

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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[We find our present views very well expressed in the following article, which was formerly published in the Perfectionist. We think we shall be approved in drawing freely from the stores of our past publications such parts as are pertinent to present thoughts and objects. Whatever is thus inserted will be found to contain far-reaching truths and principles that may well be studied by our former readers: to many of our present subscribers the articles will be entirely new. As they are from the pen of the editor, they are at least semi-editorials, and will be simply designated by the term 'Reprint.']

Ways and Means.

Many ways of reforming the world and ushering in the Millennium have been proposed in these last days. The gospel of Spurzheim calls all hearts and minds to the study of the cranium, as the only method of human advancement. The gospel of Graham teaches that the regeneration of the world is to be effected by a physiological, and especially a dietetic revolution. The gospel of Fourier promises to make earth a heaven, by scientific social arrangements. Other gospels propose other methods, too numerous to mention. As Perfectionism is a candidate, among the rest, for the 'post of honor' in the strife for the 'latter day glory,' we may properly be asked for our programme of ways and means, and we will endeavor to give one.

I. Our gospel is not a new one. We rest our enterprise, not on new discoveries of science, like the Physiologists and Phrenologists; nor on a social machinery lately invented, like the Fourierites; nor on a new revelation, like the Mormons; but on agencies that were known and relied on eighteen hundred years ago, by the Primitive church. The New Testament is our *rade-mecum*. Our gospel is new, as having been unknown to the world since the destruction of Jerusalem; but it is old, as having been known, tried, and recorded, in the apostolic age.

II. The object which we propose to ourselves, as the center of all hope and effort, is that genuine regeneration which was effected in the primitive church, and which the apostle John describes in his 1st epistle, 3: 1-10, as making a complete end of sin. This regeneration is essentially connected with the resurrection of Christ, and is in fact a resurrection of the soul, tending to, and terminating in, the resurrection of the body. From any change less radical and entire than this, we have no hope of the real improvement of mankind.

III. The first agency on which we rely for the regeneration of men, is the *Spirit of God*. And we do not refer this term to those imperceptible spiritual influences which are supposed by modern theologians to *second* merely the ministration of the truth, but to that living, mighty power, which in the days of Christ and his apostles, healed diseases, cast out devils, raised the dead, was poured in sensible baptisms on believers, revealed to them the mysteries of the inner world, and gave them the consciousness of the presence of the Father and the Son in them and with them. We believe that the spirit of God is the same in its nature and in all its leading manifestations now, as it was in the apostolic age.

It is obvious that, in respect to setting in operation this first agency, the initial movement is

to be made by God and not by us. But it is our business to invite the Spirit into the world by moral attraction and prayer, and to become its agents and conductors.

IV. The means of regeneration next in importance to the Spirit, is the *truth*. We repudiate the notion of those who think the Spirit alone is to be sought for, and who despise 'theory.' The Holy Ghost is emphatically named the 'Spirit of truth.' Its office is to lead believers 'into all truth.' Can it lead them into all truth, without leading them into a 'theory,' i. e. a system of truth? 'The truth,' says Christ, 'shall make you free.' 'Ye have purified your souls,' says Peter, 'in obeying the truth, through the Spirit.' 'The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' Truth, as distinguished in these passages from the Spirit and from grace, is manifestly a 'theory' presented to the understanding. Nor is the truth which is thus declared to be the associate of the Spirit in regeneration, communicated merely by the Spirit, independently of external teaching. 'The Holy Ghost,' says Christ, 'whom the Father will send in my name, shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.' Here manifestly verbal communications are made auxiliary to the operations of the spirit. And in accordance with this, through the whole period of the apostolic age, God employed human teachers, as the servants of the Holy Ghost, to minister the truth by personal preaching and by written communications. Moreover the Old Testament, a written record of the history and theology of the Jewish dispensation, was at that time an important auxiliary of the Spirit; and God took care that the New Testament, a written record of the history and theology of the Christian dispensation, should be prepared and preserved, to be the text book of the teachings of the Holy Ghost in all ages to come. So that the 'theory' of those who are opposed to the ministration of 'theory' by oral or written testimony, is at war with the declared principles and the manifest facts of the parent-dispensation of the Spirit. Theories are objectionable, not because they are theories, i. e. systematic exhibitions of facts and principles, but only when they are either false, or are made rivals instead of auxiliaries of the Spirit.

Here then is an appropriate sphere of human agency. By holding forth the word of life, we may become co-workers with God in the regeneration of men.

These two agencies, the Spirit and New Testament truth, constitute the basis of all hopeful operations and arrangements for human advancement. The legitimate object of all other means that may be employed, such as organization, and positive institutions of every kind, is to further the work of these—to increase the influx and fellowship of the Spirit, and to give free course and enforcement to the truth.

Though only one of these agencies is placed in our hands, yet we need not fear that the other will be wanting. God will not reveal and send forth the truth of his gospel, till he is ready to follow it with the power of the Holy Ghost. 'The Spirit answers to the word.' If we are enabled by the grace of God to bear witness of the resurrection of Christ, we may be sure that the Holy Ghost will follow our testimony, and 'bring it to the remembrance' and spiritual realization of those who receive it. Sooner or later, the word of the gospel shall 'prosper in the thing whereto it is sent,' even the complete regeneration of souls—salvation from all sin.

We have a perfect assurance that the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ have once done, and are about to do again, a work which the law of Moses, the legal teachings and forms of nominal Christianity, and the sci-

entific schemes of all modern reformers, are utterly unable to accomplish—the work of making GOOD MEN. And when a strong body of good men shall have been made, we shall have a foundation on which all external reforms and improvements can stand and become effectual. An army of the genuine sons of God, is the only force that will ever abolish intemperance, licentiousness, slavery, war, and the manifold abominations of social competition and cruelty. The 'highway of holiness,' the old grace-and-truth railroad laid out in the New Testament, is our way to the Millennium.

