

**THE USEFUL DISCIPLE: OR,  
A NARRATIVE OF MRS.  
MARY GARDNER, PP. 1-133**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649522460

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Cover @ 2017

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**MRS. PHOEBE PALMER**

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USEFUL DISCIPLE:

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BY MRS. PHEBE PALMER,

AUTHOR OF "THE WAY OF HOLINESS," "TRIBUTE TO MY CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,"  
"FAITH AND ITS EFFECTS," &c.

"Glory ye the Lord in the fire."—ISAIAH XLV. 13.

FIRST ENGLISH EDITION.

LONDON:  
ALEXANDER HEYLIN, 28, PATERNOSTER ROW.  
1857.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY WILLIAM NICHOLS,  
23, LONDON WALL.

## PREFACE.

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THE facts contained in this narrative were sketched, as taken from the lips of Mrs. Gardner, by Mrs. Lydia A. Baily, of Clinton, New Jersey. Mrs. Baily, after having heard the repeated recitals of her afflicted friend, found them so replete with instruction, that her heart was drawn to commit to paper such portions as she had found peculiarly edifying. At the solicitation of Mrs. Baily, the writer has been induced to undertake the editorship of these papers; and she now submits them to the public in prayerful expectation that the blessing of the God of all grace may rest upon the humble endeavour to promote His glory.

In an emphatic sense, the High and Holy One seems to have said to this disciple, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." "Who hath sinned, this man or his parents?" may not be an inquiry as readily prompted at the present as in former days; yet with many the impression obtains, that those who are exercised with unusual affliction may have been, in some inexplicable way, more than ordinarily deficient; and



thus well-meaning people have made the afflictions of their friends yet more painful. The case of Job furnishes an illustration. Had his pious friends known that the specific reason why God permitted Satan to try him was because he was a *perfect* man, what veneration and God-like compassion would have inspired their hearts and lips in their addresses to him! The meaning of Job's afflictions was not to be understood either by himself or his friends. Invisible agencies were at work, and it was, at the time, wholly in reference to these that the conflict was maintained.

Not only was the subject of this narrative chosen of God in the furnace of affliction, but so truly was her will subjected—through the power of grace—to the Divine will, that instances in her history might be brought to prove that she voluntarily chose to suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. It may not be improper to state one which her modesty has withheld from her narrative.

Some time after her much-loved husband and interesting children had been borne from her embraces by death, a gentleman of handsome fortune, and possessed also of many estimable qualities, offered her his hand in marriage. Mrs. Gardner, among her few surviving relatives, had one from whom, on account of his wealth and influence, she had some expectations, in case she

should need pecuniary aid in her lonely situation. To the importunities of her suitor were added those of this relative to induce her to accept the offer. But the proposal was steadfastly rejected. The gentleman was not a professor of religion, and Mrs. Gardner had, in everlasting covenant, devoted herself, soul, body, and spirit, to the service of her Redeemer. She could not consent to unite her interests with one who had not united himself to Christ. This refusal brought upon her the signal displeasure of her wealthy relative, which eventuated in an unchangeable protest on his part that she should never, under any circumstances, receive aid from him. She was now told to look to those friends and advisers with whom she had so resolutely preferred to identify her interests. These friends were the humble followers of the Saviour. Thus did she exhibit before God, men, and angels, that she chose to suffer affliction with the people of God.

As we trace her eventful life, and behold her passing onward from one scene of labour to another,—often driven by successive afflictive dispensations, which in rapid course succeeded each other,—and witness her unquenched zeal and her unyielding faith, who will not ejaculate, “Glory to God in the highest!” for such an exhibition of the power of grace to sustain? In every allotment of her Heavenly Father, however varied, how evidently does the ruling passion of her heart preponderate! Witness her intense love

to God, manifested in her burning zeal to be useful to those around her! Truly did she "glorify the Lord in the fires." Driven by circumstances of ill health from one place to another, these were only made occasions to spread the savour of pure and undefiled religion, by leading the untaught mind to fountains of knowledge and salvation. To the afflicted, then, this volume is specially dedicated.

And it is devoutly anticipated that these pages may be helpful toward inspiring minds which, from various disabilities, have, seemingly in fruitless endeavour, been grasping after opportunities for usefulness, to bring their energies to bear upon such as may be within reach of the present moment. Most afflictive circumstances, as in the case of Mrs. Gardner, have furnished opportunity to reach minds not otherwise accessible; yet to those who fully trust the keeping of their souls to a faithful Creator, every event should be regarded as a link in the golden chain leading them forth in a *right* way to a city of habitation.