



Home of Susan Wilde -

THE  
PASTOR AND INQUIRER ;

OR,

WHAT IS IT TO REPENT AND BELIEVE  
THE GOSPEL ?

*An Authentic Narrative.*

BY GEORGE DUFFIELD, J R.

PASTOR OF THE COATES STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.

SIXTH THOUSAND.



JOHN IV. 14.

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## DESIGN OF THIS TRACT.

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1. It contains "My Gospel," as Paul says, (Rom. ii. 16,) that is, THE WAY OF SALVATION by 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., seem sometimes 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. Inquirers want a "bird's eye" view of the gospel, at first; details come in more appropriately afterwards.

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## HOW TO READ IT.

1. If possible read it alone.
2. Read it with prayer.
3. Read it with your Bible in your hand, turning to each text as it is quoted, that it may be *God speaking to you*; and become true to you in your heart as well as in the record.
4. When you have read it, should you find it a blessing to your soul, hand it to some other poor sinner, that he too may repent and believe the gospel.

## THE PASTOR AND INQUIRER.

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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, according to an excellent custom, 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 the Holy Spirit, and as it afterwards appeared, the church was on the 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?” “None.”

“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 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,’ 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 behavior. ‘The wicked,’ says the Psalmist, ‘through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God.’ Your pride in reference to God, have you never felt that?” “I fear not.”

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

“Certainly I *ought* to be willing to know the truth.”

“With the aid of the Holy Spirit, who I perceive is already striving with you, I will faithfully endeavor to make you know it. 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 to 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 is a 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 Christ’s sake, your many sins may be pardoned?”

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

“You *hesitate*, and that is enough. I do not urge the request. You are not ready to comply with it now, and 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, 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 “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. His love to you has never been responded to. Every step, therefore, that 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,’ (Psalm vii. 11,) now I trust in some degree you begin to believe it, and to feel that He is angry ~~is~~ *with you?*”

## GOD ANGRY WITH THE WICKED.

“Angry with you for your *first* sin, his wrath has been en-

kindled 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*. (Hos. vii. 2.)

“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 everywhere, so long as you are unreconciled to him, be assured that his wrath ‘abideth on you.’ (John iii. 36.) 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 you, suddenly, unexpectedly, and to your eternal disappointment. Delay not then with Felix, nor like Agrippa be *almost* persuaded, but be reconciled at once to your justly offended 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 as to your mistakes, perplexities and discouragements. May the Holy Spirit bless this truth to *your* conversion, as He has already done to that of 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, but who still loves and is willing to be reconciled to you, *has a right* to the Throne of the Universe on which he is now seated, as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? (Ps. xcvi. 1.)

"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? (Romans vii. 12.)

"This also do you acknowledge as another step in turning *from sin to God*, that you as an individual *ought to obey* this law, and that there is no possible ground of excuse or refusal for not doing all that it requires? (Romans iii. 19.)

"Do 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, *that you have broken God's law and are a transgressor?*" (James ii. 10 : Romans iii. 23.)

"All this is true," she remarked, "but O, sir, where will such admissions lead me? If these things be true, I am condemned already! I am LOST! (John iii. 18 : Mat. xviii. 11.) 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!*" (Romans vii. 14.)

"You acknowledge then that you are a sinner? Condemned already, and that justly, that you have no hope from anything you have done, or can do to *merit* salvation? (Romans viii. 3.)

'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 law and justice of God demand your punishment as a transgressor, and not your acquittal? (Gal. ii. 21.) 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? (Psalm li.)

'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 are at that point where all must come, ere they can see their need of a Saviour, and a plan of salvation ; (Gal. iii. 23,) 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.*" (Luke ix. 57-62.)

#### NOTHING TO PREVENT.

"You wish to become a Christian, to become one now? Why not do so? *There is nothing, whatever, to prevent you.* Let Satan suggest as many false and ruinous reasons to the contrary as he will, our Father in heaven, so far from putting any obstacles in the way of the prodigal sinner's return to Him, has been at infinite pains and expense to remove them out of the way. Do you say you cannot go back to God in the way you have wandered *from Him*? That you cannot live your past life over again, and undo what you have done? That it is now too late to do what you have omitted to do? That future obedience will not atone for sins that are past? That to 'pay as you go,' will not cancel one solitary item of previous indebtedness? That you must look *out of yourself*, that is, elsewhere *than to yourself* for salvation, if ever you are saved at all?

#### ALL OBSTACLES REMOVED.

"All this is true enough ; but what if that which you cannot find in yourself to reconcile God to you, you may still find **IN CHRIST!** Do you wish to be in the sight of God *as if you had never sinned?* 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son,

cleanseth us from all sin.' (1 John i. 7 : Isaiah i. 18, xxxviii. 17 : Micah vii. 18, 19 : Psalm ciii. 12 : Jer. l. 20 ; xxxi. 34 : Isaiah xlv. 21, 22 : 1 Peter ii. 24.) Do you wish to be in his sight *as if you had perfectly obeyed his holy law*? There is still a way in which you can fulfill that law to God's acceptance, viz. :—by believing on his Son. **THIS WILL FULFILL IT.** 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' (Romans x. 4 ; viii. 1–4 : 1 Cor. i. 30 : 2 Cor. v. 21 : Romans v. 19.) Not a jot, not a tittle of the whole law but Christ fulfilled, and more than fulfilled ; not a jot, not a tittle of that obedience, but may become your own. Sin blotted out and every obstacle removed, the law fulfilled and the means of reconciliation provided, *whatever it is that occasions delay, arises from something on your part.* Every moment you continue unreconciled to God is not the result of necessity, but of deliberate choice. The fault is not with Him but with you. It is He who is waiting for you, and not you who are waiting for him. *His hand already offered to you, it only remains for you to put forth yours in return and accept it.*—This is one thought to which I would direct your attention, and a very important one.

#### COME JUST AS YOU ARE.

“Another is, that in coming to Jesus Christ as the only one who is either able or authorized to put matters right between you and your offended Father, you must come to him *just as you are.* Your only warrant is the word of invitation and promise, and if it is consistent for Him to give it, you are equally free to accept. You need not fear that your guilt, or your ignorance, or any other unworthiness will make you unwelcome. God never tells a sinner, as we do a creditor, ‘Wait until to-morrow.’ Never does he put off a spiritual beggar, pleading for the bread of life, by inviting him to come again and receive that which will supply his wants at a future time.

