

THE CIRCULAR.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.]

DEVOTED TO THE SOVEREIGNTY OF JESUS CHRIST.

[EDITED BY J. H. NOYES.]

VOL. I.

BROOKLYN, N. Y., APRIL 25, 1852.

NO. 24.

TERMS AND MEANS.

The Circular may be obtained WITHOUT MONEY, by application through the mail; or at the office of publication, No. 43 Willow Place, Brooklyn. Those who choose to pay, may send ONE DOLLAR for a yearly volume.

Price of single copies, when exposed at book-stores, &c., TWO CENTS.

As a FREE press must have other resources than its subscription list, all who are interested in the establishment of such a press, and in the principles of this paper, are invited to co-operate by systematic MONTHLY contributions.

Communications should be addressed to—“THE CIRCULAR, Brooklyn, N. Y.”

R. R. LEONARD & COMPANY, PRINTERS.

Orders for Job Printing are invited.

Reprint from The Perfectionist, December 1843.

New Measures.

The substitution of mutual instruction for professional preaching, as a means of religious education, ought to be, and we believe will be, a leading principle of that reorganization of the church of God which is to be the issue of the religious revolutions now in progress, in this country. The following are the heads of some of the arguments in its favor.

1. The plan of mutual instruction as a means of ordinary religious education in local churches, accords with the institutions of the primitive church. The only specific account we have of the ordinary religious meetings of local churches in the apostolic age, is that given by Paul in 1 Cor. 14; and according to that account the exercises of such meetings were not professional preaching by an individual, but voluntary testimony, prayer, singing, &c., by all the brethren. This plan did not then, and need not now, exclude the services of apostles, prophets and evangelists, or in other words, of general agents, revival laborers, specially educated or inspired itinerant teachers, lecturers, &c. It only excludes professional local teachers. If it is said that the individual churches did have local ministers, that ‘elders were ordained in every church,’ we reply that the leading function of those ministers and elders was evidently that of ruling or overseeing, rather than of teaching the church. (See 1 Tim. 5: 17.) Their office corresponded to that which might appropriately be assigned to the Moderators and Prudential Committees in our plan. That they were not professional teachers in the modern sense of the term, is evident from the fact that they were taken from among the common people of the churches over which they were appointed, and were ordained without previous special education. (See 1 Tim. 3: 1—7, & Titus 1: 5—9.) If they were exemplary, discreet householders, that was considered a sufficient qualification.—That they did not do the preaching of the church, to the exclusion of voluntary lay testimony, is evident from Paul’s account of the meetings of the Corinthian church, which doubtless had its elders, like other churches, and yet held its ordinary meetings on the plan of mutual instruction. Men who were qualified for the office of Moderator or overseer, would naturally take the lead to some extent as laborers ‘in word and doctrine,’ but they obviously had no monopoly of this function.

2. The plan of mutual instruction accords with the genius of Christianity, as a spiritual dispensation. Under the Jewish economy, a few only were educated or inspired, and they naturally were the sole teachers of the church. But the promise for the ‘last days’ was that God would pour out his spirit ‘on all flesh,’ and ‘all should be taught of God.’ This promise was fulfilled in the universal spiritual education of the primitive church after the day of Pentecost. With that education for a basis, the system of church teaching by universal voluntary testimony was the only appropriate superstructure. A church without the Holy Ghost, may succeed best under professional teachers; but a church with the Holy Ghost, may safely adopt a more

liberal plan. If it is said that we have not at the present day the universal spiritual illumination which is necessary as a basis of mutual instruction, we reply, if this is true, it ought not to be, for we live in the ‘last days.’ The promises are ‘to us and to our children.’ It may be that our systems of professional teaching hinder the general illumination of the people, as slavery hinders civilization. If the uncivilized condition of slaves is no good reason for the continuance of slavery, because slavery is the very cause of it; for a similar reason the unspiritual condition of Christendom may be no good reason for the continuance of the system of professional teaching. We ought to seek out and introduce such institutions as are adapted to the dispensation in which we live, and to the promises of God, rather than to the conditions produced by the defective institutions which have heretofore existed.

3. The plan of mutual instruction accords with the advance of education and civilization. Before the invention of printing, when books were few and expensive, the mass of the people in all countries could neither read nor write. Of course, their habits of thought and speech, (at least, where there was no spiritual illumination,) were not adapted to sustain the system of teaching by voluntary lay testimony. In such circumstances, the present system of professional preaching had its origin; and it cannot be denied that in such circumstances it was appropriate and necessary. Nevertheless, it may be out of date now. Small children need a schoolmaster, but young men may safely and with advantage be allowed to pursue their studies alone, or on the plan of mutual instruction. The mass of the people, in this country at least, are past childhood in intellectual civilization. There are but few that cannot read and write—few that could not, with a little practice, think and speak profitably for themselves and others. We certainly have better material for the voluntary system, so far as general education is concerned, than the primitive church had. All that is needed in order that we may far surpass their success in that system, is, the teaching of the Spirit, which was their glory. We may admit that our plan is not adapted to the condition of barbarous nations, or even of some parts of our own country. But we insist that it is adapted to any region, where common schools have prepared the way. Provision may be made for other methods of teaching in places where other methods are necessary. But let those who are ‘of age’ have the privilege of doing their own religious business.

4. The plan of mutual instruction accords with the republican institutions of this country. As American citizens, we are accustomed to discuss freely our own political affairs, to speak and act in town meetings without the guidance of professional politicians, to choose and change our rulers. In immediate contact with the institutions which give these privileges, we see church institutions constructed on very different principles. In the Methodist church, local teachers, instead of being chosen by the people, are appointed and assigned to their places, by a power above, which is not responsible to the people. Even in the Congregational church, though the people have the privilege of choosing their local teachers, they are obliged to choose them from a very limited class of persons who are educated and licensed for the purpose by the associate clergy. And the whole system (which is common to all the popular churches) of committing the business of thinking, speaking, and acting in religious matters, chiefly to one man in each society, is more nearly homogeneous to monarchical, than to republican institutions. The system we propose, so far as the teaching and internal affairs of local churches are concerned, is strictly republican.

5. The plan of mutual instruction accords with the habits which the people of this country have been rapidly forming within the last few years by constructing, managing, and being conversant with Temperance Societies, Lyceums, and the various other forms of voluntary association which abound among us. All the reforming, advancing part of the population, already ‘feel more at home’ in a meeting governed by a moderator, but instructed by mutual counsel, and voluntary testimony, than in one where the whole business both of governing and of instructing is done by a hired performer, while the congregation merely looks on in stupid passiveness and silence. The way has been prepared by the training which the people throughout the country have had in Temperance Societies alone; so that the voluntary principle can be transferred to religious associations with the facility and security of competent experience.

