

A Faithful Minister of Jesus Christ.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED DECEMBER 31, 1858,

AT THE

FUNERAL OF THE REV. ISAAC BRAMAN,

SENIOR PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN GEORGETOWN, MASS.

BY

DAVID T. KIMBALL,

SENIOR PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN IPSWICH, MASS.

WITH A

SKETCH OF MR. BRAMAN'S LIFE.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF MR. BRAMAN'S FAMILY.

HUGH H. TUTTLE, PRINTER,
21 School Street.

1859.

*Mrs John Lovering with the regards of the
family.*

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DISCOURSE.

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.—
REV. II. 10.

THIS exhortation, with its promise, was addressed to the angel or pastor of the church in Smyrna, a celebrated city, the metropolis of Asia Minor, a church which has withstood the most fiery persecutions; a church from which the candlestick has never been wholly removed.

That pastor is thought by many, especially by archbishop Usher, to have been that distinguished disciple of St. John, and eminent minister and martyr of Jesus, Polycarp. But whether he was pastor of the church at Smyrna at the time this letter was written or not, he was faithful to the cause of Christ unto death, and has doubtless received a crown of life. And the promise of the Saviour to his ambassadors at times of persecution, and all others, is ever good—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Could a more appropriate text have been selected for a discourse to be delivered with the remains of my beloved brother, and your excellent senior pastor, before me?

The Greek word here translated faithful, (*pistos*,) signifies, worthy of credit. A faithful man then is one in whom confidence may be safely reposed. He is pure in his purposes, firm in his belief, true to his word, and constant and persevering in the performance of his duty.

Faithfulness is ascribed to God in the scriptures, as one of his chief excellencies. And he is perfectly and unchangeably faithful. He is styled by Moses the faithful God, who keepeth covenant forever. The psalmist addressed him in these words, "Thy faithfulness is to all generations."

Jesus Christ is called a faithful and true witness, because the most entire confidence may be reposed in his testimony. He is the Amen, the faithful and true witness.

Righteousness is the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. Faithfulness is a rare property with men. Accordingly inspiration asks, "A faithful man who can find?" Though many, though most men wish to be thought upright, real integrity and faithfulness are seldom to be found. The Bible gives us some instances of faithfulness worthy of perpetual remembrance and imitation, as in Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Zechariah, Paul, Timothy, and others.

Faithfulness is as excellent, as it is rare. It is invaluable wherever it is found, whether in the more humble or the more elevated walks of life. Let a man pursue whatever vocation he may, it is a great honor to be found faithful.

In no employment, pursued by man, is faithfulness more essential than in that of a Christian minister. Paul, when speaking on this subject, says, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and the stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required of stewards, that a man be found faithful."

Faithfulness in a gospel minister is absolutely indispensable. Without it the gift of tongues and the noblest speech that angels use would be of little worth. And great is its reward in heaven. So the Lord Jesus Christ testifies:—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Let me then, with my deceased brother continually in mind, call your attention to the character and reward of a faithful minister. And

1. *To his character.*

Faithfulness in a Christian minister implies purity of intention. It is the sincere purpose of a faithful minister to do his Lord's will in the service of souls for which he died. As to his intentions, he is honest in the sacred cause. He seeks mainly, not his own honor or profit, but the honor of Christ and the salvation of men.

Faithfulness in a Christian minister implies integrity of heart. It includes entireness of devotion to his holy calling. His whole soul is in his work. His heart, like that of Abraham, is faithful before God. At heart he is sound in God's statutes. He speaks from experimental knowledge and love of the truth. Having, like Paul, received not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, and, knowing the things which are freely given of God, he declares them in their simplicity and purity.

Faithfulness in a Christian minister implies diligence in his appropriate work. That work is arduous. It is enough to fill an angel's heart. It filled the Saviour's hands. And it is sufficient to engross both the time and the talents of those who minister in his name. Viewing it in this light, a faithful minister devotes his time and talents to the service of his Lord and Master and to the interests of his kingdom. Not only in purpose, but in fact, he gives himself wholly to his work. He regards the solemn charge by Paul to Timothy, as given to himself, and acts under its impression:—"I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing and kingdom, preach the word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." If

his hands, like Paul's, sometimes minister to his necessities, he suffers not that ministration to turn his heart aside from the great object of his profession.

