

ANZA PUBLISHING

**Renowned Minister Discusses the Unique Advantages
Of a Christian Life in an Inspiring New Edition**

THE NEW BIRTH *The Nature of Conversion* **by Austin Phelps**

This little volume is in every respect excellent . . . As a theological treatise it is characterized by accuracy of definition and statement, by thorough soundness of evangelical doctrine, and by freshness of conception—New Englander and Yale Review

THE NEW BIRTH (Tarxien Press) is a highly rewarding work goes back to a time when theological discussion was not considered “heavy”. It contains an inspirational treatment of the subject of conversion, and sees faith as creating fresh possibilities that can lead to great accomplishments. In modest, inspiring, but still powerful language, it puts forward many important ideas using a sensible, logical plan that helps the individual interact with God in his new-found spiritual life.

As the title suggests, **THE NEW BIRTH** views the concept of conversion as a momentous, singular event. Austin Phelps discusses the subject in relation to the subjects of guilt, self-respect, ritual, laws, mysticism, regeneration, the power of truth, the role of the preacher, and personal responsibility. Phelps strikes just the right balance of advice, admonition, dogma and social commentary. His writing is almost poetic, yet it is also steady, careful, straightforward and compelling.

Although Phelps saw great value in the spreading of ideas through preaching, he perceived this form of address as more than a lecture; indeed, it was a kind of conversation, where people could stop to think, ask questions, and proceed to learn further. The author understood that the profundities of Christianity could not be laid out in a simple sermon; they need to be expounded upon with a great diligence and earnestness, in direct language that does not trivialize, but still maintains the purity of the fundamental concept. **THE NEW BIRTH** is a much needed book that beautifully, precisely and succinctly explains the Christian concept of re-birth.

Austin Phelps’ books are, generally speaking, devotional, homiletical, and theological in character. An early book of his was *The Still Hour*, published in 1858 in both America and Britain. It was extremely popular, selling some 200,000 copies. He also published a number of books about the difficult and varied tasks of a minister: *The Theory of Preaching: Lectures on Homiletics* (1881); *Men and Books; or Studies in Homiletics* (1882); *My Study and Other Essays* (1886) *Rhetoric: Its Theory and Practice* (1895).

Austin Phelps (1820 -1890), was born in West Brookfield, Massachusetts. Phelps' family had a somewhat unsettled existence, as his father was a teacher and principal, as well as Presbyterian pastor. First they lived in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, then moved on to Geneva, New York, and from there on to Philadelphia. Austin then went to various institutions in these places. In Philadelphia, he attended the University of Pennsylvania, graduating in 1837, at the mere age of 17. He studied at Union Theological Seminary and at the Yale Divinity School. In 1842 he was ordained as pastor of the Pine Street Congregational Church, Boston. After six successful years as pastor, he took on a position he would hold for the next 30 years, that of professor of sacred rhetoric and homiletics at Andover Seminary. He died in Bar Harbor, Maine at the age of 71.

We can see in Austin Phelps' life a great moral strength, a man who indeed did "practice what he preached". We might note that upon the death of his first wife in 1852 (whom he married ten years earlier), he married his wife's sister two years later, who at that time had tuberculosis. Other people would have been very reluctant to marry a very sick woman who was likely to die, but Phelps felt he had the responsibility to care for her, and the faith to overcome his fears. Regrettably, his new wife did not live more than two years.

Paul Dennis Sporer (editor) is the author of *The Dimensions of Companionship; Liberating Love; The Concept of Family; and Equal but Different*. He has also served as editor on more than 30 culturally and historically significant books, including *Painting Explained*, by Thomas Gullick; *Is Secession Treason?*, by Albert Bledsoe; *The Heart of Aryavarta*, by Lawrence Dundas; *Beauty and Art*; by Aldam Heaton; *The French at Home*, by Albert Rhodes; *From Slave Cabin to Pulpit*, by Peter Randolph; *Newer Ideals of Peace*, by Jane Addams; *Views of Old Europe*, by Bayard Taylor; *Gentle Measures*, by Jacob Abbott; *Parental Influences*, William Bacon; *Finding a Way Out*, by Robert Moton; *The New Birth*, by Austin Phelps; *Tupelo*, by John Hill Aughey; *An Incident of Travel*, Arthur Jerome Eddy; *End of an Era*, by John Sergeant Wise; *The Missionary*, by Samuel Mazzuchelli; *Half a Century*, by Jane Swisshelm; *Born Three Times*, by Thomas L. Johnson; *Dark Hollow*, by Anna Katharine Green; and *1492: Admiral of the Ocean Sea*, by Mary Johnston.

For further information about **THE NEW BIRTH** , or to arrange an interview with the editor, please contact Cassandra Foxton, inform_at_anzapublishing.com. The publisher's website address is AnzaPublishing.com.

#

THE NEW BIRTH, by Austin Phelps; Paul Dennis Sporer (Editor)

Revised and enhanced edition, with new index and preface

Pub. Date: 2006; Pages: 136;

ISBN: 1-932490-08-6 (hc), Price \$22.95; ISBN: 1-932490-58-2 (sc), Price \$9.95