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THE CLOSE  
OF A  
S E R M O N  
OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF  
MISS ELLIE P. FRISBEE.

1060

THE CLOSE

OF A

S E R M O N

PREACHED ON

SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 9, 1860,

WITH SOME REFERENCE TO THE DEATH OF

MISS ELLIE P. FRISBEE.

BY HER PASTOR.

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PRINTED BY SPECIAL REQUEST OF THE BEREAVED FAMILY.

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The text of the Discourse, of which the following paragraphs form the conclusion, was

REVELATION XXII, 14.

BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, THAT THEY MAY HAVE A RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND MAY ENTER IN THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY.

The design of the Discourse was to illustrate the nature of the *service* to which Christians are called, the nature of the *reward* that awaits them, and the *ground* on which the reward will be bestowed.

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Will any one doubt now the truth of my position, or rather the testimony of the faithful and true witness,—that they who “do” God’s “commandments” “have a right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the gates into the City?” Yes, Christian, you *have* a right, consequent upon your obedience, though it comes to you in such a way that your glorying can be only in the Cross. But it is as real, it is as inalienable, it is as unchangeable, as the everlasting love of God, and the bitter sufferings of his Son, and the witness-

ing and sealing of his Spirit, can make it. Saint on earth, adopted child of the living God,—does thy soul's great invisible adversary, or do some of his visible representatives on earth, beset thee with the cruel suggestion that thine hope of the Heavenly inheritance is but a dream—I say unto thee, believe not the lie that is attempted thus to be forced upon thee ; but look up to Heaven, and behold thy claim springing out of the very heart of infinite love ; and then look away to Calvary, and see it ratified and sealed with precious blood. Saint in glory, is there one about thee that questions thy right to sweep that golden harp, to wear those white robes and that sparkling crown, and to mingle in the noble service of the eternal temple ? Oh no ; thy title is written upon thy very forehead—and there is not a seraph who shines with a lustre so bright, or sits upon a throne so lofty, but that he kindles with fresh rapture as he reads it, and gratefully bids thee welcome thus to share with him the glory of his native Heavens. Only be sure that thou art of the number who do God's commandments, and thou mayest be equally sure that there is no being in the universe who can sustain even the shadow of a doubt against

thy right to the honour of being exalted into a king and a priest unto God.

Is there not something delightful in the thought that the world in which we live is bounded, on one side, by Heaven? We see the pilgrims on their upward way, faithfully doing God's work as they pass along, till at length they come near the gate which opens into the Heavenly City. It is the dark side of the gate only which they behold, and they pause amidst the deep, cold shadows that have gathered before it. But, as it begins to open, the notes of celestial praise tremble faintly on the ear, and presently the full choir of saints and angels, and the presence of the great white throne and the Lamb in the midst of it, proclaim,—“This is Heaven.” We, in our sorrow and desolation, stay behind; and we have a lifeless body upon our hands to consign to its last lowly resting place; and we go about the task with heavy hearts; and there remains for a long time a chasm in our circle of intercourse and enjoyment; but, meanwhile, that friend is walking the streets of the New Jerusalem in the company of seraphs, and helping to swell the anthems of redemption, that are rising up in sweetest melody, and yet loud as the sound of many waters, from

beneath and around the eternal throne. Oh, what a change from having the gate of death before him to having it behind him ; from battling with the monster to seeing that he is conquered ; from panting away his breath on the shores of time to drawing immortal breath beneath the throne of God !

I have been led into this train of thought this morning, by a recent dispensation of Providence, bereaving this Church of one of its younger female members, and the Sabbath School of an intelligent, efficient and devoted teacher. The young lady to whom I refer, though little known beyond her own quiet home and very limited circle, possessed attractions, both of mind and of heart, to which none who knew her intimately could be insensible. Though her extreme modesty always disposed her to keep in the background, she had a measure of intellectual cultivation which is somewhat rare even in what are considered the more favoured walks of life. Her religious principles were the result of mature reflection ; and she accepted nothing, either as a doctrine of faith or a rule of duty, for which she was not able to give a well-digested reason. Her Christian experience, though characterized by no remarkable

fervour, was yet a thing of life and power—her conversation revealed at once the fact that she was deeply conversant with her own heart, and in intimate communion with the Searcher and the Sanctifier of her heart. Her life was a quiet, unostentatious course of Christian well-doing. In her father's house, she was like a ministering angel; in the Sabbath School, she was a faithful and earnest teacher; in the families in which she spent part of her time in giving instruction, she was unobtrusive, efficient, always welcome; in the house of God, she was evidently a devout worshipper, and a docile and thoughtful hearer of the Word. Two or three of her last years were marked by an enfeebled state of health, which seemed to look towards an early grave; but it was not till within the last few months that her disease had developed itself in so decided a form as to forbid all hope of the continuance of her life beyond a very brief period. But she was not dismayed when she found that death was placing his dark signals in her path—she said to me,—“ I have no rapture, neither have I any terror; but I have a firm trust; and I feel that my Saviour has me by the hand, and will lead me safely through all the darkness.” And thus indeed it

was—she lay there an humble, patient, loving witness for Christ, as the languid flame of life approached extinction; and there was not a word or a look to warrant a doubt that she was reposing her whole soul upon Christ, until the angels took her in their arms and bore her away to her everlasting home. I saw her when she had approached so near to the gate that it was in full view; and there was no shrinking back; no faltering of faith; no sign of terror; but she was evidently fully girded for the upward flight. In that little room of that humble dwelling in which she breathed her life away, I could not doubt that Heaven was invisibly represented; and if all that passed there could have been made to stand out before the eye of sense, who can say but there might have been such a specimen of Heaven's glory, that all would have felt that that chamber of death was scarcely outside the boundaries of the city of our God, the Heavenly Jerusalem!

That dear departed saint has left behind her the savour of a quiet, uniform, devoted Christian life. Oh how much better than to have figured in the circles of fashion; to have been caressed and flattered by the worldly and gay; to have

been carried round in the whirl of unsatisfying pleasure ; to have utterly ignored the great end of human existence ; and to have come down into the dark valley with the terrible consciousness that it was to open into the world of wo ! My young friends, who are seeking all your happiness in the world, let me entreat you to dismiss this infatuation, and let your next step towards the grave be your first step towards Heaven : and having once secured the good part, you can afford to face the future, even when the darkness is the thickest, without a chill of apprehension. And you who have already set out in the Christian life,—let this report which I bring you to-day from the death-bed of one, who was the companion of some of you, and a fellow communicant with us all, serve to give a fresh impulse to all your Christian graces, and keep you in such a watchful, waiting attitude, that even the most sudden opening of the gate, at the end of your earthly course, shall not surprise or alarm you. Sabbath School Teachers, one of your associates in the goodly work in which you are engaged, has been withdrawn from this in common with every other field of earthly labour ; but she has left an example behind her which you will do well to

cherish and imitate—and remember that, in these humble walks of Christian usefulness, you are getting ready to pass the gate of the Heavenly City, and pluck fruit from the Tree of Life. And you too, dear children,—when your teachers die, remember that you must die also; and let the words of instruction you have received from them be as good seed sown in your hearts, that shall yield an immortal harvest in Heaven. God grant us a precious and continued visitation of his Gracious Spirit, that the number of saints among us may be constantly increasing, notwithstanding the steady tide of immigration to the better land.