V. We will now speak more specifically of our own method of holding forth the word of life. The two principal ways of publishing the truth are by *preaching* and *printing*. Which of these is to be preferred? From the beginning we have been inclined to choose printing, and accordingly have been engaged, the greater part of the time for ten years past, in writing and publishing papers, pamphlets, tracts, &c. Experience and mature consideration have established us in the opinion that printing is to take precedence of preaching, in the present going-forth of the gospel. In support of this opinion, we argue as follows:

1. The rule by which the comparative merits of different external agencies should be estimated, is this: That agency is most valuable, *other things being equal*, which brings the word of God to the mind with the least mixture of human influence. The more of pure divinity, and the less of humanity in the operation, the better. The more of bare faith, on the part of the subject, and the less of sensuous excitement, the better. On this principle Christ said to Thomas, 'Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.' By this rule it is manifest that written or printed testimony is superior to personal preaching, because there is much more of the human element—more that addresses and excites the senses, in the person, words, gestures, &c. of a preacher, than in the silent lines of a letter or paper. We are less likely to forget man and hear only the pure voice of God, in a crowded assembly, under the voice of an orator, than in solitude with only a tract or a book. Written or printed testimony occupies a place midway between preaching and the instruction of pure inspiration; and it is so much superior to preaching as it is nearer to the method which is entirely supersensual.

An objector to this view may say that the apostles and other primitive teachers did their principal work by personal instruction. Our reply, in the first place, is that they lived and labored at a period when the art of printing was unknown; and we cannot infer with certainty from what they did then, what they would do in the present circumstances of the world. But secondly, it is not true that they did their most valuable work by oral testimony. Their written and now printed narratives and epistles, have had a vastly wider and more permanent influence in the world than their personal preaching. By means of them, the voice of the primitive gospel has found its way over the wide chasm of anti-Christian darkness, and has come to us at the distance of eighteen hundred years. We are the spiritual children of the primitive church. They have begotten us through the gospel which they left on record. In assigning a higher rank, therefore, to written or printed testimony than to preaching, we simply give due honor to the Bible, to the most valuable labors of the apostles, to the channel through which the word of God originally came to us.

We wish it to be noted, however, that we qualify the above rule by the expression, '*other things being equal*.' It is not true that printed testimony is best for all sorts of persons

and in all circumstances. Grown persons may do well with books alone; but *children* need personal instruction. And this is true of those who are children not in years, but in intelligence and in faith. We are well aware of the fact that, in the present state of things, many and perhaps most believers are more edified, or at least entertained, by meetings, preaching, &c., than by reading; and we think it quite necessary that personal preaching should be employed and highly valued among us as a means of interesting unbelievers in the truth, and of edifying those believers whose condition of mind demands it. Yet it should be understood that preaching is specially adapted to children, and that printing is adapted to persons in a higher stage of intelligence, and, as such, is the superior agency. Our thought should be, that in proportion as we advance in grace and knowledge, we shall be less dependent on oral instruction, and shall draw more and more edification from the Bible and from other impersonal communications.

2. The wide range of the power of the press gives it an immense advantage over oral testimony in many ways. The preacher can address a few hundreds in one village; but the printer can send the same thought at the same time to minds scattered in every nook and corner of the land. Moreover, a paper can often go where a personal laborer would be excluded. And still further, we have continual evidence in our correspondence, that our little sheet reaches and feeds many who, by reason of distance from society, sickness, and other adverse circumstances, are entirely unable to attend meetings, and would very rarely, if ever, be visited by oral teachers.

By this wide range of simultaneous operation, the press conduces powerfully to the establishment of unity of faith, sentiment, and practice. It is like the flag of an army. * * * We are satisfied that the attracting and cementing power which is to bring the wide-spread multitudes of believers into unity of spirit and cause them to 'see eye to eye,' will go forth, so far as it goes in any external channel, by the medium of printing.

By this sketch, the reader may see the reasons of the course we are pursuing. Our leading object is to establish a vigorous and consistent press-power, devoted to the testimony of salvation from sin.

The Bible, Miracles, and Inspiration.

The central point of conflict between the Spirit of truth and unbelief, is on the question *whether God does spiritually reveal himself to mankind, in special providences and miraculous manifestations*. The Bible is the special champion of the doctrine of inspiration and special providences: unbelief refers all transactions to what are called the 'natural laws'; and, of course, is the direct opponent of the Bible philosophy. Whosoever refuses to recognize inspiration and the providence of God, in reality rejects the Bible; for the Bible is so identified with these principles, that a separation is impossible. The teaching of the Spirit, the providence of God, and the Bible, reflect light upon, and confirm each other. The teachings of the Spirit lead a person to the Bible; and the Bible sets persons to seeking for the Spirit of God and inspiration: and inspiration leads them to study and interpret the providences of God.

The grand plot of the history of the world, from the creation up to the present time, has been to make, preserve, and honor THE BIBLE. It is evident from the Bible account of things, that the plot of history, at least till Abraham's day, was to bring the Bible to birth. And it will be just as evident to any mind that will truthfully scan the course of things since then,

that the great results and objects of the whole machinery of the universe have been to preserve the Bible, and increase its honor and power. These scientific characters, who have so much to say about natural laws, and ignore the providence of God in the prosperity of the Bible, know as little about the soul and poetry there is in the world, as a person would know about the plot of an interesting novel, who should parse it through, spending his whole interest on the construction of sentences. When he had finished, he might perhaps say the book parsed first rate! But what would he know about the real intent and plot of it? That is just the way these 'natural law' characters are dealing with the whole history of things. The Bible, with faith, alone puts us in a position where we can take a comprehensive view of the plot.

Look for a moment at history. History tells us that since the Jewish nation fell, no nation has been greatly prospered that has not, in some way, favored the influence of the Bible. First, the Bible was victorious in the triumph of Catholicism over Mahometanism; and when Catholicism had accomplished its work, the Reformation was let loose upon it, and will yet destroy it. Again, at the present time, the prosperity of different nations may be measured by their liberality toward the Bible. And a fair view of the history of the world, since the Bible was born, would lead any rational mind to the conclusion that the special providence of God is favoring the Bible, and that no nation will prosper that does not honor it. It is old, purblind philosophy, that wonders why Spain does not flourish, and France does not succeed in her revolutions, and why Ireland does not prosper better. The reason is very obvious: it is simply because those nations do not respect and honor the Bible. Fanatical spiritualists, who will not look to the Bible for guidance, because, as they say, they have 'the light within,' very badly interpret the leadings of that 'light within.' And, on the other hand, those who affirm that we cannot be inspired, quarrel with the spirit of the Bible and with truth, just as badly.

People talk about 'the spirit of the age,' as though there was a particular spirit at work in this age. But it is clear to us that the spirit which is now at work in the world, has been the spirit of ages, and is giving the Bible supreme power: it is plain, beyond argument or speculation, that all things are governed by God, and favor and confirm the Bible.—With the evidence before us, we may as well call the devil's pleadings done, and the verdict given; and adopting for our motto, "Crush the spirit of infidelity," let us put our whole souls into one purpose, and resolve that THE BIBLE SHALL HAVE FAIR PLAY.—Home-Talk.

