

MEMOIR

OF

PHEBE BARTLETT,

OF

NORTHAMPTON, MASS.

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected  
praise.—Matt xxi. 16.

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WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN S. S. UNION, AND REVISED  
BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

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AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

PHILADELPHIA:

NO. 146 CHESNUT STREET

1831.



See page 604.



*See p. 18.*

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By  
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ALL little children have wicked hearts. When we say people have wicked hearts, we mean that they love to do wrong. The Lord Jesus says, we must all be born again, or we can never go to heaven. To be born again, is to have our hearts changed; so that, instead of loving to do wrong, we shall love to do right.

I am going to tell my little readers about a very little girl,

whose heart God changed. Her name was Phebe Bartlett. She lived in Northampton, in the State of Massachusetts, nearly one hundred years ago, when President Edwards preached there. She had a pious brother about eleven years old. He loved Christ, and wanted every body else to love him too. Although his little sister was only four years old, he knew she had a wicked heart, and had not become a child of God. But he loved her very much, and wanted Phebe to have a new heart as well as himself. So he took her away alone, and



talked to her about her soul. I suppose he did this very often, though I cannot tell how many times. When he told her how bad her heart was, she was very sorry. She would go away alone, several times in a day, and pray

to God. Sometimes she would do this five or six times in a day. I do not know what she said, at that time, when she prayed : but I suppose she told God how bad her heart was, and asked him to change it. The more she prayed, the more she wanted to pray, and she never let any thing hinder her from praying. One day she told her mother she could not find God. By this I suppose she meant that she could not feel his Holy Spirit in her heart, filling it with love, and making her love to do good. A little while after, her mother heard her in her closet

praying aloud, and very earnestly. She cried at the same time very



hard; for she saw how wicked and sinful she was, and it grieved her very much. She said a great deal, but all her mother could hear was these words: “**PRAY, BLESSED LORD,** give me

salvation! I PRAY, BEG, pardon all my sins!" When she had done praying, she came and sat down by her mother, and cried out aloud. Her mother asked her what was the matter. But she cried more and more, and wrung her hands. Her mother then asked her if she was afraid God would not give her salvation. She answered, "Yes, I am afraid I shall go to hell!" Her mother tried to quiet her, but little Phebe saw so much wickedness in her heart, that she could not stop crying till it was changed. But God heard her prayer, when she beg-

ged so earnestly for salvation. In a little while she stopped crying all at once, and began to smile, saying to her mother, "Mother, the kingdom of heaven is come to me!"

After this, little Phebe went to her closet again, for now she loved to talk with God, and call him her Father, and to thank Jesus for dying to save her. When she came back to her mother she said, "I can find God now." And again she said, "I love God." Her mother asked her if she loved God better than she loved her father and mother, and her little

sister Rachel. "Yes," said she, "I love him better than I love any thing else." Her elder sister asked her where she could find God. She answered, "in heaven." "Why," said her sister, "have you been in heaven?" "No," said Phebe. Her mother asked her if she was afraid of going to hell, and if that made her cry. "Yes, I was," said she, "but now I shall not." Her mother asked her if she thought God had given her salvation. She answered, "Yes." Her mother asked, "When?" "To-day," said she. All that afternoon she appeared glad and

joyful. Some one asked her how she felt. She said, "I feel better than I did." "What makes you feel better?" said the other. She answered, "God makes me so."

That evening, while she was in bed, she called one of her little cousins to her, and told him that heaven was better than earth. The next day her mother asked her what God made her for. She answered, "To serve him, and every body ought to serve him, and be a friend of Christ."

One evening a minister who was at her father's, talked with her some time about God and her

soul. After he was gone, she sat leaning on the table, with tears flowing from her eyes. She was asked what made her cry? She said it was thinking about God. The next day, her feelings were very tender, and she cried several times, when she thought about God. But little children must not think that they make themselves any better by crying. Some children cry when they hear about the Lord Jesus and their wicked hearts, without knowing what they cry for. But if they should cry all their life-time it would not make them any better. If they cry *be-*

*cause they have sinned*, and trust in Jesus Christ to pardon their sins, God will be pleased, and forgive them. He will never pardon their sins *because they cry*, but *because Jesus died for them*. Some people cry for joy; and I suppose little Phebe cried for joy, when she was thinking of the wonderful love of Jesus, in dying to save her from her sins.

From this time, there was a very great change in little Phebe. She loved the Sabbath, and would never play, nor talk in sport, and laugh, nor think foolish things, as many little children do on that

holy day. She would long for the Sabbath to come, instead of feeling glad when it was past, as many children often do. She would inquire how long it was to the Sabbath day; and would not be contented, till the days that were between had been counted over. She loved God's house, and was always glad when she could go there. One day her mother asked her why she was so fond of going to church? and whether it was not to see the people there? "No," said she, "it is to hear the minister preach." When she was in the

church, she did not spend the time in looking about the house, as many children do ; she did not sit uneasy and disturb others, nor go to sleep ; but she fixed her eyes on the minister, and listened to every thing he said. She loved to go to prayer meetings. She would be still at home when the Bible was read ; and when her father prayed, she prayed with him, and said over in her mind his words after him. She loved to hear the people talk about religion. One time, when some ministers were at her father's, she listened to every thing they said ;

and after they were gone, she looked out wishfully after them, and said, "I wish they would come again!" "Why?" said her mother. She answered, "I love to hear them talk."