He holds out no encouragement whatever, even the most distant and indirect, to anything like a spirit of procrastination. 'Tell them which are bidden, Behold I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and my fatlings are killed, and *all things are ready*. Come unto the marriage.'" (Matthew xxii. 4.)

NO WAITING TO BE BETTER.

"What, as I am? With garments sin-worn and earth-soiled, and at best, but filthy rags?"

"Yes, says he not, '*all things are ready?*' House, table, provisions, invitation, *wedding-garment*, ALL—and that too, '*without money and without price.*' Waiting to be better, *before* you come to Christ, waiting for your hard heart to get softer before coming to him who alone can soften it; waiting for some indefinite amount of conviction, before you begin to repent of and forsake sin, is entirely to invert the order of God's appointment. It is to destroy the meaning of all the figures that he has employed in his word to describe the mode of a sinner's salvation!

"Does the sick man wait for an increase of health before sending for a physician? Does the poor man wait to accumulate the wages of a week or month ere he accepts the title that puts him in possession of a vast estate? Does a debtor, freely forgiven the whole amount of his debt, refuse to have his obligations cancelled until he can pay a mill in the dollar? Did the bitten Israelite wait until his wound had become less red and threatening, before he looked to the brazen serpent and was healed? No more should you or any other sinner *wait for recommending qualifications* before coming to Christ. *Christ himself is the way. There is no way into the way.* Until you come to him, however great your apparent advance it is more apparent than real. All your preparations of *self-righteousness*, first or last, must be abandoned, and the

prayer of the Pharisee be renounced for that of the Publican, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'

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

"Condemned by the law, do you see your danger? Condemned by your own conscience, do you see your guilt? It is enough. Come to Christ for pardon! Come to Him for peace! You will not find them otherwise!

## ARE YOU WILLING?

"But, my dear friend, are you really willing to be made acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus? Man's way of teaching is through the head; God's way is through the heart. 'He that will do his will shall know of the doctrine,' that is, he that is willing to do it when he sees it, to him shall the truth be revealed. If there be 'first a willing mind' by far the greatest difficulty is removed.

"Examine yourself carefully at this point. Are you willing to have everything taken out of the way that separates between you and Christ? Look into your heart and see. 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! **THAT IS THE IDOL** which must be dethroned. God must have the supreme place in the heart, or He will have none. If you have found anything among the trifles of earth, the love of which if lawful, you are not willing to put second and subordinate to that of God; the love of which if sinful,

you are not willing to sacrifice altogether for his sake, behold in blazing characters written upon it, **THIS IS THE PRICE OF MY SOUL.** (Mark x. 17-23.)

FAITH TOO SIMPLE.

“One thing more, if in the progress of our conversation, to ‘believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,’ should appear a much more easy and 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? You remember Naaman, the Syrian, how 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 somewhat similar disappointment to you, of which you ought to be forewarned. You will not like to have religion, at least in its essential elements, stripped of what you have all along been accustomed to regard as its necessary ‘mystery.’ You will feel unpleasantly about it, (and well you may,) on finding not the slightest shadow of an excuse, so far as *believing* is concerned, why you should not have been a Christian, years and years ago. It will appear to you, a matter of the most unfeigned astonishment, that you could ever 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 am now about to tell you, as to that which constitutes the faith that saves the soul, you would act upon that glimpse immediately, the very moment you obtain it. (2 Kings v. 1-14; Matt. xiii. 12; Acts xvi. 31.)

BELIEVING.

“Take then this Bible, and turn to 1 John v. 9-12. May I ask you to read this passage aloud, verse by verse? In order

to believe, you want to know *how* you are to believe; *whom* you are to believe; *what* you are to believe; *when* you are to believe; what is the sin of *not* believing; and what you are to get *by* believing. Perhaps in these verses, of all others in the Bible, this all-important subject of faith is stated in terms the most simple and unmistakable.

Verse 9th :—‘IF WE RECEIVE THE WITNESS OF MEN, THE WITNESS OF GOD IS GREATER.’

“To ‘receive the witness of men,’ is to believe their *testimony*; (the old English word ‘witness’ and ‘testimony’ being the same.) ‘To receive the witness of God,’ is to believe *His* testimony. It is precisely the same act of the mind which receives both, *it is believing what has been said*. In other words, if you want a definition of faith in its simplest form, it is ‘giving God credit for what He says;’ receiving His testimony as true; believing what he has declared; *taking Him at His word!* See *Christ’s* definition, (John v. 24.)

“Whose testimony is the ‘best’ or ‘greatest?’”

“God’s, of course, for He *cannot* lie!” (1 Sam. xv. 29.)

“Which of the two, then, ought *it to be the easiest to believe?*”

“It *ought* to be, (though I never thought of it just in that light before,) easiest to believe GOD.”

“Read now the remainder of the verse:”

“FOR THIS IS THE WITNESS OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH TESTIFIED OF HIS SON.”

“Of *whom* has God given the testimony which He wishes you to believe?”

“Of His Son, Jesus Christ.”

“So far then all is plain. Faith is believing what God says; believing what God says about His Son. This you *can* believe; this you *ought* to believe. But *do* you believe it?”

“How am I to know whether I believe it or not?”

“The next verse will tell you :



Verse 10th—"HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON OF GOD HATH THE WITNESS IN HIMSELF.'"

"The belief in the testimony of God concerning his Son, leading naturally, if not of necessity, to a belief or trust in the Son himself, simultaneously with this believing in the Son of God, the Holy Spirit enters the heart along with the truth thus received, and begins to bear witness there. (1 John v. 6: Romans viii. 16: Gal. iii. 2.) *What* this witness of the Spirit is you can only learn by experience. If you have it, you will know and *feel* it. If, as still seems to be the case, you have it not, it cannot be explained in advance. This is one motive for believing; it appeals to your *hopes*; but in the last clause of the verse, there is another motive, and one that appeals very strongly to your *fear*. Read on."

"HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT GOD HATH MADE HIM A LIAR, BECAUSE HE BELIEVETH NOT THE RECORD THAT GOD GAVE OF HIS SON.'"

"Up to this moment, probably, you have never learned that the greatest of all your sins is UNBELIEF. Think of it in reference to God. 'It makes him a liar!' It insults Him upon his throne, and would bring Him down to a level with Satan! Think of it in reference to yourself. While it lasts, it binds the guilt of all other sins upon you! For every drop of sin in the life, what an ocean of sin in the heart does this expression reveal, 'He that believeth not GOD hath made him A LIAR!' Is it not the first of your sins of which to be convinced, for which to be sorry, the very first to be confessed and forsaken? (John xvi. 9; 1 John iii. 23.)

"Hoping that such is your determination, let me ask you now to read the eleventh verse."

"AND THIS IS THE RECORD, THAT GOD HATH GIVEN TO US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON.'"

"There are few verses in the Bible, on which more souls have anchored their hopes for eternity, than this. God grant

that you may do the same! Every thought that it contains • is infinitely precious. Let us take them, therefore, one by one.

“What has God given?”

“‘Life,’ life ‘eternal!’”

“To whom has He given it?”

“To us.”

“Who are meant by ‘us?’ Every one *but* you and I?”

“No, it means us both.” (1 John ii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 1-4.)

“Suppose I draw a pencil-mark around the word ‘us,’ and you substitute ‘me,’ or your own name if you will, how would it then read?”

“*And this is the record, that God hath given to (ME) eternal life.’*”

“There is such a thing, then, as ‘eternal life;’ eternal life for *you*, already ‘given,’ or provided for you by God? (1 John ii. 25.) *Where* is it to be found?”

“AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON.”

“When are you put in possession of it?”

“I do not know.”

“The twelfth verse will tell you.”

“HE THAT HATH THE SON HATH LIFE, AND HE THAT HATH NOT THE SON OF GOD HATH NOT LIFE.”

“CHRIST is God’s first gift, *with or for the sake of whom, He bestows all others.* Accept Christ as he is offered, and *with him* you will freely receive all that is *in him!* (Romans viii. 32: John v. 24.) The moment you believe in Christ, that moment you begin the life eternal! (1 John v. 13.)

#### CHRIST ACCEPTED.

“Yes, my dear friend, when God’s Lamb was offered on Calvary as the one great sacrifice for sin, (John i. 29,) when God’s own and only Son, hung dying upon the cross, our sins upon him, our guilt between him and his Father in Heaven, he felt as deep a pang for *you*, as for any other sinner. It is

not 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! how near, how very near does such a thought bring the cross to our souls! and the Crucified One almost within sight and hearing! Even while I speak, are you turning your back upon this sinful world? Leaving earthly things behind? Yielding as you are drawn by the Holy Spirit? Even now do you cast yourself at the foot of that cross, beneath those outstretched hands, those bleeding feet, that wounded side, and *thank the Saviour that he died, and died for you?* Do you say, just as really as though he were visibly present, and you addressed him personally, 'Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief! I accept the atonement thou hast provided, I take thee as the only MEDIATOR between me and my offending Father! I call thee *my* Saviour, *MINE!*

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

"Then happy are you! However feeble the hand of your faith, once put it into the hand of Christ, and you have his promise that he will not let you go. Once put yourself under his care as that of the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep, and he will answer for your safety to the end. Once give yourself to him, he in turn will give himself to you, and the union thus formed, will out last that of the soul and the body, and exist forever! (John x. 28; Sol. Song ii. 16.)

'The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose,  
He will not, he cannot forsake to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
He'll never, no never, no never forsake!'"

Closing our solemn interview with an earnest petition to the

Spirit of all Grace, that he would continue to "take of the things of Christ and show them unto her," (John xvi. 13,) I then gave to her and recommended for her perusal, the tracts entitled, "What is it to believe in Christ?" and, "The Act of Faith," 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, particularly the Gospel and Epistles of John, and in faithful attendance at the young converts' prayer-meeting, and the various 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. If you are '*in* Christ,' (Romans xvi. 7,) you should be *in* his Church; if *out* of Christ, you should remain out of his Church until you properly belong there. You say you wish to be numbered with the friends of Christ and no longer with his enemies; but to cast in your lot with the people of God?" (Ruth i. 16, 17.)

"I do."

"The first thing, of course, in making a profession of your faith, is to have faith to profess. You hope that you believe, that there is a meaning to these words such as you never saw or felt before, "His name is called Jesus, for he shall save his people FROM THEIR SINS." (Matthew i. 21.) What are the fruits of this faith? Is it accompanied by any *cure*? Is

there such a thing in your own personal experience, as 'grace' or help from Christ, and have you learned how to obtain this help from him? 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 priests for a testimony? After having by your feeble faith, 'touched the hem of his garment,' so that virtue has gone out of him, would you again hide yourself among the multitude, like that poor woman of whom Luke tells us, (viii. 43,) and enjoy the blessing in concealment? Would this be grateful? Would it be honorable? Would it be right?

"On the testimony which God has given of His Son do you believe on Christ, do you trust in him as the Son of God, as the Saviour of sinners, as YOUR Saviour? (Gal. ii. 20.) 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.' (Eph. ii. 1—7.) 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. (Heb. xi.) Your life is hid with Christ in God (Col. iii. 3,) and out of Christ's "fullness" must your faith draw an ever fresh supply of grace just as a syphon draws from a full vessel into an empty one. (John i. 16.) You want a *rule* by which this new life shall be directed. That rule is the law of God, not merely in the letter, but in its spirituality. (Rom. ii. 29.) You want an *example* with which it should conform? You have it in that of Christ. (1 Pet. ii. 21.) 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? (1 Cor. x. 31.)

"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 banqueting-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 in a Christian heart arise either from the temptations of Satan, or from the heart's remaining corruption. If from Satan, resist him and he will flee. (James iv. 7.) 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 to look even 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 I do 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.* (Rom. vii.) 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.” *In the Lord have I righteousness.* (Isaiah xlv. 24,) *out of Him you have none.* (Jer. xxiii. 6; 1 Cor. i. 30.)