A Study for All.

Each individual may study the profession of an editor, in his sphere. Life is like a newspaper; and every one publishes a daily sheet of some sort. The same prerequisites that are required to make a newspaper popular are necessary to make an individual's communications acceptable. A good editor is sure to have a pleasing variety in his paper: he does not forever ride a single hobby; neither does he fill his paper with melancholy disasters and awful disclosures; but he has an equal share of good news, such as important discoveries, improvements, reforms, &c.—and thus the compound is made palatable. So, in our daily life-paper, we must see to it that we have a proper mixture of faith, hope, and cheerfulness, with whatever unpleasant or unprofitable experience we may have to record; and do not forget a good joke once in a while.

In this life-issue, the editor performs, in a great measure the duties of compositor, proof-reader, printer, &c.—and is doubtless often fatigued and discouraged by his arduous labors. But much of this trouble would be avoided by not attempting to publish too large a sheet, and by paying more attention to quality than size. We may well content ourselves with quite a small sheet to commence with; for if we make it attractive and interesting, with an increased circulation will come edifying matter, forcing us to enlarge; besides, with care and patience in the art of well doing, our sheet will need less and less correction, until we can at last produce a 'clean proof.'

Persons are laboring under a great mistake, who are very sensitive about printing any thing for the general public, but, at the same time, feel at perfect liberty to fill their life-sheet with gossip and chit-chat—supposing that they are only publishing for private circulation. For the truth is, that the most glorious company in the universe—God and the angels—are the constant readers of the most secret thoughts of the heart: 'All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.' Sensitiveness

is good; but it should look upward, at least as intensely as in other directions. W. A. H.

THE CIRCULAR.

BROOKLYN, MAR. 21, 1852.

The editor of the New York Observer, favors us with an editorial on our late conciliatory movement. After complimenting himself on our reformation, he goes on to deny that we have reformed.—All right.

The March of Events.

Evidently, the time has come for a more thorough understanding and settlement of the social question, including marriage and the family relations. This is the dictate of Providence, written in the course of events, and is not to be avoided by a reckless onslaught on persons, or by any amount of grumbling and groaning. Society should accept the issue coolly, and be willing to trust in the potency of common sense, after the prescriptive sanctity of these old institutions is gone. The fact is, marriage and the subjects connected with it, have never yet had a shadow of justice from the otherwise all-inquiring habit of the human mind. While every other department has been open to free investigation and progressive reform, this alone has been left to the undisputed reign of shame, darkness, and the devil.—Though the relation of man and woman is the primary human relation, and confessedly the most important, it has received less sober attention than any other. The subject is met with foolish levity by the young, and is locked up under grim sanctity by the old; and there has been no middle ground of fair, dispassionate examination between these two extremes. Shame and delusion have stood sentinels at the gateway of inquiry for 6000 years, and 'conscience has made cowards of us all.'

But as we said, Providence has now conducted the civilized world to a point where they are fit to enter upon the examination of this subject in the open daylight of truth. And the observer cannot fail to see in the steady stroke of events, a providential design to push mankind beyond the old barriers of thought, and throw open this primary department of social science to the free play of mind. Mark the character of the facts that have occupied the public interest during the past winter. The publicity of the Oneida Community, startling as it was made by the New York Observer, was only the last of a series of events calling attention to the social and domestic institutions of society, and all, on the whole, bearing unfavorably upon the present system of marriage.

First, the Woman's Rights and Bloomer agitation of the past year has tended to unsettle the old foundations. Then came the Mormon development, and restoration of the patriarchal system at Utah, the shock of which, in society, seems generally to have ended in a laugh. The Forrest Divorce Trial, with its strange revelations of married life, occupied for more than a month the daily talk and attention of this city, and elsewhere, giving rise to an extensive ferment on the subject of divorce, and a general dissatisfaction with the present state of things. Following that was the case of Otto Grunzig, executed for the alleged murder of his wife, but deemed innocent by the German population, who find in it occasion of open denunciation of the present marriage regulations. One of their leading papers, the New York Allgemeine Zeitung, thus speaks of the case:

"This execution has ended a law suit, which also affords illustrations of another institution with which society torments itself until lassitude or exhaustion, namely—marriage. This case demands some reflection. Victorine, the wife of Grunzig, had claims on her husband, according to 'old rights,' and Margaretta, his mistress, thought to have newer and fresher rights. In this way it came to a conflict; and as our regulations are so exemplary, it came to the well-known solution—one of the three parties was poisoned, the other executed, and the third is in prison, to await perhaps a more serious accusation. The whole is a consequence of the above mentioned institution, [marriage:] but it is said that society is endangered—that a moral indignation is produced—if only a word is uttered about such a corrupt institution."

Finally, the Perfectionist movement, exaggerated by newspaper reports, has caused excitement and various comment through the land. It is safe to say that without any responsibility of ours, but by the independent direction of Providence, the subject of marriage and its various relations has been the main subject of public thought and discussion during the past winter. Every thing shows that we have not been premature, but have only answered the demand of Providence and progress, in our investigations and experiments on this subject. And we shall have credit before long, for the heroism, openness and candor with which we have entered the field. If there is to be a general break-up of old ideas, as every thing now indicates, it is important that somebody should be prepared with constructive, conservative principles; and those we are able to furnish from the studious experience of years in free Association. We are not anxious to urge our conclusions upon the world; but we are satisfied that the time is not distant when they will be called for, and the advantages of our education in social matters be appreciated. a.

The Revival Movement.

A most interesting and noteworthy feature of the Hartford Revival, is seen in its harmonizing old opponents and healing quarrels in the church. By the account published last week, we are told that Dr. Hawes, Dr. Bushnell, and Mr. Finney were cordially laboring together in the work. This appears almost miraculous, for there could hardly be found three leaders in the church, more naturally incompatible to each other than these men. Bushnell and Hawes have been notorious opponents, and Mr. Finney, we suppose, has been equally disliked by both. The reconciliation that appears to exist, is a promising thing for the present revival, showing that the true grace of religion is rising above dogmatic and legal differences. We trust that this is the case, and that the true spirit of devotion will sweep over the land, redeeming men to vital godliness and spiritual unity, out of the narrow confines of sectarian bigotry.

We continue our notices of the most interesting revivals now in progress.