6. The plan of mutual instruction is preëminently favorable to the development and thorough trial of truth. The freedom of discussion which it allows, excites the intellectual powers, and by the concentration of the views of many minds on the subject discussed, facilitates the discovery of the whole truth, and the detection of error.

7. The plan of mutual instruction is needed by the people, as the means of their highest spiritual and intellectual improvement. The value of a public confession of Christ with the mouth by young converts, is known to be very great. Public testimony of experience is equally valuable to those who are in more advanced stages of faith. Men learn more by the exercise of mind, and the strengthening of heart which attends their public confessions of Christ, and their efforts to edify others, than by hearing sermons. Under existing religious institutions, the principal and only necessary method of confessing Christ before men, is to join a church. But the Bible method is exhibited in the promise—‘If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.’ Moreover it is a positive disadvantage that men should have a hired functionary to do their thinking for them. Religious meetings as usually conducted on the Sabbath, are more childish than district schools; for the congregations are not even allowed to recite their lessons, but only to hear them recited by the master. Their problems are all worked out for them, and they sit and hear the solutions without exercise of mind, and of course without profit. Men might almost as reasonably hire a man with a salary of five or six hundred dollars a year to do their eating and drinking for them, as to hire one to do their religious thinking and testimony. The people, for their own spiritual health, actually need a great part of the intellectual exercise from which their ministers now relieve them. If it is said that they have been so long accustomed to hire their religious thinking and speaking done for them, that they cannot or will not do it themselves, we answer, though they may be awkward at first, they will soon learn to think and speak to good purpose, if the clergy will get out of their way. This is evident from what has already been done in Temperance Societies. It was the glory of the ‘Washingtonian’ movement that it was an outburst of the moral and intellectual energy of the common people—nay, of the degraded part of the common people.—Why may not a similar enthusiasm be kindled, and similar moral and intellectual results be witnessed in the department of spiritual reform? We are persuaded that there will be a ‘Washingtonian’ religious movement which will fill heaven with new rejoicings, whenever the

principle of voluntary association and free mutual instruction, shall be carried into the religious field. If more evidence is wanted, look at the adult Bible Classes which have been instituted within a few years in many parts of the country. They are germs of the mutual instruction system applied to religion. Where have they failed to be interesting and profitable? We venture to say that the members of them generally have derived more benefit from them than from all other sources of instruction. All the signs that can be seen, indicate that the application of the free system to religion, will not only find and develop among the common people the powers necessary to sustain it with advantage, but that it will bring to light and action, glorious treasures of talent and eloquence which now lie buried under the contempt of the educated and clerical classes.

8. The plan of mutual instruction will be much less expensive than that of professional preaching. If our previous observations are correct—if it is true that the common people are competent to think and speak on religious subjects without professional overseers, and actually need the exercise of mutual instruction, then we may safely say, in a relative sense, that each church pays in ministers’ salaries from three to six hundred dollars a year, and every village from one to two thousand dollars a year, for that which is worse than nothing. And we may say this, without disparaging at all the talents and sincerity of ministers, or the usefulness of their profession in times and countries that require the discipline adapted to children.—Their labors as local teachers of religion in this country at this day are worse than nothing, simply because the mass of the people have reached a maturity of mental power which allows and requires their own independent reflection and mutual instruction, instead of the recitations, rote-lessons, and rod of a schoolmaster. The necessary expenses of each local church or society, organized according to our plan, instead of being five or six hundred dollars a year, will be as trifling as those of Temperance Societies and Lyceums, while the benefits, instead of being diminished, will be increased. Thus the mutual instruction system offers the people a better article than they have had heretofore, at a much lower price.

9. The plan we propose is recommended by the consideration that it admits of immediate and universal adoption. Newly-formed and feeble churches need not halt on account of their inability to raise a salary, or wait the motions of theological seminaries, ‘Education societies,’ and ‘Home Missionary’ Boards. Wherever there is a company of hearty and intelligent believers, be they few or many, rich or poor, there a church may go into full operation at once.—If the old plan of professional preaching is adhered to in the attempts that are in progress to organize a Reform church, the greatest difficulty will be in obtaining a supply of ministers. People may be found in almost every village, who are panting for reform, and would be glad to give heart and hand to any hopeful project of establishing a new church organization adapted to the spirit of the age. But the work of converting ready-made ministers to such projects will be slow. Their ‘vested interests’ keep them in conservative fear of new movements. The establishment of new Theological Seminaries, and the education of new ministers will also be slow work. The Reform church, if it waits for a supply of teachers in these ways, will not be able to avail itself, for a long time, of half the actual number and force of its army, for want of officers. But let it adopt the apostolic plan of ‘ordaining elders [not from theological seminaries, but] in every church,’ or, (which is in substance the same thing,) our plan of advising every church to choose from its best-qualified

members, a moderator and Prudential Committee, to preside at its meetings, oversee its affairs, and, according to their ability, 'labor in word and doctrine;' and with this simple organization let the principle of mutual instruction by voluntary testimony be relied on as the ordinary means of church-education, and we may hope to see a speedy array of Reform churches, with officers and equipments complete, throughout the length and breadth of the land.

10. The plan of mutual instruction is not inconsistent with the adoption and efficient execution of any regulations, either in regard to faith or discipline, which may be found necessary. The Articles of Faith, and the Rules of Discipline, which would be essential to such an establishment, would naturally be incorporated in a *Constitution*, which would correspond to the pledge and Constitution of Temperance Societies. There is no evidence, either from the experience of voluntary associations, or from observation of their nature, that they are less favorable to purity of principle, true subordination, and efficient discipline, than institutions of a more aristocratic or monarchical nature.

11. The plan of mutual instruction is not inconsistent with the establishment of a general union of churches and a central government.—Local ministers are indeed, in the popular church establishments, the privileged class who embody the associate interests, and manage the general government of the united churches.—But such a class is not indispensable. Our civil governments recognize no privileged order of professional politicians, having an exclusive or controlling right of constituting the legislature, and filling the offices of our national and state governments. All are equally eligible, according to their several abilities. The connexion between *ruling and teaching* in the church, is not indissoluble. Paul speaks of them as separate functions. (See 1 Cor. 12: 28. 1 Tim. 5: 17.) In all civil governments they are separated, and they may just as well be separated in church government. Abolish the office of the local clergy, by introducing the system of mutual instruction, and still the church will have all the material for forming a central government that the state has; and a central government formed with *lay* material, cannot but be every way better for the laity, than the clerical governments of existing churches.