#### 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 feared that she might be deceived as to the reality of that faith. Still, to use the language of one of her companions on that occasion, she “*joined the church in her heart.*” Long before the second communion had come, however, 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. Yet, 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 so much to know the truth in this case, my dear friend, that you are willing to have any test applied, however painful or trying?"

"Yes," said she, "any one that will enable me to determine with more 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 pray and hope for the best. But you want to know, whether you love your Father in heaven? If you love Christ, you love Him and He loves you. John xiv. 21. 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 in the circumstances 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 have no occasion to hesitate?" 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!

## ILLNESS.

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 for ever." Ps. lxxiii. 25. 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 abatement, 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, "Oh, 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 the 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 fast.”

“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.” (Phil. i. 23.)

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, 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 ~~his~~ "*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?

The way to life is a very short one. There are but two steps to it. **FIRST**, the sinner "comes to himself," (Luke xv. 17) and sees *what he is*, viz; a sinner. **SECONDLY**, he comes to Christ, (Mat. xi. 28) and sees what He is, viz; a Saviour. (1 Tim. i. 18, iv. 10.) Salvation is in the word. (Rom. x. 8.) You come to Christ by believing his word. Believing (*with the heart*, Rom. x. 9, 10) that you are a sinner,—that is repentance. Believing (with the heart) that Christ is a Saviour,—that is **FAITH**. Where faith and repentance unite in the same person there is a **CHANGE OF HEART**. "Lord, make me to know myself," this is your first petition. "Lord, make me to know **THEE**," this is the second. God grant that both these petitions may be made and answered.

"There is nothing," said a dying lady, "but **JESUS CHRIST** *between me* and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Oh! F. if you have not Christ when you come to die, there is **NOTHING** *between you* and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth."

"The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

## THE CHRISTIAN'S TESTIMONY.

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“Read, therefore, with great vehemency, these words, ‘me’ and ‘for me,’ (Gal. ii. 20,) and so inwardly practice with thyself, that thou with a sure faith mayest conceive and print this ‘ME’ in thy heart, and apply it unto thyself, not doubting but that thou art of the number of those to whom this ‘me’ belongs: Also, that Christ has not only loved Peter and Paul, and given himself for them, but that the same grace also which is comprehended in this ‘me,’ as well pertaineth and cometh unto us, as unto them.”—**MARTIN LUTHER.**

“‘No,’ says unbelief, ‘never a word of that is true with respect to me: let them apply it to where it was sent, but I cannot think that it is to the like of me.’ Wretch, you are calling the God of truth a liar. O, blasphemy! if it were not to you, your unbelief would not be your sin.”—**RALPH ERSKINE.**

“Did Christ die for sinners. Then *why not for me?* Did he suffer and bleed for the chief of sinners? Then why not for me? Did he love Peter, Mary Magdalene, and the persecuting Paul? Did he wash them in his blood, and clothe them in his righteousness, and turn them, one from being a persecutor, into a preacher, and the other from being a grievous sinner, into a daughter of God? Then why should I conclude that he has retreated from me?”—**CUMMINGS.**

“As far as the Lord has given me light in this matter, and looking at what my own heart does in like circumstances, *I do not feel that there is anything more in coming to Jesus, than just believing what God says about his Son to be true.* I believe that many keep themselves in darkness by expecting something more than this.”—**LIFE OF MCCHEYNE, p. 111.**

## THE SINNER AT THE CROSS.

ZECARIAH xii. 10.

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.

# THE FIREMEN'S APPEAL, OR DON'T YOU SEE THE LIGHT?

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RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED  
TO THE  
DILIGENT ENGINE COMPANY.

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SOME years ago, as we opened our door one evening, on our way, with a heavy heart, to an almost deserted prayer meeting, we heard a single bell in the distance sounding the alarm for fire. Evidently it was not in our immediate vicinity, and the circumstance excited very little attention. As we proceeded leisurely on our way, we heard another and then another bell, until East West, North and South, the signals were answering each other, all over the city. Soon the rumbling of the engines, and the sharp and irregular ringing of the hose-bells, and the hoarse voice of the speaking-trumpet, were added to the general din. Presently an engine company came in sight, the leader running quietly some fifty yards ahead, and his companions moving along at a pace that very clearly indicated they were more than half inclined to believe it was "only a false alarm."

Just, however, as he turned a corner, the hitherto smothered conflagration suddenly broke out into a tremendous blaze, lighting up his whole person. The effect of the first flash upon him was instantaneous and electric. In a moment he turned towards the company and brought himself up to his full height; his bosom heaved, his eye kindled, his nostrils dilated, and putting his whole soul into the effort, he roared through the trumpet with an

energy that seemed almost superhuman—"DON'T YOU SEE THE LIGHT? PULL, MEN, PULL!" And they did pull with a witness. Instantly the ropes were fully manned, and the ponderous machine was whirled along to the distant conflagration as if its weight were nothing. However it might be with others, we had no doubt that *that* company would do good service; and the morning paper showed that we were not mistaken.

Recently, while in the "Diligent" prayer-meeting, this scene was very vividly brought to our remembrance; and believing with good Bishop Butler, that "there is a much more exact correspondence between the natural and the moral world than we are apt to take notice of," we began to analyze the leader's appeal to his companions, and turn it to a spiritual account.

Yes, thought we, here is an illustration of the past and present condition of our churches, that is well worthy of our most careful and prayerful attention. A year ago, and even we who are ministers of the Gospel, heard the death bell, and the judgment bell, tolling in the distance, and we knew that there *was* a fire, but this was about all we felt.

So with our people. They answered, most of them, to the roll call at communion. They had the outward show and habiliments of those in active service. They acknowledged that to them was entrusted the means of arresting the fearful conflagration, and saving the brands that were kindled for the eternal burning. They would admit that the great mass of the unbelieving world looked to, and relied upon them for warning and protection. But too often the earnest, anxious spirit of their Master, had entirely evaporated in them. Their eye was not single. Their ear was not attentive

to catch the echoes of the world to come. They were not upon their watch-tower. Their aim in life was something different from what God required it to be. Hence that which ought to have been light in them was only darkness, and the ordinances of the Gospel seemed to roll along on lazy and unwilling wheels.