A letter from Rev. Mr. Sherwood, of Milford, Ct. gives the gratifying intelligence that a most precious and powerful revival of religion is now in progress in the Second Congregational Church. The work began in the prayer-meetings of the church some two months since, and has continued to spread and increase in breadth and power until the present. It is shared in by the other churches in the place.—The writer says: 'It is really one of the most interesting and blessed revivals that it has ever been my privilege to labor in. I am literally worn down with the joyful labor of guiding anxious souls to Christ. The number of conversions in this church and in Mr. Brace's, as well as in the Methodist, is large, and many are still inquiring. There is no abatement of interest.'—N. Y. Evangelist.

Rev. Charles Jones, of Holland Patent, N. Y., writes us:—"Will the editor please say, in his valuable paper, for the encouragement of Christians and the honor of God, that the Holy Spirit is visiting my people and this whole region with great power. There were several conversions in the months of December and January, and a gradual rising in my church. About fifteen days since, we commenced a special effort, and God is attending it with his marked blessing. Some fifty profess submission to God, and many are serious."—Ibid.

In the village of Saxonville, Mass., a powerful revival of religion is in progress. In a Protestant population of one thousand souls, two hundred are believed to have turned to God by repentance and faith, within a few months. And it is a very cheering feature of the work, that the converts, to an uncommon extent, according to their ability, testify to their friends and neighbors what God has done for them.—Ibid.

In the Olive street church, [Rev. Mr. Richards'] of Nashua, a work of grace is in progress of the most delightful character, and in its power equalling those of other times. From the first of the year to the present the gospel has gone on from conquering to conquer, the number of inquirers and the number of converts steadily increasing. For a long time from one to sixteen have called upon the pastor every day in the week at his study for religious inquiry and instruction, while not less than one hundred and fifty have attended at a time upon the regular inquiry meeting. A very considerable number indulge the Christian hope, of whom many belong to the Sabbath school. The interest is extending into the two other Congregational societies in the place.—Ibid.

A letter from Pittsfield, Ill., dated March 3, says—"You will be glad to learn that the Congregational church in this place has experienced a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. I have never before in the West seen meetings conducted so much like those in New Haven, some twenty years ago."—Independent.

The Family Meal.

A correspondent of the Independent, lately returned from traveling in Europe, furnishes for the last No. of that paper an interesting chapter of contrasts between social life in America and the different European nations. We were much pleased with, and quote for the benefit of our readers, the writer's remarks on the 'family meal.' He thus expresses himself:

"It is surprising, the contrast between the social life at table in this country and in Europe. There seems no doubt that eating is in part an aid and an expression of kind social feelings, and that sociality at the table is highly conducive to health. From the earliest times, a good dinner has been the mode of expressing kindly feelings towards a friend. The Old Testament is, if I might say it without irreverence, almost jovial with the bounteous oriental hospitality. Homer's heroes seem to utter their best sentiments, and hold their best 'talks' at the board heaped with good things. And it will be singular and not irrelevant for any one to notice, how many of Christ's highest discourses and most loving thoughts are uttered at the social meal.

The family-meal has a higher object than to fill up our stomachs. That could be done in a much easier way. It is meant to help on friendliness and sociality, to cherish kindly relations. The mind is connected with the body. We may wish transcendently to be above it, but the truth is, the moods depend much on the nerves. Digestion of good cheer and pleasant friendly talk seem to aid one another. In Europe, the father makes his meals the time for his liveliest talks with the 'young people.' They all sit long at table. And the dinner and supper-hour are often the happiest hours in the day. As I recall my conversations with friends in Europe, I am surprised how much of the highest and noblest converse, interchange of thoughts which will inspire and strengthen me for duty many a day yet, was over the table. Perhaps the very greatness of our people is connected with this peculiarity. Each man has too great objects to stop and eat slow, or chat over a dinner. Yet, after all, grand as we are, we do not enjoy ourselves. God made the soul with various faculties, and the mode or the creed which ignores

any part of them, strips it of a part of its life and its happiness. Play as well as work must enter into the complete life. And I do believe in a higher and different type of religious character which will soon spring up here. The New England, the Puritan type, has done its great work. We need another now. We want something more genial, social, loving, kindly, something which will be with man in his laughter as well as in his struggles; a nature which the *roue*, and the 'man-of-the-world,' shall be won to, as their highest ideal of manliness and good fellowship as well as of earnestness. The character which could draw so trustingly the soul prostitute to itself, is our type. To me, more than 'revivals' would be a revival of social life here, filling it with the true sociality, the geniality, the friendship which beam out in Christ's life; more than 'experiences' or 'frames,' would be the experience through our families of a deeper cheerfulness, a purer self-sacrifice, affection, mutual kindness and reverence."

Criticism.

Paul praises the brethren at Rome, as 'full of all goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.' We have learned to appreciate this commendation in the progress of our experience as a church. We have found out that the fact of their being able to admonish one another, or as we should say, *criticize* one another, was evidence of the maturity of their spiritual growth. The little school at Putney went through a long discipleship before their system of mutual criticism was originated. The process was perfectly scientific. Love for the truth, and love for each other, had been nurtured and strengthened till it could bear any strain—we could receive criticism kindly, and give it without fear of offending, in the element of tried affection. Association had ripened acquaintance. We had been fed for many years on the truths presented in the Berean—on systematic Bible studies—and had been trained like Timothy, to 'meditate on these things and give ourselves wholly to them.' The Berean was in course of print at the time our first series of criticisms commenced, in the fall of 1846. Our doctrinal basis was finished, and we were studying the true expression of our principles in external forms, and working out salvation from selfishness by the test of circumstances. The character of our pursuits and experience stamped itself on the pages of the Spiritual Magazine published this year, in such articles as Condensation of Life, The Best Currency, Provoking Love, and others of the same kind, which reveal to the attentive reader, the problems we had to solve. The last article above named, republished in another column of this paper, calls up a thousand recollections of that time.