Our theory is, that the central government of the Church, like that of the state, should be composed of men, chosen in some fair way by the people and from the people, and its aim should be to perform ultimately for those who are subject to it, all the proper functions of civil government. As believers in the truth of prophecy, we expect the destruction of all existing political institutions. But will there be no life-boat in readiness when the wreck comes? We believe that the church of God will then have a government, previously matured, and ready to take the place of those that shall be swept away. And before that time the church must be aware of its destined office, and prepare for it. We must regard it as the proper business of the government of the church now to give rules in civil as well as religious matters, so far as this can be done without collision with the 'powers that be.' This is no new theory. Paul directed the Corinthians to institute courts for the trial of disputes about property, *within the church*, and forbade their appealing to the tribunals of unbelievers. (See 1 Cor. 6: 1-7.)

12. The plan of mutual instruction and republican government which we have sketched, does not exclude (as we have already suggested) but requires for the completeness and due balancing of its powers, a corps of *spiritual* teachers, corresponding to apostles, prophets and evangelists in the primitive church. The business of this corps should be, not local instruction, like that of the parish clergy, but general or itinerant instruction, like that of authors, editors, lecturers and evangelists. It should neither be elected by the people, nor licensed by the central government, but rely for its own consciousness of commission only on the spiritual call of God, and for its authority in the church, on its actual manifestation of divine power and wisdom. Such a corps, in a church where truth is supreme, and where divine manifestations are watchfully looked for, and willingly discerned, would secure for itself, on making due 'proof of its ministry,' sufficient consideration and support without license from government or election by the people. This would be God's department in the government—the Theocratic link connecting the republican institutions of the local churches and the central government, with the monarchy of Christ. The members of this department—each one according to the measure of inspiration given to him and proved to the church—would instruct and rebuke the people on the one hand, and the government on the other, with the authority of God. As Nathan the prophet without any civil authority, had the ascendancy over David, though he was a king, and success-

fully reprov'd him, so these agents of God, without human credentials, would be able to hold in check the highest civil rulers of the church. Yet, as their authority would be unofficial, and their means of enforcement only spiritual energy and the power of truth, their functions would be no more invidious than those of editors are in the politics of this country.—

Leading political editors actually have an ascendancy over the government, and make and unmake administrations. Yet nobody complains of their operations as being inconsistent with the spirit of republican institutions.

The elements, then, of our plan of church organization are briefly these, viz.—1. Mutual instruction in the place of professional preaching, as the ordinary means of church education. 2. Thorough republicanism, instead of clerical ascendancy, in both the local and central governments of the church. 3. A corps of general and itinerant teachers, commissioned only by God, and attested by their works, as the Theocratic regulator of the whole. A religious establishment with these elements in its constitution, will deserve to be called the FREE CHURCH.

THE CIRCULAR.

BROOKLYN, APRIL 25, 1852.

Costs and Conditions of Community.

Probably one of the things least understood by casual inquirers, is the cost and conditions of membership in our Association. To persons who are discontented with their present situation in the world, or sanguine and curious to experiment in novelties, it looks like a very simple thing to make up their mind and 'join the Community.' All that need be said, is—"We are sick of the world; your people seem to be happy; we like your principles, as far as we know them, and now we are on hand to join."—Not unfrequently persons apply for admission on the bare information that it is a religious Community, and without any further inquiry as to its terms and objects.

Whatever may be the case with other institutions, our Association does not admit of such superficial treatment. Joining us is a matter of serious moment to both parties, and cannot be undertaken with too much deliberation, or too thorough an understanding of the interests involved. In the same hasty, blindfold way, two of Christ's disciples asked to be allowed to sit, one on his right hand and the other on his left hand, in his glory. Jesus answered, with true insight, 'Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?'

This is precisely the kind of answer that is suggested to us, when we find persons seeking inconceivably a connection with the Community. The conditions of membership with us are equivalent to those which Christ instituted for his disciples, viz., the forsaking of all, and absolute devotion to the kingdom of God: and when persons think they can accept of these terms, it may still be asked, with deep meaning, Can you drink of the cup, and be baptized with the baptism which we are called to, as pioneers of truth?

By way of suggesting consideration to those who see only the pleasure-side of Community life, we will name some things which are sternly opposite to all worldly notions of comfort, and which require a self-denial rarely conceived of.

In the first place, the freedom to enjoy, which it is supposed must exist in a society where 'all things are common,' has its counterpart in the giving up of all things, which Communism demands of every individual. This feature is apt to be overlooked, while the imagination of the inquirer dwells only on the union and plenty which he sees involved in a Community organization. The fact that this result is based on a previous sacrifice of all private interests, is not appreciated. In the actual working of Community, however, we are led to realize the 'forsaking of all,' and find that the *self-denial*, i.e., the sacrifice of private individuality, is quite as broad as the general and common well-being. There is in community the largest liberty for love and generosity, but no liberty for selfishness and seeking one's own. If a person can shift his sensibility to happiness, so that it will forget private wants and find gratification in the public service, and the prosperity of the whole, then Community is exactly his place. But those who enter with their eye mainly on private luxury and pleasure-seeking, are courting special disappointment. True communism is the worst hell such persons can easily find. It has nothing for them but arrest and crucifixion till their motive is changed. Community holds out abundant pleasures and rewards, but only for the spirit which can enjoy and sacrifice for the good of the whole. It does not reserve even the common comforts of life for selfishness.

One of the essential institutions of Community is *Criticism*—a system of truth-telling between the members by which every one has his faults told him, and any bad spirit or insincere practice is held up to the free censure of all. This is the long cherished

custom of our Community, and it will be readily seen is essential to its existence. If we are to live together in such intimate combination as community involves, there must be means provided for harmonizing and perfecting each other in the relation. Such a provision is only found in the right and the love of free criticism. But while this system is so necessary to community health, it is also as disagreeable to the mere sensitive nature and personal feeling of individuals as can well be imagined; it should be carefully reckoned, at least by those deeply involved in egotism, among the costs of community life. In the constant family contact of our Society it will be sure to bring out all the concealed littleness, as well as reduce all the hard corners of character. It is in fact equivalent to the judgment—bringing every hidden thing to light—treating every one just as he really is, and searching out evil from all our past and present life. None should forget that in looking toward Community they are seeking a tribunal which detects evil, and deals with it truthfully.