Occasionally, perhaps, in the solitude of their own hearts, or in the same society of those like-minded with themselves, one here, and another there, would venture to suggest the possibility, whether, after all, the idea of the utter and final loss of the soul had not become a doctrine antiquated and obsolete; and whether those who preached as Christ did, about a "fire that is *never* quenched," were not sounding "a false alarm?" No wonder, with such unbelief as this, that so few cared to "man the ropes," and that the wheels "drave so heavily!" No wonder that they were halting every moment—as if expecting to learn from some acute critic or profound philosopher, that the eternal fire was "OUT"—that the church might disband, and its members go every one about his own business, and it would be equally well with sinners in the end!

But blessed be God, this state of mind and heart into which the professing friends of Jesus, in many quarters, were fast settling down and becoming stereotyped, is within the last few months beginning to be broken up. The same light that has flashed conviction into the mind of the sinner, has shown his guilt and danger not only to himself, but to the hitherto lukewarm and unfaithful Christians around him. That the signs of the times call upon Christians of every name, for such exertion as they have never put forth before, and that without delay, there is no longer the least shadow of a doubt.



Not only in Philadelphia, but through all the cities and villages of our land, in every church, in every fireman's hall, in every place where the people may conveniently assemble together, we want once more "the trumpet blown in Zion" by our ministers; and that with no "uncertain sound;" as Whitfield and Wesley did in almost every sermon; and Edwards, and Baxter, and McCheyne! We need on every hand laymen like Havelock and Vicars, who will put the Gospel trumpet to their mouth and shout into the ears of every lukewarm follower of Christ—DON'T YOU SEE THE LIGHT?

The great fact, of all others the greatest fact in the condition of the world is this, **THE WORLD IS PERISHING AND SINKING INTO PERDITION!** *On neighbors, on friends, on children, in their hearts and in their souls, already the flames have kindled, which if not quenched will burn for ever!*

Whoever the reader may be, we ask him to read this sentence a second time; slowly, deliberately, understandingly; one word after another, one idea after another, until by the blessing of God, it penetrates deep into his inmost heart! Probation ending! sinners dying! the pit opening! punishment beginning! the wail of the second death ascending; such is the history of every moment! Only within the last hour **THREE THOUSAND** souls have gone to their long account. How many of them have gone to heaven—saved by *your* instrumentality? How many of them have gone to the world of despair—lost, lost for ever, because *you* did not hasten to their rescue, and entreat them, to **FLEE FROM THE WRATH TO COME?**—Prov. xxiv. 11, 12.

A MEMBER OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

Philadelphia, June 3, 1858.

G. P.

THE  
PASTOR AND INQUIRER ;

OR,

WHAT IS IT TO REPENT AND BELIEVE  
THE GOSPEL ?

*An Authentic Narrative.*

BY GEORGE DUFFIELD, JR.

PASTOR OF THE COATES STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA.

FOURTH THOUSAND.

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PHILADELPHIA :

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## DESIGN OF THIS TRACT.

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1. It contains "My Gospel," as Paul says, (Rom. ii. 16,) that is, THE WAY OF SALVATION by 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., seem sometimes 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. Inquirers want a "bird's eye" view of the gospel, at first; details come in more appropriately afterwards.

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## HOW TO READ IT.

1. If possible read it alone.
2. Read it with prayer.
3. Read it with your Bible in your hand, turning to each text as it is quoted, that it may be *God speaking to you*; and become true to you in your heart as well as in the record.
4. When you have read it, should you find it a blessing to your soul, hand it to some other poor sinner, that he too may repent and believe the gospel.

## THE PASTOR AND INQUIRER.

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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, according to an excellent custom, 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 the Holy Spirit, and as it afterwards appeared, the church was on the 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?" "None."

"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 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,' 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 behavior. 'The wicked,' says the Psalmist, 'through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God.' Your pride in reference to God, have you never felt that?" "I fear not."

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

“Certainly I *ought* to be willing to know the truth.”

“With the aid of the Holy Spirit, who I perceive is already striving with you, I will faithfully endeavor to make you know it. 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 to 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 is a 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 Christ’s sake, your many sins may be pardoned?”

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

“You *hesitate*, and that is enough. I do not urge the request. You are not ready to comply with it now, and 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, 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 “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. His love to you has never been responded to. Every step, therefore, that 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,’ (Psalm vii. 11,) now I trust in some degree you begin to believe it, and to feel that He is angry ~~to~~ *with you?*”

## GOD ANGRY WITH THE WICKED.

“Angry with you for your *first* sin, his wrath has been en-

## GOD ANGRY WITH THE WICKED.

kindled against you more and more for the next, and then 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*. (Hos. vii. 2.)

“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 everywhere, so long as you are unreconciled to him, be assured that his wrath ‘abideth on you.’ (John iii. 36.) 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 you, suddenly, unexpectedly, and to your eternal disappointment. Delay not then with Felix, nor like Agrippa be *almost* persuaded, but be reconciled at once to your justly offended 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 as to your mistakes, perplexities and discouragements. May the Holy Spirit bless this truth to *your* conversion, as He has already done to that of 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, but who still loves and is willing to be reconciled to you, *has a right* to the Throne of the Universe on which he is now seated, as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords? (Ps. xcvi. 1.)

"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? (Romans vii. 12.)

"This also do you acknowledge as another step in turning *from sin to God*, that you as an individual *ought to obey* this law, and that there is no possible ground of excuse or refusal for not doing all that it requires? (Romans iii. 19.)

"Do 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, *that you have broken God's law and are a transgressor?*" (James ii. 10: Romans iii. 23.)

"All this is true," she remarked, "but O, sir, where will such admissions lead me? If these things be true, I am condemned already! I am LOST! (John iii. 18: Mat. xviii. 11.) 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!*" (Romans vii. 14.)

"You acknowledge then that you are a sinner? Condemned already, and that justly, that you have no hope from anything you have done, or can do to *merit* salvation? (Romans viii. 3.)

