

Circular
Concerning Photographs, Daguerreotypes, Ferrotypes, &c.

Beloved Gospel Friends,

Ever concerned and careful for the protection of society from the corruptions of a world by sinful life and condition, among other things, we are burdened with the desires of many, and the measureable satisfactions of desire with some, concerning photographs and other [sun?] pictures.

We have an order, which, we believe, wisely prohibits among Believers, the use of these things, except the photographs of landscapes, villages, &c. The pictures of individuals, as the persons of our Brethren and Sisters, or our Friends or relatives in outside society, are inadmissible to be kept by Believers, and the Leading Authorities of New Lebanon, never have given their union and approbation to have any such pictures taken.

As some persons in our societies appear not to appreciate the propriety or necessity of this prohibition, consequently, have been measurably indifferent, relative to the observance of the order, we feel it to be duty to present to our Gospel Friends the substantial reasons for the rejection of personal pictures, among Believers, as follows.

1st As pictures are ordinarily used, it is an eminent species of idolatry, a kind of civilized (so called,) [Fetichisun (fetishization)], belonging to a low state of human development in the spiritual scale of progress, even far below that attained unto by some people whom so called Christians, sometimes denominate as heathen, who sacrifice all that tends to install the love of, and devotion to self, as the arbiter of human destiny instead of God.

2. The tendency of their use, in multitudes of cases, is to foster a worldly affection, vanity, pride, and even worldly lusts, by persons of both sexes, who have a fondness for each other, obtaining each other's pictures, and carrying them about their persons, fondling them and kissing them as they would wish to do the person of whom the picture is taken, until their spirits are much corrupted by worldly affections & lusts.

3. Again, We would consider this subject with reference to the misapplication of consecrated treasure dedicated to holier and higher purposes. If pictures of persons are freely allowed, then each individual might wish a picture of, not only one or two persons, but of all whom they deem special friends, whether at home, abroad in other societies, or in outside society. Many would desire to procure the pictures of the (so called,) great men and women of our day.

Then, having many pictures, an Album would be wanted to keep them in. To purchase these pictures @ from 15 to 25 cts each, and Albums @ from \$1.00 to \$3.00 each, would cost from \$1.00, to \$4.00, to the individual pr year. In the course of ten years, (accordingly as they might multiply to themselves pictures, say from ten to forty pictures each,) in this way, a family of 50 persons, supposing only half of them to supply themselves with pictures, would easily accumulate, an expense of from \$250.00 to \$1,000 for pictures alone. This sum seems heavy, and yet it would only give to each individual a few pictures per annum, and a book to keep them in.

To use property professed to be wholly consecrated to God, and to God's people, and to religious and charitable purposes, in this manner, would be to desecrate, instead of consecrate, both treasure and life!

If these personal pictures were only limitedly allowed, that is, to some persons, and not to all, there would be an injustice that would breed most serious trials, and loss of

confidence in Leaders; for, if they may have them to keep, and others be denied, much harm would ensue. If pictures of Leaders, or some preferred persons may be taken, and not those of common members a worldly ambition would be encouraged, and aristocratic influences engendered, productive of much evil.

To those who might not reflect upon its probable consequences, it doubtless may seem a very simple and harmless affair to have a few pictures of their friends; but, the foregoing illustration of probable consequences, is by no means overdrawn, and might chance to fall far below actual experiences; for, if once freely introduced, and no spiritual testimony to consume its unhallowed desires, in a few years, instead of only a small part of a family wanting pictures, the majority might desire them, for the life that they minister to is natural & worldly, thus, perchance, swelling the expense for pictures in a family of 50 people, to \$50, or \$200.00 pr. annum or from \$500 to \$2,000.00 and, in a family of 150 persons, like the church order at New Lebanon, (comprising two orders in one family,) to \$6,000.00 in ten years.

But, notwithstanding this, the financial loss to society would be by far the most insignificant effect. The Spiritual corruption, pride, worldly vanity, envy, jealousy, and disunion, in consequence of individual preferments or rejections and neglects, would be appalling!

Therefore, Beloved Gospel Friends, let not this subtil evil be foisted upon Believers Society as a curse to make her oblivious to the ministrations of heavenly messengers, and sink her from the blessing of God.

We therefore hereby request, that all Photographs, Daguerreotypes, Ferrotypes, or [sun?] pictures of any name or description, of persons, in an individual capacity, or in groups, unconnected with general landscape or village scenery at large, possessed by Believers, should be destroyed, at once, that, as individuals, and as a people, we may be freed from their pernicious influences, and that the present and future generations may know and feel, we have a [living?] and practical testimony against this worldly evil.

Ministry
New Lebanon
N.Y.

Nov. 1st, 1873