Another thing that may easily be overlooked by mere spectators, is the prejudice and opposition that we encounter from existing society; which renders our progress thus far 'a battle and a march' rather than an enterprise of present pleasure. In introducing a new social order we shall get no help from surrounding influences; on the contrary, society, by a very natural law, looks with jealousy on every innovation; and we expect to make headway only as we have done, by persevering devotion, and the providence of God. There is more or less public distrust of the Community; and in this state of things it is easy for the press to raise excitations about us, which naturally lead to other vexations. These have been the occasion of considerable trouble; and they are our liabilities in the future, which no person seeking our partnership, should overlook.

In some cases persons have joined the Association, apparently with a full understanding of these conditions and liabilities, who yet found themselves unprepared for their practical working, and after some unpleasant experience in the Community have withdrawn. We regret such a course of things, in any case, and hence would faithfully apprise those who are looking toward us, of the real facts. We shall do what we can to fasten their attention on the conditions of improvement, and make them count the cost. We know that a true Community, such as heaven is made of, is well worth any cost that can come to us in this world; but if persons engage with us in seeking it, we entreat them to do so with their eyes open. We should prefer to hold a friendly acquaintance and correspondence with persons for a long time outside of the Community, rather than that they should enter it on a hasty impulse, to become dissatisfied by subsequent experience. a.

The 'Tent Room.'

The Oneida Community has produced at least two decided novelties: one in the fashion of women's dress, and the other in the interior construction of houses. The public has seen fit extensively to endorse and adopt the first; notwithstanding the shock of old prejudices, our dress reform has commended itself to common sense, and become widely popular, under the name of Bloomerism. We are emboldened therefore, to think that our second invention will find equal favor, as its merits become known. It is alluded to, and partially described in our first Report, under the title, 'Tent Room.' As there stated, the idea was suggested by the hasty need of sleeping accommodations in our new settlement; but it was afterwards retained for its own intrinsic beauties and merits. And now after four years' trial, we deem our 'Tent Room' one of the most original, interesting, and admirable inventions of the day. A brief description may be given, showing some of its advantages.

The principal Tent Room at Oneida, occupies a space on the second floor 35 feet by 30, or about one half the ground dimensions of the house. It has windows on three sides, ten in all. Around these three sides were arranged originally, ten sleeping apartments called from the peculiarity of their construction, tents. The walls are made, not of plaster partitions, but of flowing curtains of light colored moreen. A uniform curtain of this kind is hung on three sides of the room at a distance of ten feet from the wall, and the space between is cut up by similar cross partitions into apartments suitable for sleeping rooms. The large interior space which is enclosed by this arrangement is used as a common sitting room; and the curtains being hung two feet below the ceiling, allow a full circulation of light and air from the windows. The curtains are hung on wires, so that the whole space may in a moment be thrown into one large room, or by drawing the curtains it is restored to separate enclosures, perfectly distinct, and private enough, for persons of sound morality. Surmounting the curtains are a neat, stationary cornice, and valance or drapery, which gives a finished and picturesque look to the whole.

A practical trial of the arrangement, as in the case of the short dress, convinces all the senses, by a thousand considerations, of its congeniality with nature, neatness, economy, health, &c. We can not bring out in a short article, its manifold advan-

tages, but must be content with a glance at the most obvious.

It is far less *expensive* than the old lath-and-plaster bed-rooms. The cost of fitting up ten rooms in this way, is probably less in labor and material, than half the usual expense. The material can be easily taken down, and rearranged without injury, and families who move, by owning a suit of hangings, could fit up whatever house they occupy, to suit themselves. The material should be worsted moreen; in which case, they offer no exposure to fire, but on the contrary, are a protection against fire. The cost is about 24 cents a yard.

Sleeping apartments arranged in this way, have the benefit of ample ventilation, from numerous windows. Every body knows the necessary penalty of sleeping in our small, boxed-up bed-rooms, with a single window, bad air, sickly smells, and frequent headaches. Such things are unknown in the large Tent Room at Oneida. With some twenty lodgers, its morning air is as sweet, and free from any bedroom taint, as a well kept parlor. In winter, it is equally and economically warmed by a single stove in the central area; and at night, it is lighted by a single light.

It is eminently favorable to neatness, and easily kept clean. It is said to be a light task, comparatively, to do the work of such a room, and keep it in order. The degree of openness, and community inspection which such a room allows, is a constant incentive of good manners. The little meannesses which pass carelessly off, in the seclusion of a wholly private room, are naturally corrected here, where persons are in some sense, still in the presence of society, though veiled in as much privacy as they choose. Much might be written on the *moral* influence of this contrivance. It is letting in light and air spiritually, as well as literally, upon the close and infected region of private manners; and the writer of this, has breathed a new sensation of purity, and conscious refinement, while a lodger in the Oneida Tent Room, which the secrecy of locked doors is not calculated to give.

Much might be said of the increased sociality of the Tent Room, as compared with the cold isolation of ordinary apartments. This is indeed its foremost charm with the Community. It is our policy in every thing, to favor and make attractive the common gathering place, rather than the private retreat. The balance of inducement should always be toward aggregation, and not separation. With this view, the curtained sleeping rooms are left plain, simply furnished for the retirement of rest; and the common room into which they open, is intended to be the social resort of the inmates. It is furnished with books, centre table, &c., and the reunions here, for study, conversation, and music, form a constant social element, both improving and delightful.

A word should be said of the artistic merits of our new arrangement, and its superior claims on the eye of taste. We have often thought that our Tent Room is as beautiful as it is unique. The substitution of falling drapery for bare upright walls, is itself a great satisfaction to the eye; and the change introduces unlimited opportunity for the exercise of taste in decoration and arrangement.

The first impression will probably be, that these curtain rooms are too open—too little adapted to privacy, for good taste. We reply that well bred people find no fault with similar arrangements in the cabins of steamboats and canal boats. Methodists, at least, endorse the plan, by living in tents, at camp-meeting; and the idea is in accordance with all Oriental taste, from Abraham down. For our part, we find that every moral sentiment and refined feeling is amply encouraged by the degree of frankness which it requires.

Though specially adapted to community, the new fashion is also practicable in private families; and we have no doubt, would disclose, as far as adopted, the same advantages that it does with us. Away, then, with the locks and bolts, the unsightly doors, and mud walls of past barbarism, and let us assume, at least within our own families, to be honest and virtuous. We expect the time when these cumbering partitions of the carpenter will be generally discarded from the abodes of civilization, and their place be supplied, so far as necessary, with the more graceful, sociable, economical, and healthful use of drapery. Let it be the token of approaching peace—reconciliation with nature and with God. a.

Symptoms.