'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 law and justice of God demand your punishment as a transgressor, and not your acquittal? (Gal. ii. 21.) 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? (Psalm li.)

'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 are at that point where all must come, ere they can see their need of a Saviour, and a plan of salvation ; (Gal. iii. 23,) 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." (Luke ix. 57-62.)

#### NOTHING TO PREVENT.

"You wish to become a Christian, to become one now? Why not do so? *There is nothing, whatever, to prevent you.* Let Satan suggest as many false and ruinous reasons to the contrary as he will, our Father in heaven, so far from putting any obstacles in the way of the prodigal sinner's return to Him, has been at infinite pains and expense to remove them out of the way. Do you say you cannot go back to God in the way you have wandered *from* Him? That you cannot live your past life over again, and undo what you have done? That it is now too late to do what you have omitted to do? That future obedience will not atone for sins that are past? That to 'pay as you go,' will not cancel one solitary item of previous indebtedness? That you must look *out of* yourself, that is, elsewhere *than to yourself* for salvation, if ever you are saved at all?

#### ALL OBSTACLES REMOVED.

"All this is true enough ; but what if that which you cannot find in yourself to reconcile God to you, you may still find **IN CHRIST!** Do you wish to be in the sight of God *as if you had never sinned?* 'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son,

cleanseth us from all sin.' (1 John i. 7 : Isaiah i. 18, xxxviii. 17 : Micah vii. 18, 19 : Psalm ciii. 12 : Jer. l. 20 ; xxxi. 34 : Isaiah xlv. 21, 22 : 1 Peter ii. 24.) Do you wish to be in his sight *as if you had perfectly obeyed his holy law*? There is still a way in which you can fulfill that law to God's acceptance, viz. :—by believing on his Son. **THIS WILL FULFILL IT.** 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' (Romans x. 4 ; viii. 1-4 : 1 Cor. i. 30 : 2 Cor. v. 21 : Romans v. 19.) Not a jot, not a tittle of the whole law but Christ fulfilled, and more than fulfilled ; not a jot, not a tittle of that obedience, but may become your own. Sin blotted out and every obstacle removed, the law fulfilled and the means of reconciliation provided, *whatever it is that occasions delay, arises from something on your part.* Every moment you continue unreconciled to God is not the result of necessity, but of deliberate choice. The fault is not with Him but with you. It is He who is waiting for you, and not you who are waiting for him. *His hand already offered to you, it only remains for you to put forth yours in return and accept it.*—This is one thought to which I would direct your attention, and a very important one.

#### COME JUST AS YOU ARE.

“ Another is, that in coming to Jesus Christ as the only one who is either able or authorized to put matters right between you and your offended Father, you must come to him *just as you are.* Your only warrant is the word of invitation and promise, and if it is consistent for Him to give it, you are equally free to accept. You need not fear that your guilt, or your ignorance, or any other unworthiness will make you unwelcome. God never tells a sinner, as we do a creditor, ‘ Wait until to-morrow.’ Never does he put off a spiritual beggar, pleading for the bread of life, by inviting him to come again and receive that which will supply his wants at a future time.

He holds out no encouragement whatever, even the most distant and indirect, to anything like a spirit of procrastination. 'Tell them which are bidden, Behold I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and my fatlings are killed, and *all things are ready*. Come unto the marriage.'" (Matthew xxii. 4.)

## NO WAITING TO BE BETTER.

"What, as I am? With garments sin-worn and earth-soiled, and at best, but filthy rags?"

"Yes, says he not, '*all things are ready*?' House, table, provisions, invitation, *wedding-garment*, ALL—and that too, '*without money and without price*.' Waiting to be better, *before* you come to Christ, waiting for your hard heart to get softer before coming to him who alone can soften it; waiting for some indefinite amount of conviction, before you begin to repent of and forsake sin, is entirely to invert the order of God's appointment. It is to destroy the meaning of all the figures that he has employed in his word to describe the mode of a sinner's salvation!

"Does the sick man wait for an increase of health before sending for a physician? Does the poor man wait to accumulate the wages of a week or month ere he accepts the title that puts him in possession of a vast estate? Does a debtor, freely forgiven the whole amount of his debt, refuse to have his obligations cancelled until he can pay a mill in the dollar? Did the bitten Israelite wait until his wound had become less red and threatening, before he looked to the brazen serpent and was healed? No more should you or any other sinner wait for recommending qualifications before coming to Christ. *Christ himself is the way. There is no way into the way.* Until you come to him, however great your apparent advance it is more apparent than real. All your preparations of *self-righteousness*, first or last, must be abandoned, and the

prayer of the Pharisee be renounced for that of the Publican,  
 ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’

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

“Condemned by the law, do you see your danger? Condemned by your own conscience, do you see your guilt? It is enough. Come to Christ for pardon! Come to Him for peace! You will not find them otherwise!

## ARE YOU WILLING?

“But, my dear friend, are *you really willing to be made acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus?* Man’s way of teaching is through the *head*; God’s way is through the *heart*. ‘He that will do his will shall know of the doctrine,’ that is, he that is willing to do it when he sees it, to him shall the truth be revealed. If there be ‘first a willing mind’ by far the greatest difficulty is removed.

“Examine yourself carefully at this point. Are you willing *to have everything taken out of the way that separates between you and Christ?* Look into your heart and see. 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! **THAT IS THE IDOL** which must be dethroned. God must have the supreme place in the heart, or He will have none. If you have found anything among the trifles of earth, the love of which if lawful, you are not willing to put second and subordinate to that of God; the love of which if sinful,

you are not willing to sacrifice altogether for his sake, behold in blazing characters written upon it, **THIS IS THE PRICE OF MY SOUL.** (Mark x. 17-23.)

FAITH TOO SIMPLE.

“One thing more, if in the progress of our conversation, to ‘believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,’ should appear a much more easy and 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? You remember Naaman, the Syrian, how 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 somewhat similar disappointment to you, of which you ought to be forewarned. You will not like to have religion, at least in its essential elements, stripped of what you have all along been accustomed to regard as its necessary ‘mystery.’ You will feel unpleasantly about it, (and well you may,) on finding not the slightest shadow of an excuse, so far as *believing* is concerned, why you should not have been a Christian, years and years ago. It will appear to you, a matter of the most unfeigned astonishment, that you could ever 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 am now about to tell you, as to that which constitutes the faith that saves the soul, you would act upon that glimpse immediately, the very moment you obtain it. (2 Kings v. 1-14; Matt. xiii. 12; Acts xvi. 31.)