It is a year in our history known among us as the year of revival. There was a spring-like awakening of the affections, and a baptism of the spirit of unity which was new and supernatural. It was the precursor, as it proved, of the spirit of judgment, another supernatural effusion. This spirit was invited by our new ordinance of Criticism. And that originated something on this wise: In one of our evening meetings, Mr. Noyes talked about the rending of the veil, which was in prospect, between us and the invisible world, and our expectations of open intercourse with the Primitive Church. But how were we prepared to make music with this glorious company? Our hearts might be in tune, but in beauty of expression we must be for the present extremely awkward and unpractised. We were, in our external characters, comparatively uncivilized—rude and uncultivated in taste and manners—barbarians to the refined society of heaven. But, he said, there was one chord of sympathy between us, one spirit in which we could flow together now, and make music, and that was the spirit of improvement. That spirit animates all heaven, and no matter how green we are, it will put us in musical sympathy with every good being in the universe. With this for a beginning, we wanted to increase our points of harmony, and make ourselves attractive to them by all the refinement and civilization of which we were capable; and as one measure, he proposed the plan of mutual criticism, which is now such a pillar in our system. The plan was received with enthusiasm, and one of our most earnest members offered himself immediately as the subject of the first experiment. The others engaged to

study his character, get their impressions clear, and bring to the next meeting the verdict of their sincerest scrutiny. We were to tell our whole mind, 'without partiality, and without hypocrisy,' 'in nought extenuate, nor set down aught in malice,' but hold up to him as perfect a mirror of his faults as possible. When the affair transpired, we were not prepared for its solemnity. If some of us were sportively disposed in the beginning, we were serious enough before the surgery was over. There was a spirit in our midst, which was like the word of God, 'quick and powerful, and a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.' All that winter we felt that we were in the day of judgment. Criticism had free course, and it was like fire on the tender life. Each in turn submitted to the operation we have described. It was painful in its first application, but agreeable in its results. One brother who has a vivid memory of his sensations, says, that while he was undergoing the process he felt like death, as though he was dissected with a knife; but when it was over, he felt as if he had been washed. He said to himself, 'these things are all true, but they are gone, they are washed away.' Criticism is our interpretation of Christ's saying to his disciples, 'If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.' II.

The Power of Christ's Resurrection.

[NOTES OF A CONVERSATION.]

G.—The resurrection of Christ was the keynote of the Primitive church—the standard that they were raised to, and they recognized no other.

N.—That standard was always placed before them, and was all the time a new, fresh thing to them; not covered with cant and antiquity as, in a certain sense, it is now.

G.—The coming of Christ was a supernatural thing—the crowning fact of a miraculous dispensation; but during the ministry of his life he rose above the plane of all previous miracles in his power over disease and death, and finally came out on the high level of the resurrection; and that was the level that the Primitive church stood upon.

N.—'Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?' Although the power of the original resurrection of Christ is offered freely to us, and we can lay hold of it in faith, to resist the claims of death, this is not enough; the prison of death must be sacked, and his captives set free. 'All that are in their graves shall come forth.'

G.—The work of overcoming death is connected in my mind with the coming together of the three worlds.

N.—The upper or resurrection world is to attract the two lower worlds to itself. This is the order in which Paul states the matter. First, he says, 'the dead shall rise;' secondly, 'the living shall be changed;' and, then, all together shall ascend to meet Christ and the New Jerusalem.

G.—And it is the resurrection power of Christ, working in this world and Hades, that is to bring on their junction with each other and the heavenly world.

N.—The power of Christ working in the spirits of the dead, may quicken them to take on matter, and assume visible bodies, just as, on the other hand, it comes into this world to reduce and refine our gross bodies. We have too much matter, and they have too little. The interior life is the same in both parties—the spirit of Christ affects both, and brings them to the third position of spiritualized matter. This world and Hades constitute two extremes, and Christ is the medium between them. The dead shall rise, and we be changed; and all meet in Christ. All partitions between the three spheres will be taken away.

G.—In the words of Paul, "In the dispensation of the fullness of times, he will gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth."

N.—When I am tempted to wonder at the

idea of invisible substances assuming visible forms, I look at the manna with which God fed the children of Israel; and again at the miracle of five loaves, with which Christ fed 7000 men and took up twelve baskets of fragments. I do not imagine that something was created out of nothing in that case. 'They all were filled,' and twelve baskets taken up. I believe those facts, however unaccountable they may seem to some. I do not know why every one of us is not as astonishing a fact as that miracle. Go back a few years, and who can tell what or where we were? You may say we have come to our present condition by a gradual process; but time is nothing to an infinite mind. It is just as if a mere invisibility had suddenly sprung into form. We are miraculous beings, and we are what we are, by just as miraculous a process, as that by which 'water was turned into wine.' The power of Christ's resurrection carries us beyond all 'natural laws' to the supremacy of the law of life.

G.—That is a power that does something more than merely keep persons from dying.

N.—It bursts the bands of death. Christ's heart had been pierced with a spear—but after three days, the wound was entirely healed, and he rose from the dead. The Father narrowly superintended every operation at the cross. Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. We must all come into the embrace of that same power. That is to say, the power of the living God will work on all believers as intensely and energetically as it did on Christ. The case of Christ was one in which justice—the vindication of the eternal rights of God and man—called forth the greatest intensity of the power of God. And it is by the working of that same energy that we are saved. The power of the living God will work on all believers as intensely as it did on Christ.

S.—Paul seems to have had an intense idea of that power. He prayed that the Ephesians might know 'the exceeding greatness of the power of God to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead,' &c.

N.—We need not fear to yield ourselves to this mighty power, for it is the most delightful element in the universe.

G.—The same power that wrought in the Primitive church to the crucifixion of the flesh, finally landed them in immortality.

N.—The crucifixion of the flesh was but the rending of the sepulchre; for the flesh is the grave of the spirit.

Provoking to Love.

"Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works."—Heb. 10: 24.

The world is well skilled in the art of provoking to wrath and strife and revenge; but to provoke one another to love is something new, and all untried: indeed we are so accustomed to associate wrong with the word 'provoke' that its use in this connection seems a mis-use. But it is the happiness of our nature that all its susceptibilities to evil can be turned to the best account for good; and strength of passion and power of excitement which in the world is so uncomely and disastrous, under divine impulses, becomes beautiful and glorious in its effects. We have only to use the proper stimulus, and love can be provoked as certainly as wrath. Devise occasion, and we shall see it flash out and retort like a burst of anger. We shall see it kindle with excitement and grow passionate and phrenzied, and acquire all the intensity of revenge; and as revenge in its vehemence stops at nothing, but follows its bent thro' fire and water, so love, sufficiently provoked, will overcome incredible difficulties and perform exploits of heroism unknown to the tameness of common life.