It is evident that the agitation commenced by the New York Observer on the subject of marriage, is on the increase. The Observer came out and denounced the Oneida Community for entertaining new views of this subject, and in so doing they have set a ball in motion which has been steadily rolling, and threatens not to stop. The character of the letters received from all parts of the country show that the public mind is uneasy and unsatisfied with the present state of the social question. There is a demand for more light; and as free thought and discussion begin to have play on these antique forms and usages, it is very likely some of them will tumble about folks' ears. It is evident the social and marriage

questions can no longer be let alone. If we don't handle them, our enemies will; and there seems to be no escape from having a general overhaul and investigation of the old foundations. We are ready for such a movement; but we shall carry in the forefront of all innovation the conservative principles of Salvation from Sin, and the Sovereignty of Jesus Christ. These are the very ground and basis of the new heavens and the new earth; and no man can safely advance a step from the old platform until the faith of salvation is firmly in his heart. We believe the world is getting ready to let in that faith; and consequently that the providential time has come to investigate all social relations freely and fearlessly. As leaders of the van, we have inaugurated the movement in the true spirit of religion; and if any turn aside from that it is at their own peril. Providence will doubtless govern all, and lead the world at length out of the wilderness of sin into a land flowing with milk and honey.

The Opening of Japan.

The American Government are about sending an expedition to Japan to break up if possible the non-sensical reserve of that people toward foreigners and to induce them to open their country to intercourse with the world. The effort will no doubt be successful, and we hope without the use of any but polite and Christian arguments. One way or another, however, Japan will be made to follow the example of China, and come into open line with the rest of the world. It is impossible for any nation to resist the tide of civilization and the reasonable demands of progress. However they may prefer to shut themselves up in darkness and stagnation, such a privilege is out of the question. There is a resistless spirit abroad which claims the whole earth as the domain of light and freedom, the common home of man. It is noticeable that this movement on Japan, takes its impulse from California, thus linking together the extreme East and the extreme West, and showing that the earth has at last been traversed and girdled by the advancing occupation of the race.

The following is an extract from the President's letter to the Emperor of Japan.

"I send you this letter by an Envoy of my own appointment, an officer of high rank in his country, who is no missionary of religion. He goes by my command, to bear to you my greeting and good wishes, and to promote friendship and commerce between the two countries.

"You know that the United States of America now extend from sea to sea; that the great countries of Oregon and California are parts of the United States; and that from these countries, which are rich in gold and silver and precious stones, our steamers can reach the shores of your happy land in less than twenty days.

"Many of our ships will now pass in every year, and some perhaps in every week between California and China: these ships must pass along the coast of your Empire; storms and winds may cause them to be wrecked on your shores; and we ask and expect from your friendship and your greatness, kindness for our men and protection for our property. We wish that our people may be permitted to trade with your people, but we shall not authorize them to break any law of your Empire.

"Our object is friendly commercial intercourse, and nothing more. You may have productions which we should be glad to buy, and we have productions which might suit your people.

"Your Empire contains a great abundance of coal; this is an article which our steamers, in going from California to China, must use. They would be glad that a harbor in your Empire should be appointed to which coal might be brought, and where they might always be able to purchase it.

"In many other respects, commerce between your Empire and our country would be useful to both. Let us consider well what new interests may arise from these recent events, which have brought our two countries so near together; and what purposes of friendly amity and intercourse this ought to inspire in the hearts of those who govern both countries."

The Worth of Money.

Franklin taught the world how to make money. Jesus Christ instructed them how to spend it—what to do with money—which is by far the most important to know. Perhaps it will be said, that men know how to spend money by nature, but need to be educated how to make money. We think the very contrary is true. It is more natural for men in general to make money than to spend it. They are enthusiastic and whole souled in the business of accumulating—they take to it from attraction; but the business of spending money, is a grudging, crucifying operation, from beginning to end. They need to learn of Christ that the whole value of money is in spending it, that it is fulfilling its true function when they can turn it to advantage, on their soul's account. Then it will not be a torment to give. 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' and more blessed to spend money than to make it; but to appreciate this truth, we shall have to forsake Franklin's wisdom, which is bounded by this life, and learn of Christ, who was wise for both worlds.

Suppose a man has money and wants to know

what to do with it. Franklin would say, keep what you have, and get all you can. But Christ signifies what he would have a rich man do with his money in the parable of the unjust steward. 'Make to yourselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness.' The steward had his master's money, and when he was about to be turned out of office he used it to buy favor for himself with his master's creditors. It was a fraudulent proceeding, but Christ commends his example to the children of light. The parable evidently applies in this way: Satan is lord of this world—money is 'unrighteous mammon,' the devil's currency—men are his stewards, in charge of his treasury. Now if a person is liable to be turned out of office for some offence, Christ advises him forthwith to use the money he has in his hands, and turn his master's riches into gain for himself. Satan has the management of the things of this world, and if you have any of his goods on commission, make as much out of them as you can, pass them off for love, buy friendships that will receive you into everlasting habitations when your stewardship ends. The Franklin school will call it squandering, but it is the deepest financial policy—a crafty speculation, if you consider it. Money is 'uncertain riches'—it will pass out of your hands inevitably by one means or another—'quickly,' before it takes wings, convert it into love; change it for something that will not fail. You will soon want another kind of habitation—use your money, so far as it will avail, to provide an everlasting one. 'We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; but we can lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come,' by a faithful use of the unrighteous mammon committed to us here. And it is a blunder and folly for rich men to overlook their advantage, and let the chance go by, till suddenly they leave 'the warm precincts of the cheerful day,' and find themselves naked and homeless, and unwelcomed in the shades of Hades. Rich men, as they grow old, are often tormented with the fear of poverty—why is it not a true instinct and 'a shadow cast before,' as they approach toward Hades, of what awaits them there?

Those who are wise in the use of money, will have friends in all worlds ready to receive them on any failure; but the wicked make to themselves enemies with the mammon of unrighteousness—in heaven, where the cry of the laborers whose hire has been kept back by fraud, entereth into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth; in Hades, where Dives and Lazarus exchange places; and in this world, where they would find themselves friendless if by any chance they should become moneyless.

We shall study Jesus Christ instead of Franklin; and count that a dollar earned or a dollar saved, is not so good as a dollar spent, in the way Christ advises. It is the only way to use this world as not abusing it.

Old Truths in New Hands.

It is amusing, as well as instructive, to notice how TRUTH works its way through 'heresies,' 'fanaticisms,' and all manner of abuse and misrepresentation, to popular recognition at last. Truth is almighty, and will overcome all obstructions, and scatter falsehoods, in its onward course, like chaff before the wind. At the same time, it is more subtle than any opposing element, and, despite all Satanic influences, will find out every crevice in the human heart, and fill it with its own presence.