BELIEVING.

“Take then this Bible, and turn to 1 John v. 9-12. May I ask you to read this passage aloud, verse by verse? In order

to believe, you want to know *how* you are to believe; *whom* you are to believe; *what* you are to believe; *when* you are to believe; what is the sin of *not* believing; and what you are to get *by* believing. Perhaps in these verses, of all others in the Bible, this all-important subject of faith is stated in terms the most simple and unmistakable.

Verse 9th :—‘IF WE RECEIVE THE WITNESS OF MEN, THE WITNESS OF GOD IS GREATER.’

“To ‘receive the witness of men,’ is to believe their *testimony*; (the old English word ‘witness’ and ‘testimony’ being the same.) ‘To receive the witness of God,’ is to believe *His* testimony. It is precisely the same act of the mind which receives both, *it is believing what has been said*. In other words, if you want a definition of faith in its simplest form, it is ‘giving God credit for what He says;’ receiving His testimony as true; believing what he has declared; *taking Him at His word!* See *Christ’s* definition, (John v. 24.)

“Whose testimony is the ‘best’ or ‘greatest?’”

“God’s, of course, for He *cannot lie!*” (1 Sam. xv. 29.)

“Which of the two, then, ought *it to be the easiest to believe?*”

“It *ought* to be, (though I never thought of it just in that light before,) easiest to believe GOD.”

“Read now the remainder of the verse :”

“FOR THIS IS THE WITNESS OF GOD, WHICH HE HATH TESTIFIED OF HIS SON.”

“Of *whom* has God given the testimony which He wishes you to believe?”

“Of His Son, Jesus Christ.”

“So far then all is plain. Faith is believing what God says; believing what God says about His Son. This you *can* believe; this you *ought* to believe. But *do* you believe it?”

“How am I to know whether I believe it or not?”

“The next verse will tell you :



Verse 10th—"HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON OF GOD HATH THE WITNESS IN HIMSELF."

"The belief in the testimony of God concerning his Son, leading naturally, if not of necessity, to a belief or trust in the Son himself, simultaneously with this believing in the Son of God, the Holy Spirit enters the heart along with the truth thus received, and begins to bear witness there. (1 John v. 6: Romans viii. 16: Gal. iii. 2.) *What* this witness of the Spirit is you can only learn by experience. If you have it, you will know and *feel* it. If, as still seems to be the case, you have it not, it cannot be explained in advance. This is one motive for believing; it appeals to your *hopes*; but in the last clause of the verse, there is another motive, and one that appeals very strongly to your *fear*. Read on."

"HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT GOD HATH MADE HIM A LIAR, BECAUSE HE BELIEVETH NOT THE RECORD THAT GOD GAVE OF HIS SON."

"Up to this moment, probably, you have never learned that the greatest of all your sins is UNBELIEF. Think of it in reference to God. 'It makes him a liar!' It insults Him upon his throne, and would bring Him down to a level with Satan! Think of it in reference to yourself. While it lasts, it *binds the guilt of all other sins upon you!* For every drop of sin in the life, what an ocean of sin in the heart does this expression reveal, 'He that believeth not GOD hath made him A LIAR!' Is it not the first of your sins of which to be convinced, for which to be sorry, the very first to be confessed and forsaken? (John xvi. 9; 1 John iii. 23.)

"Hoping that such is your determination, let me ask you now to read the eleventh verse."

"AND THIS IS THE RECORD, THAT GOD HATH GIVEN TO US ETERNAL LIFE, AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON."

"There are few verses in the Bible, on which more souls have anchored their hopes for eternity, than this. God grant

that you may do the same! Every thought that it contains is infinitely precious. Let us take them, therefore, one by one.

“What has God given?”

“‘Life,’ life ‘eternal!’”

“To whom has He given it?”

“To us.”

“Who are meant by ‘us?’ Every one *but* you and I?”

“No, it means us both.” (1 John ii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 1-4.)

“Suppose I draw a pencil-mark around the word ‘us,’ and you substitute ‘me,’ or your own name if you will, how would it then read?”

“*And this is the record, that God hath given to (ME) eternal life.’*”

“There is such a thing, then, as ‘eternal life;’ eternal life for *you*, already ‘given,’ or provided for you by God? (1 John ii. 25.) *Where* is it to be found?”

“**AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON.**”

“When are you put in possession of it?”

“I do not know.”

“The twelfth verse will tell you.”

“**HE THAT HATH THE SON HATH LIFE, AND HE THAT HATH NOT THE SON OF GOD HATH NOT LIFE.**”

“CHRIST is God’s first gift, *with or for the sake of whom, He bestows all others.* Accept Christ as he is offered, and *with him* you will freely receive all that is *in him!* (Romans viii. 32: John v. 24.) The moment you believe in Christ, that moment you begin the life eternal! (1 John v. 13.)

#### CHRIST ACCEPTED.

“Yes, my dear friend, when God’s Lamb was offered on Calvary as the one great sacrifice for sin, (John i. 29,) when God’s own and only Son, hung dying upon the cross, our sins upon him, our guilt between him and his Father in Heaven, he felt as deep a pang for *you*, as for any other sinner. It is

not 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! how near, how very near does such a thought bring the cross to our souls! and the Crucified One almost within sight and hearing! Even while I speak, are you turning your back upon this sinful world? Leaving earthly things behind? Yielding as you are drawn by the Holy Spirit? Even now do you cast yourself at the foot of that cross, beneath those outstretched hands, those bleeding feet, that wounded side, and *thank the Saviour that he died, and died for you?* Do you say, just as really as though he were visibly present, and you addressed him personally, 'Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief! I accept the atonement thou hast provided, I take thee as the only MEDIATOR between me and my offended Father! I call thee *my* Saviour, *MINE!*

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

"Then happy are you! However feeble the hand of your faith, once put it into the hand of Christ, and you have his promise that he will not let you go. Once put yourself under his care as that of the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep, and he will answer for your safety to the end. Once give yourself to him, he in turn will give himself to you, and the union thus formed, will out last that of the soul and the body, and exist forever! (John x. 28; Sol. Song ii. 16.)