Faithfulness in a minister implies impartiality. A faithful pastor is careful to give every one of his flock his portion in due season. In administering reproof, he does not spare men who move in the higher walks of life, while he severely lashes those in the lower walks; but does equal justice to both. He rebukes, as well as instructs, without respect to persons, showing that he feels the weight of Paul's charge to Timothy: "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality."

Faithfulness implies perseverance in duty. A faithful minister adheres to the belief of the truth and to the practice of duty unto the end. Be thou faithful *unto death*, is the injunction of the text. And this injunction to the letter was followed by the pastor of the church in Smyrna, the celebrated Polycarp. No terrors, no persecutions, no sufferings could shake his confidence in Christ, nor induce him to betray his attachment to his cause. He adhered firmly to Christianity till his last moment, and gave himself up a victim to the flames of persecution. When brought before a tribunal to answer for the crime of being a Christian, and called upon to reproach Christ and live, he replied, "eighty and six years have I served him, and he has never wronged me; and how can I blaspheme my King, who has saved me. Hear me frankly confess what I am—I am a Christian." "I have wild beasts," said the proconsul, that examined him, "I will expose you to them, unless you repent." "Call them," replied the martyr, "our minds are not to be turned from the better to the worse." "I will tame your spirit with

fire," said the other, "since you despise the wild beast's, unless you repent." "You threaten me with fire which burns for a moment," said Polycarp; "but you are ignorant of the future judgment and the fire of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. But why do you delay?" Such were his courage and joy on the occasion, that the proconsul was embarrassed; he sent a herald however into the assembly to proclaim, Polycarp has professed himself a Christian. On this the multitude of Jews and Gentiles, who dwelt at Smyrna with insatiable rage shouted aloud, "This is the Doctor of Asia, the father of Christians, the subverter of our gods." They unanimously demanded that he should be burnt alive. When bound to the stake, he offered a prayer, of which this was a part—"O Father, I bless thee, that thou hast counted me worthy of this day and this hour, to receive my portion in the number of martyrs, in the cup of Christ for the resurrection to eternal life, both of soul and body, among whom may I be raised before thee this day, as a sacrifice well savored and acceptable." Thus Polycarp was faithful unto death. And surely Christian ministers, who live in countries, where such persecution is unknown, must be faithful in their adherence to the belief of Christianity, to the maintenance of its doctrines, and the practice of its precepts, till in the common course of Providence they are called to lay down their commission with their lives.

Faithfulness requires ministers to preach the pure truth of God's word, without substituting for it the traditions or the doctrines of men. The apostolic charge is, Preach the word; and they cannot evade it but at infinite hazard. Every faithful minister meets it at choice. He preaches the truth, the whole truth. He shuns not to declare the whole counsel of God. No private nor selfish

motives, no desires of pleasing men or of securing their favor induce him to keep back or partially conceal any of that message from God, which he has it in charge to deliver. He is not like many Christian ministers, so called, who corrupt the word of God ; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, he speaks the truth in Christ.

He preaches the truth plainly, solemnly, affectionately, and appropriately, giving to every one his portion in due season. Pure gospel truth must be preached plainly by him, who would faithfully serve his divine Master, and souls for which he died ; and that, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear. Suppose a pastor knows that certain gospel doctrines and precepts are contrary to the belief and practice of many of his hearers, including some of the most influential of them ; what shall he do ? Shall he keep back those doctrines and precepts from fear of giving offence and of losing his station and support ? No, as an honest and faithful man, he cannot do this. He must commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God, by clearly teaching those doctrines and earnestly inculcating those precepts.

Ministers of the gospel are under the strongest obligations to be faithful in the dispensation of the truth. Love to souls, whose eternal salvation is intimately connected with a full disclosure of the truth, requires it. Their commission under the heaviest penalty demands it. A Christian minister is appointed as a watchman. And his duty is to warn the wicked from God. A part of his commission is, When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die, and thou givest him not warning, that same man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand. Love to the Redeemer, the salvation of men, and the solemn charge under which he lies should induce every Christian minister to be faithful in the dispensation of the truth, and in every part of ministerial duty.