This is the lesson we learn from the history of Perfectionism. The time was, when the doctrines of freedom from sin, salvation by grace, Christ in us, &c., were regarded as dangerous delusions. The 7th chapter of Romans was then considered by the churches as a true description of Christian experience. The commencement of J. H. N.'s 'heresy' at New Haven in 1834, consisted in a denial of that dogma, and confession of holiness. He was pronounced 'crazy' simply because he adopted such language as this: 'Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive un-

to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under law, but under grace. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.' (Rom.) Whoever applied such language to himself was then called 'insane' at once. Not so now: indeed such testimony has become quite palatable to the churches.

A few days since we heard Rev. Mr. Finney, in Rev. Mr. Beecher's church of this city, preach the same truths that were regarded as great heresies in the early days of Perfectionism. He ridiculed the idea that the 7th chapter of Romans is a description of good christian experience. 'Why?' said he, 'some seem to imagine that such language as this—'I am carnal, sold under sin,' &c.—is proper for a Christian.' In the place of that doctrine, he held up the 8th chapter of Romans as the true description of Christian experience, and would not recognize any lower standard.

On another occasion, Mr. Finney preached as 'heretical' a discourse as was ever heard from the lips of a Perfectionist, from these words: 'The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.' (2 Cor. 5: 14.) In this discourse he affirmed in the plainest possible terms, that salvation is wholly of grace, that 'the law is only a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; that the Christian is not under law; that all necessity for law is done away in Christ; that Christ in us takes the place of legal rules; that the love of Christ is the only constraining force required. He said that the believer was married to Christ—one with him. And Christ says to us, after we have been married to him, as a man would say to his wife whom he had perfect confidence in, 'Do as you please: your will is my will.' "The Christian" said he, "can say with Paul, 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'" (Gal. 2: 20.)

Mr. Finney had, doubtless, preached in like terms in many other churches. Such doctrines were received by Mr. Beecher's congregation with apparently good relish. At the same time, however, that we admired Mr. F.'s frankness in declaring the truth, the thought was unavoidable, that his words would not have been so well received, if he had himself endorsed them with a confession of holiness.

The grand offense of Perfectionism, after all, is not in regard to doctrine, but in regard to practice. All the 'ultra' practices of the Perfectionists are directly traceable to the received doctrines of the church. Our freedom from law and the fashion of this world is based on the doctrine of union with Christ, as presented by Mr. Finney at the time and place mentioned above. The principles there stated, if practically carried out, would lead to the same results that are manifest among us, viz., a pentecostal community of interests. We are in the position pointed out by these words of Christ: 'All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not after their works: for they say and do not.'—(Matt. 23: 3.)

We are heartily glad to see the truth progressing, if only in form. We expect it will go on from 'conquering to conquer,' and that ere long such truths as the Second Coming of Christ, will rise from their long disgrace, and be faithfully acknowledged by the churches.

W. A. H.

THE ROSE.—Professor Agassiz, in a lecture upon the trees of America, stated a remarkable fact in regard to the family of the rose, which includes among its varieties not only many of the most beautiful flowers which are known, but also the richest fruits, such as the apple, pear, peach, plum, apricot, cherry, strawberry, raspberry, blackberry, &c.; namely, that no fossils of plants belonging to this family have ever been discovered by geologists! This he regarded as conclusive evidence that the introduction of this family of plants upon the earth was coeval with, or subsequent to, the creation of man, to whose comfort and happiness they seem especially designed by Providence to contribute.

Sewing Women and Sewing Machines.

A writer in the Home Journal describes a sewing machine, (Singer's Patent) now in operation in New York, and sums up its abilities as follows:

If the machine is in perfect order, and the operator perfectly understands it, it can make on an average four hundred stitches per minute walking up along seam, or along the border, with such celerity as to fill the beholder with admiration. Taking the average of work, it is equal to six pair of hands: a straight seam it can sew faster than twelve seamstresses: in leather work, it can accomplish more than fifteen men. The work done by the machine is more regular than that of the most expert seamstress. The machine makes no mistakes, never gets tired, or idle: it makes its millionth stitch as firmly and as accurately as its first. There is no stopping to thread the needle till the 'spool' is exhausted.

But it seems, that there is somebody to be injured by this wonderful worker, and that it meets with considerable opposition. The writer tells the following incident:

I have alluded to the opposition which has been made to the sewing machine, on the ground of its introduction being inimical to the interests of the laboring tailors and seamstresses. That opposition still continues to a certain extent. A few days before I visited the establishment, a scene occurred there of an extraordinary character, which may serve to show how intense a feeling has been excited against it. A lady, well dressed, and apparently intelligent, entered the office, walked to the machine, standing before it, and uttered the following words: "God made living workers enough without these dead ones: the man who invented that machine ought to be hung." Having delivered this 'testimony' against it, with great vehemence, she turned away and vanished, as unceremoniously as she entered. The feeling which induced such singular behavior I revere: but none the less confident is my conviction that the feeling grew out of misapprehension. Labour-saving machinery invariably results, at length, in promoting the welfare of the laboring class. One thing is certain, the condition of seamstresses and journeymen tailors is now so bad that almost any change in their lot must be a change for the better. Certainly the sewing machine cannot do serious harm to needle-women, because almost all possible harm has been done them already. On the contrary, I conceive it is certain, in the end to be of infinite benefit to them.

This is the case of Prof. Maillefert and the Hurl-Gate Pilots over again. The Prof. and his men were doing a public benefit by removing the dangers of Hurl-Gate, and one of the Pilots remarked that 'he ought to have been blown to hell long ago.' Here a lady, a seamstress probably, says with great vehemence that 'the man who invented the sewing machine ought to be hung.' The reason of displeasure in both cases was the same; the parties stand in such a relation to society that what is a benefit to the public becomes a threat of starvation to them. Hence the natural and almost necessary opposition of one class or another to all the improvements that come up. This diabolic anarchy in the social relation results from selfishness. When will the world get sick of it?

Spiritual Archery.

Paul says in a certain place, 'the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.' Here the great antecedents of death are represented in their true relations to each other; the chain of operation leading to death is made out. Sin the immediate cause, law the secondary; they are to each other as bow and arrow. The devil kills men by shooting them with the arrows of sin; his bow is the law; the result is death. Sin is the poisoned shaft, but it is the law that drives it into the conscience. Hence the law is elsewhere called 'the ministration of death,' 'the ministration of condemnation,' the 'letter which killeth,' &c.