Little Phebe always feared God. She was not afraid because she thought he would punish her, but she loved him with all her heart, and she was afraid she would displease him. She went one day, with some larger children, into a neighbour's orchard to get some pears.\* She did not know that she was doing wrong,

\* See *Frontispiece*.

being a very little girl; but when she brought home some of the pears, her mother told her she must not get them without leave, because it was a sin. God had told her not to steal. Phebe wondered at what her mother said, and burst into tears, saying, "I will not have these pears." Turning to her sister Eunice, she said, "Why did you ask me to go to that pear-tree? I should not have gone if you had not asked me." The other children did not care much about it; but Phebe could not be made easy. Her mother sent one of the children to ask

leave of the owner to have the pears, and this quieted her a little while; but she soon began to cry again most bitterly. Her mother asked her what made her cry, now they had asked leave.

She did not answer for some time, but kept crying. At last she said, it was "*because it was sin.*" She cried a great while, and said she would not go again, if Eunice should ask her a hundred times. And she would not eat any pears for a long time; for when she saw them, she thought of her sin in taking them without leave, and that troubled her very much. 1

fear very few of my little readers have such tender hearts as Phebe had, and would fear so much to do a wicked thing. You see how badly she felt, because she had taken a few pears without leave. But a great many children think *nothing of taking fruit from other people's orchards and gardens.* All Sunday-school children, when they look upon the trees hanging down with ripe fruit, and feel a desire to take it without leave, should remember that they break the tenth commandment, which says, "*Thou shalt not covet,*" and if they take any of the fruit, they break the

eighth, which says, “*Thou shalt not steal.*” They should put away the wicked desire from them as quick as they can, and keep saying to themselves, “Thou shalt not covet;” “Thou shalt not steal.”

I do not know whether little Phebe could read in the Bible, though I have seen some little children not much older than she was, who could read. But if she could not read the Bible, she was very attentive when she heard it read; for she was sometimes filled with joy and delight with verses that came to her mind. She believed every thing that is in the

Bible to be the word of God, and some of the verses have such wonderful promises in them, that they made her heart glad. One time this text came to her mind:—"Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." She spoke of it with great joy, with a smiling face, and with her voice raised. She then went into another room, where the rest of the children were, and her mother heard her talking very earnestly to them about it. She said three or four times, with great joy

and wonder, “*Why it is to sup with God!*” If any of my little readers should hear **Jesus Christ** knocking at the door of the house, would they not run, and open the door, and ask him in? **But Jesus** now wants to come into your hearts, as much as a person that knocks at the door wants to come into the house. **But**, if your heart has not been changed, you love sin better than **Christ**, and will not let him come in. **He** knocks at your hearts every time you hear in the **Sabbath school**, or at church, that you must repent and give your hearts to **Christ**. **And**

every time you have a serious thought, Christ is calling, by his Holy Spirit, at the door of your hearts. If you will only open your hearts to him, he will come in and live there. He will take away your angry and wicked feelings, and make you love God, and good people, and every thing that is good.

Some time after that, her mother heard her crying very late one night, while she was in bed, and asked her what was the matter.

She answered, but her mother could not hear what she said. The next morning her mother asked

her if she did not cry the last night. She answered "Yes, I did cry a little, for I was thinking about God and Christ, and how they loved me." Her mother asked her if it made her cry to think that God and Christ loved her. She said, "Yes, it does, sometimes."

As I told you, when speaking of Phebe's brother, those who have had their hearts changed, want to have every body else have new hearts too. So it was with Phebe. Once she was in a room with her little brothers and sisters. After a while she came out and sat by her mother, look-

ing very mournful and sad, and said, "I have been talking to Nabby and Eunice." Her mother asked her what she had said to them. "Why," said she, "I told them they must pray and prepare to die; that they had but a little while to live in this world, and they must be always ready." Her mother asked her sister if she had said that to them. "Yes," said she, "she said that, and a great deal more." And a great many other times, she talked to her little brothers and sisters about their souls, sometimes so as to make them cry. Once, she urged her

mother very hard to go and pray with her little sister. Her mother put her off; but she pulled her by the sleeve, as though she could not be denied. Her mother told her that Amy must go and pray for herself. "But," said Phebe, "she will not go;" and she begged her mother to go with her.