'The soul that on JESUS has leaned for repose,  
He will not, he cannot forsake to its foes;  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
He'll never, no never, no never forsake!'

Closing our solemn interview with an earnest petition to the

Spirit of all Grace, that he would continue to "take of the things of Christ and show them unto her," (John xvi. 13,) I then gave to her and recommended for her perusal, the tracts entitled, "What is it to believe in Christ?" and, "The Act of Faith," 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, particularly the Gospel and Epistles of John, and in faithful attendance at the young converts' prayer-meeting, and the various 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. If you are *in* Christ, (Romans xvi. 7,) you should be *in* his Church; if *out* of Christ, you should remain out of his Church until you properly belong there. You say you wish to be numbered with the friends of Christ and no longer with his enemies; but to cast in your lot with the people of God?" (Ruth i. 16, 17.)

"I do."

"The first thing, of course, in making a profession of your faith, is to have faith to profess. You hope that you believe, that there is a meaning to these words such as you never saw or felt before, "His name is called Jesus, for he shall save his people FROM THEIR SINS." (Matthew i. 21.) What are the fruits of this faith? Is it accompanied by any *cure*? Is

there such a thing in your own personal experience, as 'grace' or help from Christ, and have you learned how to obtain this help from him? 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 priests for a testimony? After having by your feeble faith, 'touched the hem of his garment,' so that virtue has gone out of him, would you again hide yourself among the multitude, like that poor woman of whom Luke tells us, (viii. 43,) and enjoy the blessing in concealment? Would this be grateful? Would it be honorable? Would it be right?

"On the testimony which God has given of His Son do you believe on Christ, do you trust in him as the Son of God, as the Saviour of sinners, as YOUR Saviour? (Gal. ii. 20.) 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.' (Eph. ii. 1—7.) 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. (Heb. xi.) Your life is hid with Christ in God (Col. iii. 3,) and out of Christ's "fullness" must your faith draw an ever fresh supply of grace just as a syphon draws from a full vessel into an empty one. (John i. 16.) You want a *rule* by which this new life shall be directed. That rule is the law of God, not merely in the letter, but in its spirituality. (Rom. ii. 29.) You want an *example* with which it should conform? You have in that of Christ. (1 Pet. ii. 21.) 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? (1 Cor. x. 31.)

"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 banqueting-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 in a Christian heart arise either from the temptations of Satan, or from the heart's remaining corruption. If from Satan, resist him and he will flee. (James iv. 7.) 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 to look even 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 I do 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.* (Rom. vii.) 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.” *In the Lord have I righteousness.* (Isaiah xlv. 24,) *out of Him you have none.* (Jer. xxiii. 6; 1 Cor. i. 30.)

#### 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 feared that she might be deceived as to the reality of that faith. Still, to use the language of one of her companions on that occasion, she “*joined the church in her heart.*” Long before the second communion had come, however, 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. Yet, 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 so much to know the truth in this case, my dear friend, that you are willing to have any test applied, however painful or trying?"

"Yes," said she, "any one that will enable me to determine with more 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 pray and hope for the best. But you want to know, whether you love your Father in heaven? If you love Christ, you love Him and He loves you. John xiv. 21. 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 in the circumstances 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 have no occasion to hesitate?" 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!

## ILLNESS.

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 for ever." Ps. lxxiii. 25. 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 abatement, 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, "Oh, 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 the 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 fast.”

“ 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.” (Phil. i. 23.)

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, 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~~ “*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?

The way to life is a very short one. There are but two steps to it. **FIRST**, the sinner “comes to himself,” (Luke xv. 17) and sees *what he is*, viz; a sinner. **SECONDLY**, he comes to Christ, (Mat. xi. 28) and sees what He is, viz; a Saviour. (1 Tim. i. 18, iv. 10.) Salvation is in the word. (Rom. x. 8.) You come to Christ by believing his word. Believing (*with the heart*, Rom. x. 9, 10) that you are a sinner,—that is repentance. Believing (with the heart) that Christ is a Saviour,—that is **FAITH**. Where faith and repentance unite in the same person there is a **CHANGE OF HEART**. “Lord, make me to know myself,” this is your first petition. “Lord, make me to know **THEE**,” this is the second. God grant that both these petitions may be made and answered.

“There is nothing,” said a dying lady, “but Jesus Christ between me and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Oh! F. if you have not Christ then, there is nothing between you and weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

“Read, therefore, with great vehemency, these words, ‘me’ and ‘for me,’ and so inwardly practice with thyself, that thou with a sure faith mayest conceive and print this ‘ME’ in thy heart, and apply it unto thyself, not doubting but that thou art of the number of those to whom this ‘me’ belongs: Also, that Christ has not only loved Peter and Paul, and given himself for them, but that the same grace also which is comprehended in this ‘me,’ as well pertaineth and cometh unto us, as unto them.”—MARTIN LUTHER.

“‘No,’ says unbelief, ‘never a word of that is true with respect to me: let them apply it to where it was sent, but I cannot think that it is to the like of me.’ Wretch, you are calling the God of truth a liar. O, blasphemy! if it were not to you, your unbelief would not be your sin.”—RALPH ERSKINE.

“Did Christ die for sinners. Then *why not for me?* Did he suffer and bleed for the chief of sinners? Then why not for me? Did he love Peter, Mary Magdalene, and the persecuting Paul? Did he wash them in his blood, and clothe them in his righteousness, and turn them, one from being a persecutor, into a preacher, and the other from being a grievous sinner, into a daughter of God? Then why should I conclude that he has retreated from me?”—CUMMINGS.

“As far as the Lord has given me light in this matter, and looking at what my own heart does in like circumstances, *I do not feel that there is anything more in coming to Jesus, than just believing what God says about his Son to be true.* I believe that many keep themselves in darkness by expecting something more than this.”—LIFE OF MCCHEYNE, p. 111.

## 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.