So should the final reward of fidelity. But

2. *What is that reward?*

"Be thou faithful unto death, and I *will give thee a crown of life.*" A crown of life, given by the Son of God, is the reward promised to the faithful pastor. "A crown," literally speaking, "is a cap of state, worn on the head of princes, to denote their royal dignity." In the sacred scriptures frequent mention is made of crowns. They were much used by the Hebrews. The high priest wore a crown, bearing on the forepart of it a plate of gold with the inscription, "HOLINESS TO THE LORD." Crowns were bestowed on kings and princes as marks of their royal dignity. The elders, in Rev. iv., 10, are said to cast their crowns before the throne. While the four living creatures give glory, and honor, and thanks to him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him, and worship him, casting their crowns before the throne, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." These crowns, representing as they did their own dignity and honor, they cast before the throne, as an expression of their sense of the infinitely higher dignity and glory of him, who sat upon it. In a figurative sense a crown in the sacred scriptures often signifies distinguished honor. Paul regarded the Christians of Philippi, not only as very dear to him, but also as his joy and crown; his crown, as by their conversion and eminent holiness through his instrumentality, they would reflect great honor upon him on the day of judgment, and procure him a rich reward. In the same light he regarded the Christians of Thessalonica; what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye

are our glory and joy. As the Judges crowned the victors in the ancient games, each with his appropriate crown, amid the vast multitude of spectators, so our righteous Judge will crown the apostle on the day of retribution in the presence of the assembled universe. And by a beautiful figure his converts are here styled his crown of rejoicing and glorying.

The term crown is used for reward, because conquerors in the Grecian games were literally crowned. Their crown was a corruptible one. It was a garland of flowers, which would soon wither and decay. But the crown of the Christian conqueror is incorruptible. The crown, which Christ will put on the heads of his faithful servants, will outshine the fixed stars and yon permanent sun. The reward of his fidelity in the souls, converted through his instrumentality, will continue forever. In my text the word crown is used figuratively for honor, dignity and glory. I will give thee a *crown of life*. "I will advance thee to such glory and felicity, as will be infinitely more than an equivalent for the utmost thou canst suffer in my cause."

Thus ministerial fidelity will be rewarded most honorably in the life to come. Thus Paul expected a crown of righteousness as the reward of his fidelity in running the Christian race, and in fighting the fight of faith. For he said to Timothy, his own son in the faith, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me in that day." Animated by the assurance of such a crown, he rose above persecutions and trials, to which he was called, severe and bitter as they were. His appeal to the elders of Ephesus, Acts xx., respecting his trials in that place, and his fidelity under them, and the bonds and afflictions, which still awaited him, and his

final reward, and his prayer for them were very impressive and pathetic. No wonder they were so greatly moved. Who, that has a particle of sensibility in his heart, even at this distant period of time, can listen to his words without deep emotion ?

On that tender occasion it afforded Paul unspeakable satisfaction to reflect, that he had faithfully preached the gospel and performed his other ministerial duties at Ephesus. This was to him, even then, a precious reward. At the same time he looked forward to the future world for the full reward of his fidelity in the commendation of his Master ; "well done, good and faithful servant," and in his converts at Ephesus, who would be the crown of his everlasting joy.

Distinguished honor and blessedness are promised to faithful ministers in heaven under the figure of a crown ; a crown of righteousness by Paul, a crown of life by James, and a crown of glory by Peter. And Christ himself says to the pastor of the church of Philadelphia, "Behold I come quickly ; hold fast what thou hast, that no man may take thy crown."

Great and precious promises are made to the pastors of the seven Asiatic churches on condition of their fidelity to the cause of their divine Master, their victory over sin, and their perseverance in true holiness, notwithstanding every obstacle. And these promises are the portion of all faithful pastors at every period of the church ; of every faithful pastor of our day.

