

**DEATH OF THE CONVERT;**

**OR,**

**WHAT IS IT TO REPENT AND BELIEVE THE  
GOSPEL?**

**BY**

**GEORGE DUFFIELD JR.,**

**PASTOR OF THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, N. L.,  
PHILADELPHIA.**

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ARE  
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THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, N. L.  
BY  
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GEORGE DUFFIELD, JR.

*Philadelphia, Jan'y. 1, 1853.*

## DEATH OF THE CONVERT.

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It was on a Tuesday afternoon, the 18th of January, 1848, shortly after I had been settled in the village of B., that I first met the subject of this memoir. She had called at the parsonage, ostensibly for the purpose of leaving the monthly tract, of which some four hundred copies were usually distributed through the congregation. Modest and prepossessing in her appearance, with a countenance at the same time full of energy and intelligence, my first impression was, that I saw the regular distributor for the district. Telling her that I was glad she had not neglected the minister's house, and that I always made it a point of duty to read the monthly tract myself, and consider it as a message sent to *me*, I was about to commend still further the work in which she was engaged, and as a pastor, heartily thank her for such efficient co-operation, when with some hesitation she informed me, that she "was not the regular distributor, but only a substitute."

Suspecting from the manner in which she uttered this remark, that she still "lacked the one thing needful;" and taking advantage of my ignorance of her real character, I at once began to put such inquiries as would elicit the truth. For some weeks previous, there had been evident tokens of the presence of God's Spirit, and as it afterwards appeared, the church was on the very eve of one of the most powerful revivals it had ever known. It was very natural, therefore, to ask my visitor,

"What is the state of things in your own immediate neighborhood?"

"I do not know whether I can give you any answer."

"You are not then a professor of religion?"

"No, sir."

"Have you any hope that you are a Christian?"

"No, sir."

Have you any objections then to become one, any prejudices against religion itself?"

"Not that I am aware of. I have often wished to be a Christian, always hoped to be one before I died. I may even say, that I have tried to become one, but thus far I have not succeeded."

"How have you tried? What have you done?"

"Besides going to church and Sabbath-school, I have prayed and read my Bible for a long time past, but I have often been completely discouraged. I don't seem to get any further."

"You think then that true religion consists in something more than reading your Bible, and observing secret prayer, and going to church, and maintaining a correct deportment in the eyes of the world?"

"Yes, sir, I know it does. I must feel my sins, and believe in Jesus Christ."

"You have never then felt or been convinced that you were a sinner, a great sinner, in the sight of God?"

"I cannot say that I have. I know it, and know that I ought to feel it, but I must confess it has never yet come home to me as I suppose it should do."

"For example, among other respects in which you are still ignorant of 'the plague of your own heart.'—1 Kings, viii. 38, you have not yet discovered, that it is full, very full of PRIDE?"

With a mingled expression of surprise and pain depicted in her countenance, she replied, "I hope not."

"Understand me, I do not mean what commonly goes

among men under that name. There is another kind of pride which is perfectly consistent with an amiable disposition and behaviour. 'The wicked,' says the Holy Scripture, 'through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God.'—Ps. x. 4. Your pride in reference to God, have you never felt that?"

"I fear not."

"Are you willing then to have it discovered to you now, this very moment, that you may know how deep rooted is the corruption of your heart, and how much it needs to be changed?"

"Certainly I ought to be willing to know the truth in my case."

"With the aid then of the Holy Spirit, who I perceive is already striving with you, I will faithfully endeavor so to do. My object, as you must be aware, is not to hurt your feelings, but simply to enable you to detect what they are. Though almost ashamed to acknowledge it to yourself, to say nothing of the shame of having it come to the knowledge of your friends, you have evidently come here to-day, hoping that your new pastor would talk with you about your soul? Is it not so?"

Her silence implying assent, I then proceeded. "I rejoice to see you on this errand. We are now in this parlor all alone. There is no eye to see us but that of God: no ear but His that is open to what we say. Here then is the question that perhaps will try you, and reveal you in some measure to yourself. Are you willing now to kneel down, and have me pray with, and for you, that for Jesus' sake, your many sins may be pardoned?"

In a moment, the real state of her heart, in its natural "enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7, became painfully evident to her. A crimson blush suffused her face, and she was silent.