The art of provoking love is unstudied in the world, because love is little valued. Men will sell love for almost any thing—sometimes a ninetenth is consideration enough for losing another's friendship,—and the most pitiful triumph of opinion or will, compensates a man

for the dislike and hatred it obtains him. His own perquisites of property and will, are more to him than all the warm affections of his kind. But to believers who are not conformed to this world, love is a treasure beyond price, and acquisitiveness is put on its sharpest scent to procure it. It has orders to sell every thing for love, but truth.

The apostle says, *consider one another, to provoke unto love, &c.* The art of provoking to wrath seems to come by nature; men practice it without forethought; but some consideration is required to make us successful in provoking love; we are to consider not ourselves, but *one another*. It is natural for men to consider themselves and inquire what is agreeable to their own tastes and constitutional peculiarities, and what will advance their own interests; but it is according to heavenly wisdom that we should find happiness, not egotistically, but in the love which will be the return of our consideration for others; and we miss happiness when we pursue it too directly; when we would pour it into another's cup it overfloweth into our own. In the science of music we have melody, an agreeable succession of single sounds; and harmony, the tasteful combination of a variety of sounds. Mere melody, is comparatively insipid; it is in harmony, in the concord of many melodious sounds, that music displays her power and attraction. Isolated happiness is like melody, feeble and tasteless, compared with the music of union, the blissful concord of hearts; so that if we seek the highest gratification of our own tastes, we shall consider others, and learn the skill of producing chords in exquisite variation; in other words, the art of provoking love.

Of general things, *cheerfulness* is a great provocative of love. One who is uniformly happy, and bright-eyed, whose presence is like a May morning, sunny and musical and enlivening,—such a one will provoke love whether he tries or not—whether he says much or little; and there is no surer way to repulse love than to be sad and moping—devoured with private speculations and the canker of egotism. Love flies not a homely, but a downcast face. We can learn to say 'that's good,' to whatever comes along, and so 'drive dull care away.' The testimony of our tongue will give a great advantage to the spirit of cheerfulness; confession is always one of our weapons of conquest. Cheerfulness is diffusive—it shines for others; but melancholy begs for itself. Facility of yielding, and suppleness of manners will always provoke love. When there is truth or essential interests at stake, we are bound to be as inflexible as an oak; but this seldom occurs, compared with the thousand little daily occasions when unimportant things bring up a question of difference, and we have a chance to provoke love by giving way on our part and promoting with alacrity the contrary side. Perhaps our judgment is better than the other's; yet the love we provoke by compliance is worth more than the difference. Very often the real advantage on one side or the other of a disputed point amounts to nothing; it is pride of opinion that must be maintained; but if we are wise, pride of opinion will be utterly condemned for love; we shall rejoice in the chance to be generous, to give rather than receive the favor of compliance; for in this case as in all others, 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' And if we would be eminently successful in provoking love, we should not only acquire a facility of yielding, but a facility of entering into another's plans with all our heart—of showing relish, and becoming enthusiastic in carrying out his schemes.—'Whoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.' Add to your compliance cheerfulness and good will, and be happy in seeing others enjoy themselves in their own way. We may take a hint for our purpose from the way the world provokes to wrath. The most frequent cause of quarrels is evil speaking; and hatred is embittered and infuriated by abusive personalities—by taunts and impudent sallies. *Twitting* is a favorite method of inflaming passion. If men want to heat up a strife they be-

gin to twit each other, and we have their characters all overhauled and every little meanness each ever committed dragged to light. Well, believers may innocently reverse this performance, and twit each other of beauty and goodness, and the graces of character which God has liberally bestowed. Every body loves to be praised, and there is no passion in nature more innocent. Its gratification is one of the delights of heaven. If we can confess our salvation without boasting, we can praise the saints without flattery. Paul's epistles are full of praise to his children. His censures are more sparing than his commendations. The effect of praise on believers is doubtless to strengthen their justification—to second their own word of testimony and enliven their faith. 'Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things,' and speak of these things, not abstractly, but as they are actually exemplified in the church. Skillfully using this provocative, we shall see the contrary effect of evil speaking, in the love and mutual delight which will be excited.

We should not be ashamed to let others know we want their love. Considerable impertunity in this plea would not disgrace any one. Love generally waits to be asked, and does not bestow itself on indifference or the appearance of indifference; and yet there are many who desire to be loved very much, whose dignity and self-esteem are so chary of confessing it by word or action, that they starve in the midst of plenty. To such we would commend a saying of a distinguished author—'The foolishness of love is better than the dignity of egotism.'—[Reprint.]

There is more pleasure in a sense of actual growth than there is in self-complacency with reference to objective results. If the everlasting hankering of the heart for comfort could express itself in words, it would cry for a sense of growth and improvement. This consciousness we can ever have, at the price of reconciliation with the criticism of God. "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." God is ready to give us criticism as fast as we are prepared to receive it: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

CORRESPONDENCE.

FROM NEW YORK.

Verona, March 4, 1852.

—Through criticism of the Spirit I have been led to see with the utmost clearness, that God's claims are first, and infinitely above all other claims; and I call upon all that is within me to render unto him his due. I see also that he does not light a lamp to have it covered by a bushel—he does not shine into any one for his individual benefit merely, but he wants mediums through which he can shine out upon a world in darkness; and I pray that all within me which dims the lustre of his light may be purged out. Many such things have been shown me—mostly my excess of cautiousness. But I begin to be cautious of withholding from God.

March 8th.—I spent some time yesterday with the Association, very agreeably, though much their debtor. Mr. B. read the home-talk to me, on the new position of the Association; and though your request for a response does not exactly mean me, yet I wish to say I am pleased with the movement, and regard it as of the Lord, an 'onward move.' And I am glad that you do not renounce the past; for, as Abraham stood and looked over the land, in its length and breadth,—his by promise,—the gift of God; so, all that our eyes have seen, in its length and breadth, is ours. And whether we merely sojourn in the land—dwellers in tents, until the iniquity of the people is full; or whether we go up in the name and strength of Israel's God to possess the land, it is equally due to faith to consider the inheritance ours.

Yours, HARLEY N. LEET.

FROM VERMONT.

Rutland, Vt., Feb. 25, 1852.

—I have heard through a friend of your connection with a paper called the Free Church Circular; and though I know but little of its character and object, its name indicates your belief that there is one living and true church—and only one—of which all who are truly in Christ are members; and that by virtue of this union they are *free*—free indeed! If this be its doctrine I most heartily subscribe to it, and wish it God-speed. Too long have men endeavored to plant Christianity in a corrupt soil, and nourish it by external means, causing to grow a soulless body—like destitute of *spirit, life, and truth*. Heaven hasten the day when truth shall triumph, and the free church—the bride of the Lamb—see every species of hypocrisy and human worship swept away before the brightness of her rising. E. M. W.