Is it indeed so ? Will every pastor, who overcomes sin, and is faithful to God and to souls, be saved from the second death, from everlasting destruction ? Will he partake of the hidden manna, and of the fruit of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God ? Will he experience the most pure, substantial and satisfactory en-

joyment forever in heaven ; a happiness, known only by experience, a happiness, with which strangers to religion do not intermeddle ? Will he receive from the Saviour a white stone, with a new name inscribed upon it ? Will he be perfectly acquitted on the day of judgment, and publicly acknowledged, as a child of God and an heir of glory ? Will he share Christ's victories over his enemies, and bear part with him in judging wicked men and wicked angels ? Will Christ give him the morning star ? Will he give him that light and consolation here, which constitute the dawn of heavenly glory, and which will be lost only in the transcendent effulgence of that glory ? Will he appear in garments white and clean and be acknowledged by Christ, as his friend, before his Father, and before the angels ? Will he become an immovable pillar in the temple of his God, bearing, as its inscription, the name of God, the name of the city of God, the New Jerusalem, and the name of the Redeemer, to show whose he is, to what city he belongs, and by whom he was redeemed ? Will he sit with Christ on his throne, and share in his power, authority and glory ? Are such the honors and privileges of Christ's faithful ambassadors ? What are motives to fidelity, as stewards of the mysteries of Christ, if these are not ? What could heaven unfold, or God offer, which would furnish more powerful appeals to our hope, or be more animating excitements to diligence, faithfulness and perseverance, than is expressed in these promises ? What difficulties should discourage us, what temptation divert us, what enemies alarm us, when the God of glory is presenting before us such powerful motives to fidelity and perseverance in our Master's service ?

The glory of wise, faithful and successful ministers is thus described by the prophet Daniel : " They, that be wise, shall shine, as the brightness of the firmament, and they, that turn many to righteousness, as the stars forever

and ever." What a beautiful and splendid view is here given of the future glory of God's faithful servants! The brightness of the evening firmament! How glorious to behold! The lustre of its stars! How radiant! With such brightness, with such radiance will God's wise and faithful servants shine in the third heavens! Our Saviour uses a still stronger and brighter figure; that of the sun, shining in his full strength. Having graphically described the final separation of the righteous and the wicked, he says, "Then shall the righteous shine forth, as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." Though all the saints will be glorious in their Father's kingdom; some will excel others in glory there. "In my Father's house," says our Saviour, "are many mansions." Are not some of those mansions brighter than others? "And," says a holy apostle, "there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory." So also is the resurrection of the dead. As one star in the firmament is brighter than another, and as the sun is brighter than the moon and stars, so one saint in heaven is more glorious than another. While all the righteous shine brightly above, wise and faithful ministers, who have turned many to righteousness, will shine with pre-eminent brightness. And all who are converted and saved through their instrumentality will be so many stars in their crown of glory and joy.

Blessed, then, unspeakably blessed, are those faithful ministers of Christ, who have closed their labors on earth, and entered on their reward. They are blessed, because their labors, and trials, and sufferings, and conflicts with sin are ended, and they have entered on a career of glory, and immortality in heaven. Whether their talents were two, or five, or ten, they have gone each to receive the benediction of his divine Master, "Well done, good and

faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Having been wise for themselves here, and imparted lessons of wisdom to others; having faithfully served their divine Master and souls for which he died, they are now distinguished with peculiar honor and blessedness in his heavenly kingdom. Having instrumentally turned many to righteousness, or imparted instruction which will issue in that result, they will shine as the brightness of the firmament and as stars of magnitude forever and ever. If blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord, as they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them, emphatically blessed are those ministers of Christ, who rest from their labors of love in the pastoral office, here, and enter on higher and holier services in company with those who had previously been brought home to glory, as the reward of their faithfulness. Does Jesus Christ see of the travail of his soul to his satisfaction and joy in the multitudes redeemed unto God by his blood of every nation, kindred and language? Every faithful servant of his sees of the fruit of his labors, and in a sense of the travail of *his* soul to his comfort and joy in the number of those brought into Christ's family, and ultimately into his heavenly kingdom, through the instrumentality of his labors, instruction and prayers. Blessed, unspeakably blessed, are those dear brethren, who were our fellow laborers in the pastoral office, and who were faithful unto death, each of whom has received a crown of life.