“You *hesitate*, I remark, and that is enough. I do not urge the request. You are not ready to comply with it now. Your hesitation is easily accounted for. It is not because a stranger makes the request; not because it is made too abruptly; not from any feeling of modesty on your part. Ah no, my dear friend, it was PRIDE that this moment prevented you from going to the Throne of Grace. ‘O how deceitful above all things, and how desperately wicked is the human heart!’—Jer. xvii. 9, and *yours among the rest?*”

Answering sadly in the affirmative, she thanked me for the conversation, and hoped that it would not be lost upon her. “If you will not let me pray *with* you as a minister of Christ, you at least have no objection that I should pray for you,” I remarked, as she was leaving the door, and in the timid though grateful glance which was her only reply, I felt assured that I should soon see her again. Then, putting into her hand the tract No. 500 entitled, “The Door was Shut,” as eminently calculated to deepen any impression that had been made, and bidding her good afternoon, I soon found my way to the study, to spread out her case before the Lord.

#### CONVICTION OF SIN.

The following Tuesday saw Sarah a second time at the parsonage. The week had evidently been to her a long and trying one. Traces of deep anxiety were apparent in her countenance, and now at least she was not ashamed of the errand that brought her to the minister of Christ. We can only give the *substance* of the conversation that then occurred.

“You have found out by this time, my dear friend, that matters are far from being right between you and God. They never have been right. Every step you have taken,

you have wandered further and further from Him. Every thought you have ever cherished; every word you have ever spoken; every action you have ever performed, have thus far only made the distance wider and wider. Every separate sin has but added new blackness to that cloud which shuts out from you the light of his reconciled countenance. You have long known that 'God is angry with the wicked every day;' now I trust in some degree you begin to believe it; to feel that he is angry ~~not~~ with you! Angry with you for your *first* sin, His wrath has been enkindled against you more and more for the next, and the next, successively. Just in proportion to the increase of your guilt, has been the increase of his anger. At this very moment he is more angry with you than ever before. He looks at you not merely as you are to-day, or as you have been during the last year, but in view of the *total amount* of sin that you have committed against him. The sins that you have forgotten, He has neither forgotten, nor forgiven. As a creditor, who carries forward from page to page what is still unpaid, he looks at *all*. Even your secret sins are set in the light of his countenance, and the fact of your guilt is the one great ever present thought that occupies his mind in relation to you. When you lie down, and when you rise up; when you go out, and when you come in, always and every where, so long as you are unreconciled to him, be assured that his wrath 'abideth on you.' How much owest thou thy Lord? is the solemn question of which he daily reminds you *here*: it is the great one to which you must give an answer hereafter. Think of that word *owest*, how much is involved in it! This matter between you and God will certainly come to *trial*. If you are tried by his law, you know that you will be *convicted*. If you are convicted, you know that you will be *condemned*. If condemned, that you will be



*punished*; and if punished, that you will be punished *forever*! O then, 'agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily,' says Christ, 'thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.'—Matt. v. 25, 26. 'Lest at *any* time!' remember that. It may be to-day, it may be to-morrow, the hand of arrest shall be laid upon thee, suddenly, unexpectedly, and to your eternal disappointment. Delay not then with Felix, nor like Agrippa be *almost* persuaded, but give neither sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, until you are reconciled to an angry sin-avenging God. Meanwhile, here is a book, which I hope you are now willing to read in the character of the person addressed. It is 'James' Anxious Inquirer,' and its perusal, I trust, will be to you like sitting down beside one of the most excellent and experienced ministers in the world, and having him advise and counsel with you. May the Holy Spirit, bless the truth which it contains to *your* conversion, as it has already done to such multitudes of others."

## REPENTANCE.

Our next conversation was much too extended to give in detail, so I must again confine myself merely to the substance of what was said, during one of the most interesting and profitable interviews I have ever been permitted to enjoy, in the whole course of my pastoral experience. There was this peculiarity about Sarah's mind, that made it so pleasant for me to converse with her, that it was essentially a *thoughtful* one. Whatever I told her, if she once fairly understood it, she was sure to remember, and what was more, to carry out and apply it. There was no necessity

to be ever repeating and explaining the same thing over and over, as is so often and so discouragingly the case, for no other reason, than simply the want of a little attention.

