

“John Colby Has Become A Christian”

Near the Fanconia Mountains in New Hampshire there died a very aged man in August 1852. Shrewd, vigorous and sturdy, he lived without God in the world, four-score and four years,--a grasping, passionate, an domineering man, a thorough-going worldling. But the sudden death of an old acquaintance startled him. He felt that it was time for himself to get ready, and by an exertion, almost incredible, he learned to read the Testament. “Yes, it was hard work,” as he said to a friend. “At my time of life to begin with the letters and learn to read, was hard work. Sometimes I could not make out the sense. But I would cry to the Almighty to help me, and then I would try again, and He would help me to find it out. So that now, I have read the Testament through eight times, and here I am in the epistles of Peter, the ninth time; and Oh!” he added, with streaming eyes, “it is glory, and praise in my heart.” He was a sagacious and energetic old man, and, as he said himself, “I wanted a religion that should be good and strong, and that would keep by me, and help me when I came to die. So I cried to the Almighty, and He gave me a heart for the blessed Testament. I found out how to read it, and then I read in it that Jesus Christ made the world, and rivers, and the mountains. And then I began to pray to Him, that He would gibe me a new heart; and He gave it to me. And I read, that when He lived on earth, He healed the sick and the blind, and was good to the poor; and then I knew tha He would be kind to me; and He forgave me, and gave ma a new heart.” It was quite true. The change on his harsh and rugged nature was very wonderful; and as he said to the great American Statesman, who was his brother-in-law, “I have had done for me, Daniel, what neither you nor all the great men in the world could do for me; I have got a new heart.” And, returning to his home, Mr. Webster said, “Wonderful things happen in this world, and one of them is, that John Colby has become a Christian.”