We see no objection to reversing Paul's statement, for a description of the antecedents and operation of salvation; in which case we should say, 'the sting of immortal life is righteousness; and the strength of righteousness is free grace.' As the devil kills by shooting men with sin and condemnation, Christ saves by throwing into them faith and justification. As the law is the propelling, strengthening power of sin, liberty is the spring of true obedience. Life and death are the opposite results of the two operations.

The satisfaction of this view rests in the fact that Christ is more than the devil's equal as an archer; and if there are plenty of flying, fiery darts to be 'quenched,' there are also more numerous subtle and penetrating arrows of life, glancing all about us, ready to convey justification, love, and life, to the inmost being.

A Printer's Reflection

As I was distributing type this morning, the thought came into my head, What if this type should object to being separated, and each particular letter should feel so attracted to its present associations, as to make it averse to being transposed, and entering into new combinations? What if the type should say, 'our arrangement in this form makes beautiful reading; why should we change?' This whimsical idea suggested itself as an illustration of the social system of the world, with its marriage relation, and family relation—its stolid inabitiveness, and narrow, sectional prejudice, by which the associations of most persons are stereotyped for life. Perfect society has been compared to God's musical instrument, on which he can play infinite changes, and delight himself with the composition of harmonies without end.—Why may we not compare it to his *alphabet*, with which he edits a paper, or composes a poem, a romance, or song? His purpose in such a case, would require unlimited freedom of combination, and perfect mobility of the individual members. This is the state in heaven. We do not conceive of heaven as divided into families, strangers to each other and incompatible—or that the angels have a certain dwelling-place, 'private residences' where they only feel at home. All are named after one name, and to meet another there, is always to find a brother or sister, though unseen before. There are no sad partings in that 'innumerable company,' no regrets, no severing of ties; and yet their happiness is doubtless increased and distributed by transposition of relations and new associations; and God takes pleasure in producing artistic effect in their social arrangements, expressing his beautiful conceptions and sentiments, as the poet does in numbers. Death to be sure, in this world, breaks up the form from time to time, and makes way for a new imprint. But we are looking to see the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven, and to see death abolished; and if we would be educating ourselves for that condition of things, we must be enlarging our hearts into community love, and cultivating cosmopolitan tastes.

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

Home-Talk by J. H. N.—No. 92.

[REPORTED FOR THE CIRCULAR, APRIL 7, 1852.]

HABIT—IMITATION.

Habit is the thing that makes it so difficult for people to serve God, and be happy. The devil reigns in human nature by habit. Satan appropriates life to himself, and digests it into himself, in consequence of the world's abandoning themselves to the power of habit. On the other hand, God gets possession of us, by taking possession of our habits, and causing a perpetual flow of life and originality in the place of them. This is a matter of the most vital interest. Habit is essentially concerned in all kinds of diseases. We shall get free from all diseases, when we rise above habits, into inspiration and freedom, and become like little children. Habit is the only thing that stands in the way of our having their freshness, vigor, and growth. Old age is nothing but a bundle of habits. If we want to see disease, old age, and death flee away, we must abandon habits. This huge Bastille will be destroyed, and the captives set free, by the introduction into the world, of the principle of *aggregation*—enthusiasm, and the abandonment of routine.—The very citadel of the devil will be sacked, when routine is abandoned, and inspiration has free play.

Habit is but another form of *imitation*. In imitation we follow another's example; in habit we follow our own. In imitation we take a model from others; in habit we take our own past course for a model. In both cases, we have an *outside* model to go by—we walk in the sight of our own eyes, and under an external influence, which is necessarily a legal influence, because external. The only way to be a free

man is, not to walk in the sight of our own eyes, nor by any external influence, but to walk by an internal instinct—by an influence that is more refined than we are. In so doing, we walk by the *ascending fellowship*, and not otherwise. To walk by an outside model is really walking by the *descending fellowship*, because any thing that you can see with your eyes is inferior to your spirit. If the spirit takes something that it can see, for its model, it is walking by the carnal. It is only when we forsake all external models, and seek the guidance of a superior spirit, that we walk by the *ascending fellowship*. Habit in the early stages of experience may be a good thing, and so a good example to copy from may be; but we shall not perfect our education until we abandon entirely outside models, and learn to walk in the spirit.

I have considerable difficulty, from time to time, on the subject of *imitation*—difficulties that arise from my own position, and on the question of my responsibility to set good examples. I do not want any one to follow my example in an outward way. Persons might as well take the law for their standard; and it would be much better for them to follow the examples of Christ, Paul, and those better than I am. But it is not good to follow *them* in the sense of saying, 'They did thus and so, and therefore we will do thus and so.' The true way to copy after superiors is to study their spirits, and consult the spirit within us. By devoting ourselves unreservedly to the spirit of Christ, we shall naturally fall into his ways. In the final state we shall all be *originals*, and follow no example, except in reference to the central principle of walking in the Spirit.

It is a very mischievous thing, to be under the despotism of example. It is bad, both for superiors and inferiors. It is bad for superiors, because it forbids them to act from their own instincts; and it is bad for inferiors, because what may be the best for superiors, may not be best for inferiors, and *vice versa*. So, at the same time that example should have its proper place among us, and we should avail ourselves of the good there is in it, still there is a liability to make too much of it.

We must make up our minds to walk in *newness of life*, with the spring of inspiration always at work. I have made up my mind that I will not follow any one's example, even my own; but will walk by the light of the Spirit within me, and will expect continual newness of life; and not think because I find it good to do a certain thing to-day, that it will be proper to-morrow. We must have 'new measures,' continually. This, God can give us. He is full of invention. To a man that is wide-awake, who sees in the light of God, there is no difficulty in starting new measures of the mind and heart, day by day. I hope to see the time when every soul of us will be continually striking off on some new track, and we shall be all the time astonishing one another with unexpected developments of new life.

We will follow no one's example, but become perfectly *monotonous* in the habit of walking in the Spirit. That will make us all original—give us an infinite variety of character and action.

HOME-TALK—NO. 93.

REPORTED FEBRUARY 5, 1852.

"CHRIST THE SAME YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER."

It will produce a good effect upon every one, to obtain a true and vivid conception of *JESUS CHRIST*. The confused imaginations about Christ, which destroy his personality, and resolve him into a sort of abstract principle, are nearly as common among the Orthodox as the Unitarians. The spiritual view of him is substantially the same in both cases. We must put away from us all these false and unjust conceptions of Christ, before we can avail ourselves of his power and salvation. I conceive of Jesus Christ as a *human being*—a real and palpable subject of thought, and object of love. The name of Jesus Christ in the Primitive church was a word of power. The charm, enchantment, and majestic spell of that name,

cast down principalities and powers. It was then known to be a name 'above every name, in heaven and on earth.' The devils even confessed, saying, 'Jesus we know, and Paul we know.' And they knew Jesus in the same sense that they knew Paul—as a living individuality.