Analyzing her experience during the previous week, I found she had made much progress in the knowledge of divine things, and had evidently been thinking very deeply on the character of God as "the Holy One and the Just," and of the relations he sustained to his creatures, as their Ruler and Judge.

"You admit then," I remarked, "as the starting point of repentance, that this Holy God, who is angry with you, and to whom you desire to be reconciled, *has a right* to the Throne of the Universe on which he is now seated, as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords?"

"You also admit, that he has given us a LAW? Now, as a second step toward that change of mind which God requires, do you *approve* this law, as 'holy,' 'just' and 'good,' as the very law God ought to have made; and for which no other can be substituted?"

"This also do you acknowledge as another step in turning from sin, that you as an individual *ought to obey God*, and that there is no possible ground of excuse or refusal for not doing all that he has said?"

"You further admit, that this obedience has been most inadequately rendered; if in any single instance, it has been rendered at all, in view of the proper motive? In other words, you must admit, *that you have broken God's law and are a transgressor?*"

"All this is true," she remarked, "but O, sir, where will such admissions lead me? If these things be true, I am already condemned! I am *lost!* There is no hope for me! To what a difficult position am I brought? If I approve the law, I condemn myself! and yet how can I do otherwise? The law is right, but I am wrong!"

“You acknowledge then that you are a sinner? Condemned already, and that justly, that you have no hope from any thing you have done, or can do to *merit* salvation?”

In vain you ask God’s righteous law,  
To justify you now;  
Since to *convince* and to *condemn*,  
Is all the law can do.

“Do you see that the justice of God demands your punishment as a rebel, rather than your acquittal? And laying aside for the moment all selfish considerations, can you truly, and from the heart adopt as your own the language of the Psalmist,

Should sudden vengeance seize my breath,  
I must pronounce thee just in death,  
*And if my soul were sent to hell,*  
*Thy righteous law approves it well?*

“If so, then you have come to that point where all must come, ere they can see their need of a Saviour, and a plan of salvation; and I am now prepared to talk with you about

#### FAITH.

“O, sir,” she replied, “willingly, if I know my own heart, *would* I believe in Christ?”

“Why not then believe in him now? Our Father in Heaven, so far from putting any obstacle in the way of a sinner’s return to Him, has been at infinite pains and expense, to remove them out of the way. Why did he give his Son to die, but that you might be saved; and what single truth in the whole volume of his word does he *more* wish you to believe than this, (1 John, i. 9,) that ‘the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin,’ and that ‘Christ is the end of the law for righteousness,

for every one that believeth.'—Rom. x. 4. You have already been convinced, that you must look *out of yourself* for salvation to some one else. You cannot go back to God in the way that you have wandered *from* him. You cannot live your past life over again, and undo what you have done; or do what you have omitted to do. Obedience either perfect or imperfect, from this time forward until you die will not atone for the sins that are past. 'To pay as you go,' will not cancel one solitary item of previous indebtedness. God has therefore removed these obstacles, which would otherwise be insurmountable, and since he has already provided the means of reconciliation, *whatever it is that occasions delay, arises from something on your part and not on His*. At any moment that you are ready to be saved from your sins, he whose name is called JESUS, for this purpose, Matthew i. 21, stands ready to deliver you at once from their guilt, and their power, and their punishment. The fault is entirely your own, every moment that you continue an enemy of God. This is one thought to which I would direct your attention, and a very important thought.

“Another is, that in coming to Christ as the only Mediator between you and an offended God, you must come to him *just as you are*. Your only warrant is the invitation, and if it is consistent for him to give it to you, you need not fear that your guilt, or your poverty, or any other unworthiness will make you unwelcome. Christ is the only way to God, and any idea of *a way into this way* by previous good works; any hope of being prepared to come before you *do* come; of getting better by waiting, when all the while instead of being bettered, you rather grow worse, is foolish in the extreme. The serpent-bitten Israelite did not reason so; nor the lepers at the gate of Samaria; nor Esther before she drew near and touched the top of the

golden sceptre. Nor would you so reason in reference to your body. Conscious of a dangerous malady, you would not wait until it was developed through all its successive stages. You would send for the physician at once. So with the soul.

