

[Birnie, Barbara]

TRIUMPHANT DEATH OF A BELIEVER

DIED, in Lee-Centre, Oneida Co., N.Y., December 25th, 1848, Miss Barbara Birnie, daughter of Mr. William [and Mrs. Mary] Birnie.

Some ten years since, Sister B. removed with her father's family, from Dumfriesshire in Scotland to this country. They soon settled on the farm their father purchased, where they have resided to the present time.

Sister B. was a remarkably religiously disposed girl, and when quite young became a member of the Methodist Church. The Bible was her daily study; and conversation on religious topics, prayer and praise, were her delight. Her character was above reproach. All who were acquainted with her loved her. In the course of time, by careful study of the Scriptures, and serious reflection and examination, she became convinced of the gospel truth of the universality of God's grace and love for all his children. As she could no longer consent to retain her connection with a Partialist Communion, she withdrew herself, about a year previous to her death, from the Church of which she had been, for some eight or nine years, an esteemed member.

Her health, until this sickness, was always good. On the first attack of the disease, she seemed to have a premonition that her departure was at hand, and before it was apparent to the family that there was any danger, she calmly and deliberately selected the text (Luke xx.36) which she wished to have preached from, at her funeral; desired that Br. D. [Dolphus] Skinner should administer the consolations of the Gospel, and if he could not attend, then some other Universalist preacher; but if no Universalist preacher could be obtained, she requested they would bury her without any public services. Perhaps the circumstances connected with the burial of a beloved brother, some two years before [William, who died on 3 Nov 1846, age 19] (a young man who had made no public profession of religion,) at which a certain Presbyterian clergyman officiated, had some influence on her mind.

Her disease affected the brain, so that she was, at times, delirious; but there were intervals when reason resumed its office, and then her constant theme was the sublime truths of life and immortality, the universal blessedness of the race in the resurrection. Once, when her physician (a Partialist,) was praying, she checked him on his introducing his limited views, telling him that she was on her dying bed, that her faith was not to be shaken, &c. She dwelt long in conversation with her father (a Presbyterian) upon the joy and peace she received in the hopes of Universalism, and the gloom that the doctrine of endless misery imparts to its believer. Once, after a period of delirium, she called the family about her, to say that it seemed to her that she had died, and was in a state of

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happiness, save one thing that troubled her, and that was, that some of her former associates in time were reporting that she had renounced Universalism on her death bed; and she was permitted to come back to earth to bear testimony that Universalism was more glorious to die by, than to live by; that she hoped no one would utter falsehood about her, that she was more and more firm as a Universalist.

She was not only prepared, but anxious, so soon as it was the good Father's will, to bid farewell to these mortal scenes, and triumph over death and the grave.

Br. Skinner could not attend her funeral, but her request was so far heeded, that another minister of universal love was able to do it, by addressing a large congregation of sympathizing friends on the 28th ult. E. F. [Rev. Eben Francis]

*Utica, N.Y.*

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