It is very evident that Christ is not now known in the world as he was known in the Primitive church. They knew, either from personal knowledge or by tradition received from those that had seen him, that such a being had lived on this earth: they had familiar ideas of his looks and behavior, and thought of him as we think of a departed friend. Through that whole generation persons had fresh, vivid imaginations concerning him. But this was not all. They expected before the close of that generation to see him again. The announcement when he left them was, 'This same Jesus [not an abstract principle] shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.' They expected to see Christ in person. If they looked backward or forward, Jesus, a human being, as well as a Son of God, and possessing almighty power, was present to their imaginations. Their faith was in that living personality. Though they did not then behold him, they had seen him, and were soon to see him again. Their faith looked into the invisible; 'it was the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for.' Their faith was not a mere abstraction; it rested on firm foundations of past experiences—upon the memory of Christ's actual existence on this earth.

It is a very interesting fact, that the miracles performed through the whole period of the apostolic age, were done *in the name of Christ*. Peter took a great deal of pains to make this fact manifest. When he healed a lame man, at a certain time, the multitude were filled with wonder and astonishment at the miracles that had been done, and looked upon the apostles as gods. And Peter said to them, 'Why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? . . . God hath glorified his Son Jesus, having raised him from the dead; whereof we are witnesses: and his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea the faith which is by him, hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.' (See Acts 3.) There is no other name under heaven but that of the Lord Jesus, that is above all principality and power. He has destroyed the prince of this world. He is stronger than the strong man armed, and bindeth the strong man, and spoileth his goods.

The lack of miraculous manifestations in the present age of the world may be accounted for from the fact, that Christ has not yet a people who are prepared to be the embodiment of such power in a very abundant manner. No people will be prepared for such manifestations, until they have risen up through the murky spirit of Unitarianism into clear connection with the person Christ Jesus, so that every thing shall be done in his name. The mighty signs and wonders that accompany salvation must be realized and acknowledged as the property of Christ—the property of that man that was crucified, and raised from the dead.

Jesus Christ, besides his spiritual presence, and the influence that he exerts upon the world, has a *personal presence*. Christ's personal presence is an important and glorious thing: and he uses it whenever it will do the most good in the church. In the case of Paul's conversion, Christ's personal presence seemed necessary. He could have sent his messenger to perform what was done, but he thought it best to commence the work of grace in Paul by his own personal presence: that he should speak to him out of his own mouth, and let the whole power of his spirit and presence bear upon him. Jesus Christ is now King in the heavens, as he was then, and has the same interest in the experience of the church: he is as desirous now to save the world as he ever was, and his spirit and personal presence will not be wanting in

any place where it is required. Let us remove every obstruction out of the way that would interfere with Christ's personal presence among us, and allow him the same freedom in this part of the church that he enjoys in the New Jerusalem.

I want to do justice to my benefactors; and, first of all, to *Jesus Christ*. My heart longs to acknowledge that credit is due to him for all the evidences we have seen of his miraculous power among us—for all the beauties and benefits of Association, and for all the good we receive.

Table-Talk, by J. H. N.—No. 12.

February 5, 1852.

I am inclined to think it would be an advance on our past attempts to secure the influences of heaven among us, to particularly invite the fellowship of PAUL here at the table.

It is Paul who has taught us this philosophy of the reconciliation of God and man with matter. He wrought out the details and practical development of this principle even more than Christ did. He was the first man after Christ who found out that 'there is nothing unclean of itself'; that 'all things are indeed pure, but it is evil for that man who eateth with offense.' He was the first one who taught the great catholic doctrine, that 'every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' 1 Tim. 4: 4-5. He is the father, we may say, of the philosophy that is so much opposed to asceticism.—His spirit is preëminently a social spirit—and a spirit of receptivity and modesty, that appreciates God in every thing. At the same time, it is diffusive and distributive. His spirit did us among us, would be a great help in regard to eating and drinking. It would give us greater boldness and success in our efforts to 'do every thing in the name of the Lord Jesus.' It is Paul who has told us that we can eat and drink, discerning the Lord's body, and that if we eat and drink unworthily, we eat and drink damnation to ourselves.—See 1 Cor. 11: 29.

Paul, undoubtedly, had the most *liberal conscience* of any person in the Primitive church. He was not fettered by any cast-iron rules. He had but one object before him—the glory of Christ; and he was perfectly free to use any means that would favor that object. He was 'made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some.'

We should not allow our minds to think of Paul as a far-off being, somewhere in the third heavens. He is a living personality, and has as much interest in the progress of Christ's kingdom on the earth, as when he was here in person. He yearns after the church with a motherly care, and desires exceedingly to make our acquaintance. Let us seek communion with his spirit.

Justice demands that we recognize the presence of Paul, as well as Christ, at our table,—and that our hearts should flow forth in gratitude to him.

—Mrs. Swisshelm thus commences a leading article in her *Pittsburg Advertiser*:—"Thank heaven for the return of the mud, the soft mud—black, yellow, or red, no matter what color, every hue of the comfortable old-fashioned mud is welcome, doubly welcome, after its long absence. It tells that the late flinty earth, like the hard and stony heart of a sinner, has been reached by the divine influence. It is at last melted into sympathy for the sorrows of the poor—has relented and opened her bosom to her shivering children, who for a time were cast off, and whose tears fell, unheeded, upon her stony breast. The mud, the welcome mud, is her promise to supply their wants, is the sign of her return to her maternal duties!"

—A marriage lately took place at Skaneateles, in the State of New York, rather out of the ordinary line. After giving his views 'in a brief speech,' Mr. Sellers, the bridegroom, took his bride by the hand and said:—"In the presence of all who are present, I take Sarah Abbot to be my wife, making no promises of continued affection, and invoking no aid thereto, but hoping, trusting, believing, that our characters are sufficiently well-adapted to enable us to be each other faithful and affectionate husband and wife during our lives."—Miss Abbot, the bride, then said:—"In the presence of all who are present, I take Samuel Sellers to be my husband, making no promises, but hoping, trusting, believing, that our characters are sufficiently well-adapted to each other to enable us to be faithful husband and wife while we live." They then signed a paper with their declaration of being husband and wife, and the ceremony was over.

Letters Received.

M. F. Merriam: S. Lea; (the former letter, with remittance, was received.) L. Hollister; M. S. Belknap.