Blessed especially is our dear brother and your beloved pastor, who has now finished his course, and received his crown. Has it seemed to any of you, that I have kept him too much out of sight in my remarks on ministerial fidelity? So far from this, I have had him constantly in view in all I have said on the character and the reward of a faithful

minister. Brother Braman was truly and emphatically a faithful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. I have never known a more faithful pastor; and I knew him well. I heard him preach in my native town (Bradford) a sabbath or two before his ordination; and his sermons of that day on the texts, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his," and "Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation," have ever since been in my mind. I was present at his ordination. I have been intimately conversant with him most of the time from the commencement of his ministry in this place to Wednesday of the past week, when by his bedside I held a short conversation with him on his being near the river Jordan, and about to pass into the promised land. In going from the place of my nativity to that of my ministry and in returning and in going about the county for more than fifty years, I seldom, if ever, passed his house, whether on yonder hill or near this sanctuary, without calling to show him my respects, and to enjoy a pleasant and friendly interview with him. And to see him at my own house was equally pleasant; "father Braman" was the delight of my family. We were brothers in the same ministerial Association more than fifty years, and most of that time we frequently exchanged pulpit services. He took part in the performances of my ordination; and now every voice, that was heard in those performances, is silent in death. His sincere, long-trying and constant friendship was to me exceedingly precious. His trials were numerous and great. But he was admirably fitted by nature and grace to endure them. In his own words, he "waded through a sea of trouble." The water came into his soul. The floods overflowed him. But they could not drown him; for God was with him, and saved him by the strength of his right hand. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses;

but he remembered the name of the Lord our God, and put his trust in him.

Mr. Braman was the minister for his time in this place. Considering the divisions, which had long prevailed among the people, the fact that they had employed sixtythree candidates since the death of the Rev. Mr. Chandler, six years and a half, and the theological controversy of long continuance, Mr. Braman was the man, as evidently designed and adapted by Providence to meet the wants of the society, as was General Washington to meet the wants of his country at the time when he was called into public life.

While at college, and during his subsequent life, he was distinguished by originality of thought, thoroughness of scholarship, and keenness and pertinency of wit.

He possessed and manifested the best characteristics of a faithful pastor. Purity of purpose, integrity of heart, diligence in his work and entire devotion to it, impartiality and perseverance, and consistency of life and conversation marked his whole course. He preached the pure truths of the gospel; and he preached them plainly, solemnly, affectionately and appropriately. Though he was a very modest man, and even diffident; he was bold in declaring to all men the whole counsel of God, whether they would hear, or whether they would forbear. In administering reproof he spared no man on account of his prominence, his wealth, or influence. Both in his sermons and in his prayers he made free use of the pure language of scripture. His sermons were truly evangelical; for they were full of the gospel. They were rich in Christian sentiment, clothed in appropriate language.

In the former part of his ministry he spoke with great rapidity; but he pronounced every word so distinctly, that he was well heard. I have often said, and say it very

deliberately on this occasion, that I never heard a preacher utter more important truth in a given period, and utter it so as to be heard and understood by a whole assembly, than Mr. Braman. It has been objected to the delivery of his sermons, that he was too much confined to his notes. But he had a better excuse for this than many preachers of written sermons. Each sermon, as written, was complete. All of it was so pertinent and important, that the omission of a single word in the delivery, or the misplacing of it would have been a material loss to his whole audience. He did well therefore in confining his eyes to his notes. In which respect he resembled that celebrated and most excellent divine, Rev. Thomas Prince, who closed his ministry and his life in Boston, Oct. 22, 1758, of whose delivery of his sermons it is said, that he "rarely allowed his eye to wander from the written page," and yet what he read often "went to the hearts of his hearers with overwhelming power."