Let no sense of guilt prevent you,  
Nor of fitness fondly dream ;  
*All the fitness Christ requireth,*  
*Is to feel your need of him.*

“Still another thought, a very simple one indeed, but one nevertheless all important in this particular juncture of your experience. *Are you really willing to be made acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus, and to have every thing taken out of the way that separates between you and him?* If there be first ‘a willing mind,’ by far the greatest difficulty is removed. O! when salvation becomes an object so desirable, that neither the taunts of ridicule, nor the sneers of scorn, nor any trial, nor any sacrifice is deemed to be too great to be undergone, how easy and delightful is it to direct the inquiring mind!

“But look once again into your heart. Do you say within yourself, I could give up all but *this*. I could endure every sacrifice but *that*. Could I only retain that one beloved object from which I am so loath to part, I might be persuaded to become a Christian? If so, *that is the very thing you must renounce*; that is the very sacrifice you are called upon to make; that, the very object you must surrender at once and forever, if you are not willing to accept it as the price of your soul. **THAT IS THE IDOL** which must be dethroned. The way to have God love us, is first to love his Son. ‘He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father also,’ says Christ, but never do you love Christ, until you are willing to give up *all* for his sake.

‘Whoso forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be my disciple.’—Luke xiv. 33.

Ye tempting sweets forbear,  
 Ye dearest idols fall,  
 My love ye must not share,  
 Jesus shall have it all.  
 ’Tis bitter pain, ’tis cruel smart,  
 But ah ! thou must consent, my heart !

“Yet one thing more. If, in the progress of our conversation, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ should appear a much more simple thing than you now suppose, will you promise me, that the simplicity of faith shall be no obstacle in the way of its exercise? Remember Naaman the Syrian, he was almost willing to remain uncured, rather than have the cure effected in a way so totally different from that in which he had expected it. So I fear there may be a singular disappointment to you, of which you ought to be forewarned. You will not like to have religion stripped of what you have all along accounted its ‘mystery.’ You will feel badly about it, (and well you may,) because you cannot find the slightest shadow of an excuse, why you should not have been a Christian years and years ago. It will appear to you that you could not possibly have been so blind and stupid, as not to perceive a truth which might be comprehended by a heathen or a child. And yet this is really the case. All I ask of you then is simply this, that if you catch *a single glimpse* from what I now say, as to that which constitutes the faith that saves the soul, you would act immediately upon that glimpse the very moment you obtain it.

“Take then this Bible, and turn to 1 John, v. 9–11. May I ask you to read the passage aloud, verse by verse. Verse 9. ‘If we receive the witness of men, the witness of

God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.' That is, if we believe what men say, and accept their testimony as evidence, much more ought we to believe what God says, especially any thing he may speak in reference to his Son? in fact, that it ought to be far more easy for us to believe God than man.

“Verse 10. ‘He that believeth in the Son of God hath the witness in himself.’ Have you ever known what it was to have the testimony of your own experience as to the truth of God’s word? Have you ever had such a feeling of gratitude in your heart toward Jesus Christ, that it has led you to kneel down and thank him that he died on your behalf, and to consecrate yourself to his service? But read on.

“‘He that believeth not God hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record, that God gave of his Son.’ Have you ever been convinced of the dreadful nature of this sin of unbelief, as the very worst of all the sins that men commit? Have you considered that it is *wilful*? That it is *against light*? That it is a direct and habitual *insult* to the Father? A sin of the basest ingratitude to the SON? A sin against the office-work of the HOLY SPIRIT? A sin, which daily combines and concentrates all the transgressions of your life, into the enormous crime of refusing to repent, and believe, and find pardon? For every drop of sin in the life, what an ocean of guilt in the heart does this expression reveal! ‘He that believeth not GOD, hath made him a liar!’

“Verse 11. ‘And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.’ This is one of the verses on which my own soul first anchored its hopes for eternity. God grant that you may do the same. What has God given? ‘Eternal life.’ To whom has he given it? ‘To us.’ Who are meant by ‘us?’ “The

world for whom he died." Suppose you substitute the word ME, your own name if you will, how would it then read? 'And this is the record that God hath given to ME, eternal life.' Where is this life to be found? 'In his Son.' Who is his Son? 'The likeness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.' How do you know it? From the recorded testimony. Is such the record?"