God is full of pity and compassion, and when people's hearts have been changed, they are like God. They love every body, and pity the poor and those that are in distress. Little Phebe felt so. A poor man that lived in the woods, lost a cow that was a

great help to his family. He was at her father's, talking about his loss, and how hard it was for him to keep his children from being hungry, and crying for milk. After she had heard all that the poor man said, she ran out to her father, who was in the shop, and begged him to give the man a cow, telling him that the hunters, or something else, had killed the poor man's cow. Her father told her that they could not spare a cow. Then she begged him to let the man and his family come and live at his house. She said a great deal more to her father, which

showed how much she felt for the distresses of others, and how delightful it was to her to help them.

People that have new hearts love to pray. You know, dear children, that we always like to talk with those we love. We want to be with them all the time. So those who love Jesus Christ, love to talk with him, and tell him all their wants, and ask him for the things that they need. And God loves to have them talk with him. He answers them in his holy word, which is full of blessed promises to such as love him.

While they are talking to him, his Holy Spirit brings these promises to their hearts with such sweetness, that they sometimes almost cry out for joy. So you see it was with little Phebe, when she found God had promised to sup with those who opened their hearts to him. She loved to talk with God, and was never known to neglect secret prayer. She said her catechism too, every night before she went to bed. She never forgot it but once, and then when she thought of it, she cried out with tears, "I have not said my catechism;" and she would

not go to sleep, till her mother had asked her the questions.

Those whose hearts have been changed, love all good people ; and they love God's ministers very much. Little Phebe loved her minister. Once he was sick, and took a long journey for his health. When Phebe heard that he had returned, she was very glad, and said to the children in a very joyful tone, " Mr. Edwards has come home ! Mr. Edwards has come home ! "

O, will not all the children who read this book be like little Phebe ? Will they not go alone every day

and pray to God to show them how wicked their hearts are, and to pardon all their sins, and bring them to Christ, and give them new hearts? But do not, dear reader, think that you make yourselves any better by your prayers. When you ask your father or mother for any thing you want, you do not think yourself any better for it; and praying is only asking God for things that we want. Just as soon as you see that you are sinners, feel sorry for your sins, and trust in Christ for pardon, God will take away all your sins, change your hearts, and call you

his own children. Yes, dear children, he will make you like the Lord Jesus Christ! O wonderful love! O will ye not love that Saviour, who gave his own life to save you?

I have nothing further to say about little Phebe, except that when she had become a woman she married Mr. Noah Parsons, and was a very good, pious woman. Those who knew her, say that she was a very prayerful, sincere, and devout Christian.

Her grave is to be seen in the burial ground, at Northampton; and the old stone which tells where

her body was laid, has the following written upon it :

IN MEMORY  
OF  
MRS. PHEBE PARSONS,  
WIFE OF MR. NOAH PARSONS ;  
WHO DIED, JANUARY 5, 1805,  
IN THE 74<sup>TH</sup> YEAR OF HER AGE.

An elm tree stands at the head  
of her grave.







## A SUMMARY OF BIBLICAL ANTIQUITY

THIS, compiled for the use of Sunday-School Teachers, and for the benefit of Families. By JOHN W. NEVIN, late Assistant Teacher in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, (N. J.) In two volumes.—Revised and corrected by the author for the American Sunday School Union, and Revised by the Committee of Publication.

It needs very little reflection, to be convinced of the importance of having some acquaintance with the circumstances, natural and moral, of the time and country in which the Bible was written, in order to read it with understanding. Historical facts, objects of surrounding nature, the productions of art, with agnætic, social, religious, and civil usages, are continually urged before the reader's mind, and noticed as things with which he is supposed to be perfectly familiar. And thus familiar they were to the ancient Jew. But widely different is our situation in this respect. Many hundred years separate us from the times of original revelation. To read the Bible, in many parts, with a proper sense of its meaning, we need so much familiarity with these things as to be able to transport our minds away from all around us, and to clothe them, in the midst of Judæa itself, with all the moral drapery that hung about the Israelitish spirit ages ago. We need to be conversant with the mountains, the plains, the streams; the beasts of the field and the birds of the air; the labours of the farmer and the habits of the shepherd; we need to walk, in fancy's vivid vision, through the streets of Jerusalem; to mingle with the inmates of the Jewish dwelling, to participate in their seasons of festive joy, and to sympathise with their sorrow in the day of calamity and bereaving death; we need to go up to the temple, to unite in its worship, to behold its solemn rites, and to admire the beautiful grandeur of its scene. The fact that such knowledge is wanted now, through the providence of God, to illustrate every page of the Bible, evinces it to be the will of God that *all* should, as far as they have power, endeavour to acquire it.

The following are the principal topics on which this work furnishes information:—Geography and Climate; Natural History; Dwellings and Household Accommodations; Occupations, Dress, Meats, Social Intercourse; Domestic Customs and Habits; Diseases and Funeral Customs; Miscellaneous Matter; Political Institutions; General History of Religion; The Tabernacle; The Temple; Ministers of the Tabernacle and Temple; Sacrifices and other Religious Offerings; Sacred Times and Solemnities; Members of the Jewish Church; Synagogues; Religious Sects.