Table-Talk, by J. H. N.—No. 7.

February 19, 1852.

We cannot too often refresh our minds with the scene of the day of Pentecost. There we behold the natural and most beautiful results of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. 'When the day of Pentecost was fully come, the disciples were all with one accord in one place.—And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost:—and what were the results? 'All that believed were together, and had all things common; and they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.' (Acts, 2.) It is evident to me that they did 'eat their meat with gladness,' because they had 'singleness of heart.' The fact that they were 'converted, and had become as little children'—having their attention single-eyed toward God—and were delighted with good, praising God with their whole hearts—was the reason why they ate their meat with gladness. Every thing tended to intensify their life, and give it a single purpose. The day of Pentecost was a very momentous time. The disciples had looked forward to it with great interest and expectation. They had been through great trials since the death of their Master; but at this time a crisis took place in their experience, and their labors were crowned with abundant fruit. The masses of the people, to whom the apostles preached, 'were pricked in their hearts,' and cried out, 'What shall we do?' The circumstances of the occasion brought all believers into an intensity of purpose that carried them away from the ordinary turmoils of life, and raised their souls to God and heaven. They had but one thing to attend to—they sought only 'the kingdom of God and his righteousness.' They were 'men of one idea'—men who cared neither for their property, their reputation, nor their lives. 'They sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need.' Their hearts were pure, free from all the turbid influences of the world, and were therefore good conductors and channels of the spirit of heaven: and that spirit flowed in upon them, and filled their hearts; and they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,' as free as little children, in the presence of God who loved them.

There is the model we must look at in our eating and drinking. We must cultivate in us the same intensity of purpose that the disciples had on the day of Pentecost, and free ourselves from all double-mindedness. 'Purify your hearts, ye double-minded.' 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.' Those who have hearts pure enough to see God will enjoy their food, eat without fear, and have good digestion. The pure in heart will see beauties in every thing: every object will reflect upon them Divine glory.

[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. 86.

[REPORTED FOR THE CIRCULAR, JAN. 3, 1852.]

INATTENTION.

The difficulties and faults that we meet with in children, do not result so much from positive disobedience as from inattention. But inattention, when allowed to become a habit, is itself the worst kind of disobedience, and the most difficult to deal with. If a child shows an ugly will—something positively bad, that you can strike at—the work of correction is a simple matter, compared with the case of a child who is in the habit of dissipating his thoughts, and so diverting himself that you cannot get his attention upon serious things. He may be very civil and pleasant, and yet, you can see, entirely indifferent to your wishes; and this inattention, while it disowns any positive intention to disobey, is yet in effect the same thing; it leads the child, over and over again, into the coolest disobedience.

But children are not the only class who are

affected by this evil. Inattention is the prevailing difficulty between the world and God. And by this I mean that there is a *powerful spirit* diverting minds from the truth—covering them with scales, so that the arrows of God find no entrance. An inattentive person is *scaly* in every sense of the word. I am satisfied that many in the Association as well as elsewhere, have grown up under the influence of this inattentive spirit. Perhaps they are seeking to free themselves, and do not exactly understand the difficulty they are laboring under. They wonder why they do not improve faster. The truth of Christ is constantly and plainly presented to them; but its effect on them is superficial and temporary—and the same truths have to be uttered again and again, before they sink into their hearts and bear fruit. I believe that all of these difficulties may be traced to the demon of INATTENTION.

We should clearly understand that the spirit of inattention has in it the essence of disobedience—the essence of unbelief, and every thing that we speak of as bad. If Satan can cover people's minds with a spirit that prevents them from attending to God and the truth, then he can prevent them from receiving every kind of good; and if it is the preventer of all good, it is the breeder of all evil. We are to be saved by the love of the truth. 'The truth shall make you free.' And if Satan can prevent us from giving attention to the truth, he can prevent us from being saved. It is not necessary that he should make us positively ugly, so that we shall be convicted ourselves, or that he should make us skeptics and open infidels, in order to shut us off from salvation. All that is required is to scale over our minds with inattention—a dissipated habit of mind. Unless the truth can have fair play with us, its work can not be deep, effectual and fruitful. I am satisfied that you will all make more rapid progress in the grace of God than you are now making, if you learn to thoroughly control and educate your attention.

The general method of securing this protection against God—this scaly covering of unbelief, that makes men, like leviathan, inaccessible to the truths of God—is by the *false direction* of the attention. People's attention cannot be held by two things at once; and if the attention is fixed on outward things, it cannot be kept on inward things. The attention of the world is directed to Californias, Crystal Palaces, and the riches and luxuries of life. The attention is all absorbed in that way; and of course the mind is rendered blank toward God and the great inner realities. That is the process by which men are made scaly.

We make it a rule to carry the war into the enemy's camp; and in order to turn the tables in this case, we must accumulate a power of inattention towards external things, corresponding to the power of their claims. All that the world can show of either good or evil, is but a *mirage* of the devil, a false vision, a mere painting. That is the truth about the outward world; and the opposite is the truth in regard to the inward world. Paul makes the true distinction, when he says, 'We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.' The things which are seen are the pageants; and the things that are unseen are the realities. We have been accustomed with reference to good, to say that 'this world is all a fleeting show;' but the poetry represents it as delusive with reference to evil as well as good; and so it is:

"This world is all a fleeting show,
For man's illusion given:
The smiles of joy, the tears of woe,
Deceitful shine; deceitful flow—
There's nothing true but Heaven."

Every thing that would divert us from single-eyed attention to the will of God—he it good or evil—is a delusion—properly called a false imagination. The world has no power of itself against the servants of God. Christ said to his crucifiers, 'Thou couldst have no power against me, except it were given thee from

above.' We may say the same. And any claims of power against us that the world or the devil may pretend to have, are mere shams and air-castles.

We can justly turn the tables upon the devil and the world, and cultivate in us a habit of inattention to their shows. They are all worthy of inattention. We may soberly and rationally cultivate inattention in this direction, both in respect to good and evil, and turn our attention to inner realities.