"Yes, my dear friend; when God's lamb was offered on Calvary as the great sacrifice for sin, when God's own and only Son, hung dying upon the cross, is it too much to suppose, that his Omniscient eye looked even to *you*, and that so to speak, he said within himself, 'I die for *her*. My blood is shed for *her*: *her* sins are laid upon me, and by my stripes if *she* will, *she* may be healed!' O why should you not say in return with the apostle—'He loved *me*, and gave himself *for me*.'—Gal. ii. 20. Why not *appropriate* to yourself, that salvation which is already provided and offered for your acceptance? Not one step more need you take, ere you can say, 'Eternal life is mine.' I take Christ as the MEDIATOR to stand between me and my offended God. I call him *my* Saviour, MINE!

'Here Lord, I give myself away,  
'Tis all that I can do.'

Closing our solemn interview with an earnest petition to the Spirit of all Grace, that he would thus take of the things of Christ, and show them unto her, I then recommended for her perusal the tracts entitled, "The Act of Faith," and "What is it to believe in Christ?" and we parted.

#### JOINING THE CHURCH.

I pass over the first period of Sarah's trembling hope that she had become a disciple of Christ, which was spent



in much prayer, in diligent perusal of the word of God, and in faithful attendance on the means of grace, and resume the narrative a short time previous to the first communion season after her conversion.

“I have come,” said she, “to ask you what is my duty in reference to uniting with the church? Do you think I am a Christian?”

“It is not for me to answer such a question,” I replied. “Neither do I pretend to dictate to you, or decide for you in this matter. Such a step must be taken solely on your own personal responsibility. All I can do is to help you in coming to a decision for yourself. You do not wish then any longer to be numbered with that world who are the enemies of Jesus Christ. And in order to make a profession, you are right in supposing that the first and principal thing is that you have faith to profess. The reality of this faith may be tested in various ways. What are its fruits? Is it accompanied by any *cure*? You say you have taken Christ as your Saviour from sin. Do you think that you have learned how to obtain grace from him for this purpose? If so ought you not to make public acknowledgment of the obligation under which you are to him, just as the lepers of old went and showed themselves to the priest for a testimony. After having by your feeble faith, as it were, ‘touched the hem of his garment,’ so that virtue has gone out of him, would you again hide yourself among the multitude, like the woman of Syro-Phœnicia, and enjoy the blessing in concealment? Would this be honorable? Would it be right?”

“Have you then the consciousness of believing in Christ, and trusting on him as the Son of God, and the Saviour of sinners? If so, a great change has taken place in you; you have been ‘renewed in the spirit of your mind;’ you have been ‘born again.’ With the new birth has come a new

life, and you want a steady *principle* from which that life is to flow? That principle is Faith. You walk by faith and not by sight. You want a *rule* by which it should be directed. That rule is the law of God. You want an *example* with which it should conform? You have it in that of Christ. You want an *object* to which this new life shall be devoted? What better could you have than *the glory of God*, viz. to have him recognized as that which he really is, so far as your feeble instrumentality will avail for this purpose.

“The true question for you to decide is not how *much* faith you have, but have you *any*? Not how much love, but do you love him at all? Not how much honor you can put upon Christ, but whether you dare withhold from him the little your profession might confer? In all honesty and sincerity of heart do you believe that some faith in Christ, some affection for him does exist, and if that will do on which to begin, that it shall henceforth be your constant and earnest endeavor to have it increased? If so, then are you one of those ‘little ones,’ whom the Saviour will delight to receive into his banquetting house, and extend over you the banner of his love.

#### DOUBTS AND FEARS.

“But then I have so many doubts and fears?”

“These of themselves are no evidence that you are not a Christian. Doubts arise either from the temptations of Satan, or from the remaining corruption of your own heart. If from Satan, resist him and he will flee. If from yourself, make a fresh application to the blood of cleansing, and generally your doubts will vanish. I often compare them to the clouds that come over the sun. Keep your eye steadily on the Sun of Righteousness, and his rays will

soon dissipate them. But keep your eye on the clouds themselves, and you will soon be unable even to look in the direction of the sun. At any time that you are in doubt about your path, hasten back to the cross, and if it be a dozen times a day, you will find it the course that is safest and best."

