmer, and has been rising and gathering to itself material in a small way, from the time of the reformation, and now the true faith once delivered to the saints is coming to the birth again among the Gentiles.

Fanatical faith was born in the age of the apostate fathers, and was evidently generated by the devil's abuse of the miracles of Christ and the apostles. These miracles started a demand for the supernatural, which the devil speculated upon. In fact, the great snare, which Christ and the apostles predicted should come upon that age, was a development of fanatical faith. A spiritual principality arose then, which from that time to this has been the deadliest foe of true faith, by disgracing it, setting up scarecrows, and making people afraid to believe. It stands ready the moment a person opens his heart to true faith, to beget in him a craving for useless wonders, and so run him off the track. It has stood like the dog in the manger, over the Gentile dispensation, ready to possess itself of every move toward the recovery of true faith. What fires of temptation we have been through from this principality! The point is to be able to resist the imaginations of the flesh, and the will of the flesh—set reason and common sense on the throne, and yet not be faithless but believing. That is the battle we are fighting now. The Lord is trying us to see if we will utterly refuse fanatical faith, before he gives us true faith—to see if we will endure all things rather than be bewitched and imposed upon by that old snare of the devil, and yet not give up true faith. There is the point; to maintain the good fight of faith—and yet calmly submit to death, without asking God to interfere merely for our comfort—submit to his sovereignty both ways. This is his decree: You shall not renounce your belief in my sovereignty, and you shall not demand my exercise of that sovereignty; and if you try to make me do a miracle and I do not choose to do it, you shall not give up your belief in my power and goodness. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were right about it. They would declare that their God was *able* to deliver them, though he should refuse and suffer them to be burned in the furnace the next minute. That was rational. Christ's temptation in the wilderness was a temptation to fanatical faith—to cast himself down from the temple—command the stones to be made bread, &c. When we become as chaste as he was, we may expect the gift of his faith.

Letters Received.

E. Carrier; O. H. Miller; P. P. Britton; S. Chapman; E. Barnes.