

[Jennison, Betsey]

DEATHS.

BR. AUSTIN:—It falls to my lot to record the passing away of one of the “Mothers in our Israel.” Last Sunday morning, about 4 o’clock, Mrs. Betsey Jennison—familiarily known to many of our ministering brethren as “Mother Jennison”—departed this life for the better home above, at the advanced aged of 88 years, 7 months and 15 days. There are few left among us who have enjoyed so long the rich promises of divine love, as they are interpreted by the doctrine of Universal Salvation; and none of us can ever expect to prove the power of those promises to sustain and console us under all the burdens and sorrows of life, in a more remarkable degree, than has fallen to her lot.

She was well qualified to appreciate the difference between Partialism and Universalism. In early life she became a member of the Rev. Dr. Baldwin’s church in Boston, a connection which continued but a few years at most; for Mrs. [Nancy] Johnson, the sister of the deceased, assures me that soon after the removal of Rev. Mr. [John] Murray to Boston to become the pastor of the First Universalist Church in that city, Mrs. Jennison heard him preach several times, joyfully embraced the doctrine he proclaimed, and soon became a member of his church. This must have been as early as 1795 or ’96; so that her membership in the Universalist communion has very nearly exhausted the allotted period of human life.

After the death of Father Murray and the removal of Father [Hosea] Ballou to Boston, Mrs. Jennison became a member of the School Street Church, where she enjoyed the preaching of Father Ballou as long as she resided in Boston.

Rev. Mr. Pickering married the only daughter of Mrs. Jennison who lived to arrive at maturity; and after he was settled as pastor of the First Universalist Church in Providence, R.I., she removed to that city, and became a member of the church under his care. How long she remained there I have been unable to learn; but probably only while Mr. Pickering remained in charge of the Society. From Providence she removed to the city of New-York, and united with the church then under the care of Br. [William S.] Balch. From there she came to this city, at what date I have not been able to ascertain, and at the reorganization of the church connected with the Universalist Society in this place, then under the care of Br. G. Collins, Mrs. Jennison and sixteen others signed their names to the “Profession of Faith and Articles of Church Government.” This was in April, 1849, and here she has remained until her death, a valuable member of the church as long as her health permitted her to participate in its affairs.

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The subject of this notice was a woman of extraordinary mental abilities, and her whole being was baptized in the spirit of God's impartial grace and infinite love. I do not feel so competent to speak upon this point, from the fact that soon after I became acquainted with her she suffered a renewed attack of paralysis, which very much impaired her powers both of body and mind. But notwithstanding this, I have been astonished at the tenacity and accuracy of her memory, and, I trust, instructed and profited by her child-like confidence in God, and the cheerful submission and christian resignation with which she has borne all her afflictions. For years she has literally *waited* her appointed time. On one occasion, in answer to a remark by the writer, that she would not have much longer to wait, she replied, with great animation, "Blessed be God, I am ready to go this hour, if it is his pleasure." At my last visit, as I bent over her bed to catch her half-articulated words, she said, "I have lived long, not always as faithfully as I could wish; but I have endeavored to live to the glory of God, and now when his blessed time comes, I am going to die to the glory of God." These were the last words I ever caught from her lips.

Mrs. Jennison has passed through great vicissitudes in life. She has known what it is to be rich, and what it is to be poor—if, indeed, any one can be poor with such friends as she has had, and such a faith as she has enjoyed. It is now about eight years since she was rendered entirely helpless by a stroke of paralysis, and during that time, she has received the most devoted care from Mrs. Johnson, a sister much younger than herself, but still somewhat advanced in life. Our Society in this city has contributed liberally to their wants, assisted in former years by the Societies with which she was connected in New York and Boston. She has gone to enjoy the full fruition of the glorious Faith which sustained her so fully through all the vicissitudes of this mortal life; and may the rich blessings of the Divine love be with all who are called to mourn her departure.

J. STEBBINS

Hudson, Sept. 30, 1862

Christian Ambassador, Auburn NY, Sat. 11 Oct 1862

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