"There is another thing that troubles me very much every day that I live; instead of being better, I all the while seem to myself worse."

"You feel I suppose that when you 'would do good, evil is present with you? What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.' 'To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not.'"

"That is precisely the feeling."

"And the inference you draw from it is that you are no Christian?"

"I certainly am tempted to think so."

"Well, then, I draw another inference from the same premises, viz., that Paul was not a Christian, for this was just his experience. He too felt this inward conflict between the flesh and the spirit, and frequently alludes to it as the very thing which constituted the distinction between Saul the persecutor, and Paul the Apostle. You will find it a maxim of Christian experience, that the better men are, the more they see of their wickedness and depravity. Just as a prisoner in filthy and loathsome garments emerging from a dungeon, would become more conscious of his condition, the more fully he came into the light; so is it with you as a sinner, in drawing nearer and nearer to a holy God. You see nothing aright, until you see that all your righteousness is borrowed from his Son.

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to his cross I cling.

## THE FIRST COMMUNION SABBATH.

The first occasion on which the Lord's Supper was administered, after her conversion, found her a "spectator," not because she was unwilling to profess her faith in Christ, but simply because she still feared that she might be deceived as to the reality of that faith. But long before the second communion season had come, her eye was fixed upon it with an intensity of interest that I have seldom seen equalled. It was to be the only time that she would take her seat there, before being welcomed to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Still as the time drew nigh, she again began to fear lest she might be deceived, and bring reproach upon the cause of her Master by a false profession. "O that I only knew whether I loved God in deed and in truth," she said; and as she spoke, I noticed the fatal flush upon her cheek. I looked at her eye.

Those glances shone  
Too brightly to shine long,

and I began to fear the worst from that short and frequent cough.

"Do you wish to know the truth in this case, so much my dear friend, that any test, however painful or trying, you are willing to have applied?"

"Yes," said she, "any one that will enable me to determine with certainty, what is now the most anxious question of my soul."

"Well, then," I replied, "perhaps there is one nearer than you think. You know that you have not been very well of late, and your friends have been troubled about you, and perhaps, I may say, with some reason. I do not say that this sickness will be unto death. It may be so, or it may not. We of course ought to hope and pray for the best. But you want to know, whether you love your

father in heaven? Are you willing then in this matter for life, or for death, to put yourself in his hands, and say, 'Thy will be done?'"

It was a trying test indeed, and for a moment in the overwhelming emotions it excited, I almost feared that I had gone too far. But at once she admitted, that the question was a perfectly proper one, and thanked me that I had asked it.

"And then you think," said she, "if I can answer this question to my satisfaction, I need not fear to apply for admission to the church?" Thus assured, she entered afresh on the duty of self-examination, and in the one question, settled the other. O how few examine themselves so thoroughly, whether they be in the faith!

#### SICKNESS AND DEATH.

It was not long after the communion, which was her first and only one on earth, that Sarah's health began visibly to decline. At first she was confined to the house, then to her room, and finally to her bed, but in every stage of its progress, her sickness seemed to be more abundantly sanctified in teaching her humility, resignation, and the value of prayer. When the physician announced the probability of her speedy decease, she received the information with such unruffled composure of countenance, as to excite not only his surprise, but that of all her friends. Having already placed herself entirely at the disposal of the Lord in this matter, as the blessed consequence of such submission to his holy will, she was enabled to maintain to the end an unwavering confidence, that when heart and flesh should faint and fail, God would be *the strength of her heart*, and her portion forever. As it was once beautifully said of a minister, we might also say of this young convert: "In her own spirit, the revival never suffered any abate-

ment, but rather grew brighter, until its light was lost among the glories of the heavenly world."

Early one Sabbath morning, hearing that her strength had been rapidly failing during the night, I embraced the opportunity for the last time to look upon Sarah in the land of the living. How very beautiful that day was! The air was balmy and odorous. Never before did the bright October sun seem to me to shine with a more mild and grateful lustre. As I looked up at the hill behind her father's house, the autumn woods were dressed in their most gaudy coloring. Seldom, if ever in my life, had this earth appeared so beautiful, and involuntarily the thought came into my mind, O it is hard to die: to die now, at this season of all others; to die so young, when there are so many hopes to be fulfilled, so many to love her, and whom she loves, it is hard indeed!"