I am perfectly satisfied that the worst mischief we have to contend with is inattention; it is this that hinders progress and improvement more than any thing else. If this evil could be removed, there would certainly be more positive, fruitful obedience to the will of God. As we have said, this power of inattention and outward self-diversion, which precludes the operation of the truth, is not a mere habit, or a superficial influence. It is a *spirit*—a strong, mighty principality—a thick scale over the minds of people—which diverts them from the truth as it comes to them, by turning their attention outward, and thus prevents the critical action of the truth upon their life.

Let us raise a decisive revolt in our hearts against the spirit of inattention. And in order to keep clear of this spirit, and have a true spirit of attention to God and the truth, it is not necessary to be in a continual labor of mind and will on the subject. But clear yourself of incantations and spiritual possession—break the power of the principality that does not give your mind fair play: it is not left to its natural action, but a positive spirit is distracting it.—What I ask, is a revolt against enchantments. Let every one vow, that his mind shall not be bewitched; that it shall have a fair chance to attend to Christ, and be quiet. Suppose while I am talking here, somebody should set behind you, and scratch your back up and down with a pin. Would your mind have fair play? There would be a positive obstruction to your attention to the truth; your attention would be drawn to the pain. Now I am satisfied that there is a sort of scratching of the mind—a certain operation of Satan's spirit on the nerves or outward parts of the mind, where he can get access, that is just as distracting to the attention as the case supposed. To a great extent the evils among us are *cutaneous*. The hearts of our people are right; they have good intentions; but the outside surface of their minds is affected. If they can break up the cutaneous operations of Satan, they will get rid of this difficulty of inattention. The diversion of the attention from living truth to outside air-castles, is an immense evil, although cutaneous. If that spirit has possession of the mind, it is not necessary that our thoughts should be directed to any particular thing; it is a spirit of *vacancy*—impotence of thought; it will not let us think at all. We should have a great deal easier time, if we could break through this witchcraft and come into a natural state.—There is no state so distressing, no work so hard, as to be without thought.

The true weapon to use against this enemy is the *confession of Christ*. In the first place, believe that Christ is able to seize your attention, and keep it wholly to himself. Let all look into their hearts, and see if they do seriously believe in that fact—see if they do believe that Christ is a Savior from the serpent inattention. The spirit of inattention is a spirit of unbelief, and the spirit of unbelief is damnation. So if we need a savior from any thing, it is from the spirit of inattention. And if you have settled in your hearts that Christ is an almighty Savior in this matter, then ring a confession of it in the ear of every spirit that would deny that fact, or divert your attention from it.

It is important to understand the spiritual law of attention. In the outward world we travel from place to place in various ways—by walking, steam, horse power, &c.; but in the spiritual world we change places by changing the direction of our attention. It is a spiritual law, that if you direct your attention toward another spirit, you will immediately find your spirit mingling with it—space is abolished. No matter what distance may separate you, by the right direction of your attention, you come into its presence. *Your life will go where you direct*

your attention. If your attention is on outward, visible things, your life is there. If your attention is on Christ, your life is there. This is one reason why persons love each other so intensely in first becoming acquainted. The novelty of their presence for the time being, seizes the attention and secures it;—and where the attention is, there the life goes. This is true of evil as well as good. If you love another person and your attention becomes fixed you will inevitably flow in, and become identified with his life. If a bad character seizes your attention, and you cannot divert it, you will fall in, and be present there, and have all the mischief and miseries of the location.—Power of attention is the key of salvation, and the devil must not be allowed to keep the key.

HOME-TALK—NO. 87.

USELESSNESS OF SELF-CONDEMNATION.

REPORTED NOV. 25, 1851.

We had a conversation, a few evenings since, on the importance of understanding that we can confess Christ, receive him, and avail ourselves of the good element of his life, without any preparation, without waiting for any improvement in our characters.—[See Home-Talk in Circular No. 6.]—I will now endeavor to present an idea which seems to me to be the proper complement of that doctrine, and equally necessary to be understood,—viz., that *when a person is overtaken in a fault, it is not necessary that he should have a long time of mortification and self-condemnation, before he can turn to Christ and receive justification*. In such a case the most foolish thing that can be done, is to sink down under shame and condemnation.

To illustrate our principle: suppose you are suffering from morbid alimentiveness, and at any given time eat too much food. What would be the proper state of mind in regard to the matter? To give place to condemnation, and so put your case into the hands of Satan, would certainly be the very worst thing you could do. *It could not do you any good; it would not edify you for the time being; neither would it give you any security for the future; it would weaken your spirit; besides, you would thereby take in an element that is constantly falling into mischief*.—I think a true state of mind, in such circumstances, would express itself thus: 'The case is bad, and I do not want to make it any worse, and wish to avoid falling into the same folly again.' The best way to do this is to flee from present sensations, and cleave to the spirit of Christ, which is a spirit of temperance and justification. This is the only way to secure good experience for the future, or stop present mischief. To do this there is required a settled determination and purpose to do the best thing for the interests of God and the truth, forgetting self.

We must learn to live in the Everlasting Now, and make that a CONTINUAL CONFESSION OF CHRIST. Then the devil will not be able to touch us with his accusations. All he can possibly do is to bring up *past* accounts for settlement, and with the past we have nothing to do—our business is with the present. And, furthermore, the devil has no right to call us to any settlement whatever. Christ is the one to settle with; and the only way we can ever settle with him, is by putting our cases into his hands, just as we are, without any preparation. It is as unreasonable for the devil to call us to a settlement, as it would be for an individual to push a person down in the street, causing him to break a pitcher for instance, and then demand payment for the same!

The great lesson we have to learn, is to walk without stumbling; and the only way to avoid this, is, not to give place to condemnation—but commit our case to Christ: we may be perfectly sure that 'he will with every temptation make a way of escape.' 'Though a just man fall seven times, yet shall he rise again.' Has temptation or difficulty brought you to a sense of your own weakness? Very good. Now is the time to adopt the language of Paul: 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' We may in this manner turn every apparent defeat into a glorious victory, and stop all propagation of evil. In all cases of mischief, the first thing to be attended to is to stop propagation; and we need not imagine because we have made one mistake we must make several.

We have demonstrated by abundant experience—by 'figures that cannot lie'—that a continuous confession of Christ will ensure everlasting victory. All that we need, to give us constant hope and exuberant courage, is the assurance that we shall make this continual confession. We must confess Christ in us a *confessing spirit*—as our ability to confess him. It is Christ alone that can maintain this confession in us. 'Salvation is wholly of grace.'

Letters Received.

M. Baldwin; N. K. Kneeland; H. W. Olmsted.