A moment after I entered her room; there lay that meek and pale and gentle sufferer, and it was painfully evident that she was drawing very near to the gates of the grave. She had suffered more that night she told me, than during the whole course of her illness, but her tone was expressive of any thing but complaint.

"You feel then that the life of your body is fast ending?" I asked.

"Yes, very."

"Does it give you any uneasiness to have the Master come and call for you?"

"No, I long to be with him. I wish to go. I desire to depart and be with Christ which is far better."

From that moment, I need not say, that all the feelings with which I entered the room had vanished. All thoughts of this world were swallowed up in view of the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. The delusion was over, and the deep and powerful conviction again flashed

across my mind, with more strength than ever, that it was better, far better for a Christian to die than to live. Yes, like a mariner loosing anchor from a foreign shore to depart for his own country, her heart was in her home, and her home was in heaven!

During the day however she lingered, and I again called to see her in the evening. But as I laid my hand on the gate, the burst of grief from within the house told me that all was over. While the last rays of sunset were yet lingering in the West, and the distant church bells had begun their chime for evening worship at this holy and peaceful hour, and amid the sweetest music on earth, the happy spirit of the young convert was borne on angel wings to the bosom of her Father!

In the cold moist earth we laid her, when the forest cast the leaf,  
And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief,  
Yet not unmeet it was that one, like that young friend of ours,  
So gentle and so beautiful, should perish with the flowers.

It was the last and most earnest wish of her heart, (approaching almost to a confident belief,) that by her death she might glorify God, in "the conversion of others," and as I stood by her grave, during a temporary delay in the adjustment of her coffin, the thought occurred to me of writing this tract for that purpose. The narrative is authentic. The conversations are genuine. The experience related is perfectly true. Fellow immortal! will you accept the earnest wish of the unworthy writer, to lead you to Christ in the same way in which he has endeavored to lead others?

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My reasons for publishing this tract are the following:

1. It contains "my gospel," as Paul would say; that is, "the way of salvation" through our Lord Jesus Christ,

just as it appears to my own mind, and as I hope, just as it has passed through my own heart.

2. I am aware of no other tract that covers precisely the same ground as this, nor any that I can use as a pastor, to the same purpose. The many separate tracts on conviction of sin, repentance, faith, the new heart, &c., I sometimes find very much to confuse the serious reader, because *the relation and connection* of these several doctrines are not brought out as distinctly as they might be. If I have in any measure succeeded in showing the practical and experimental connection of them all, it will give me no little pleasure.

3. Several years since when this tract was first written, it was examined and approved by a number of ministerial brethren, especially by my venerated friend and pastor, the late Dr. ERSKINE MASON, of New York, who said to me, "Publish it; it will do good." If I now err in following his advice, it will be the first time that I have ever erred in a similar manner.

4. Since that time, these pages have been extensively circulated in manuscript, and so many copies have passed beyond my control, that it is no longer prudent to withhold a *genuine* copy.

5. The last and perhaps the strongest reason of all, is the apparent success that has attended the perusal of the tract by those who had begun to put the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?"

On these accounts, not daring to withhold its publication any longer, with a prayerful and an anxious heart, I cast these pages as "bread upon the waters," hoping again to find it after many days.



## THE SINNER AT THE CROSS.

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In evil long I took delight,  
Unawed by shame or fear,  
Till a new object struck my sight,  
And stopped my wild career.

I saw one hanging on a tree,  
In agonies and blood ;  
He fixed his languid eyes *on me*,  
As near the cross I stood.

O! never till my latest breath,  
Shall I forget that look ;  
It seemed to *charge me with his death!*  
Though not a word he spoke.

My conscience felt, and own'd the guilt,  
It plunged me in despair ;  
I saw, *my sins his blood had spilt*,  
*And helped to nail him there.*

A second look he gave, which said,  
"I freely all forgive ;  
This blood is for thy ransom paid,  
I die that thou may'st live."

Thus while his death my sin displays  
In all its blackest hue,  
Such is the mystery of grace,  
It seals my pardon too.

NEWTON.