The life of Mr. Braman corresponded with his preaching, and was its most happy illustration. By a holy life and conversation he showed that he was honest in his sacred calling. So exemplary was he in his deportment, so cheerful, wise and discreet, as well as instructive, in his conversation, that those who were opposed to his settlement, and those, who differed from him in sentiment, could find no just pretence for saying any evil thing of him. During the sixtyone years of his residence here he commanded the respect of all. In his last sickness he was calm and resigned to the will of God, patient under suffering, and grateful for the kindness of his people toward him and his family. Notwithstanding the opposition he met with from various quarters, the society was greatly increased under him; the meeting house was thrice enlarged to accommodate them; the sabbath school was one of the

most flourishing in the county; and about a hundred persons were converted in one revival.

Our brother, having been faithful unto death, has gone to receive a crown of life; a crown of immortal glory in heaven. Having been wise, as well as faithful; having instrumentally turned many to righteousness, he now shines as the brightness of the firmament, and will shine as a brilliant star forever and ever.

His hoary head was to him a crown of glory, while here,

“ But now he wears a starry crown,
And triumphs in almighty grace,
While all the armies of the sky
Join in their glorious Leader’s praise.”

From that bright and glorious world, to which he has ascended, he now speaks, and speaks to you, his people. Yes, though dead, he yet speaketh. He speaks to you by those discourses which he addressed to you from the sacred desk, while he was with you, and by that instruction which he imparted to you, in his conversation, as he went from house to house, testifying, with the faithfulness of Paul, repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. He speaks to you by that clearly Christian spirit and example, which he habitually manifested to you. What he said to you, while here, he seems to repeat to you to day, giving to it the sanction and the force of heaven and immortality. Let it enter your ears. Let it find a lodgement in your hearts. Follow his instructions. Follow him to glory. Let me be silent in regard to you; and let his living, his dying, and his heavenly counsels enter into your souls, and produce the appropriate results.

Brother Braman was interesting and happy in his social relations. As a husband and a father, he was kind and tender and greatly endeared. 'Twas pleasant, even to delight, to see him with his beloved family. Yes—

"'Twas pleasant, as the morning dews,
That fall on Zion's hill,
Where God his mildest glory shews,
And makes his grace distil."

And he was very happy in his family relations. His former wife was a rich blessing. She was as a fruitful vine at the sides of his house. She was as well adapted to him, as he was to his society. How could he with his incompetent salary have supported and educated his family, and made his house the scene of liberal and appropriate ministerial hospitality, had she not been industrious and frugal, and ready for every good work? And how could he have been made so comfortable and happy, as he was in the days of infirmity and sickness, had not her successor, with his widowed daughter, ministered to him with great fidelity and affection? Never was a minister of Christ, who almost reached his fourscore years and ten, more kindly cared for, and more grateful for that care, than this, our venerable friend and brother. Had I before my mind no other evidence of the wisdom and benignity of Divine Providence, than what is presented in the adaptation of his partners to him, as to himself, his office, and his circumstances in life, I should have entire confidence in that wisdom and benignity. He was equally happy in the children who survive him, all of whom happily show forth the excellence of their parentage.

To his surviving widow, children and grandchildren let me say, I know not whether you have more cause to mourn on account of your loss, or to rejoice on account of his gain. Your loss is great. Who could have been called to part with a more valuable or more endeared relative and friend? But his gain is infinite. His joy rises to an immeasurable height in the kingdom of glory. In proportion as you loved him, you should rejoice in his joy, agree-

ably to the sentiment conveyed by our Saviour when he said to his disciples, "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go to the Father." Lift up your eyes, and behold him in his glorified state. Hear him saying unto you, "Finish your course wisely and well, and come up hither." Follow him as he followed Christ, and you will shortly be with him, and participate in his glory.

My brethren in the ministry, especially you my young brother who for several years was associated with him in the pastoral office, and who loved him, as a son the father in whom he delighted; and you, my brother, who sustain in his place the pastoral relation to this church and people, and who are now called to take up the mantle of the ascended Elijah, and you, beloved brethren of the Association, of which for more than sixty years he was a member, many of whom visited him at his sick bed a few days since, highly to his satisfaction; you will speak with him here no more. While you cherish a very respectful and affectionate remembrance of him, carefully imitate him in his fidelity to Christ and to souls. All ye ministers of Christ who have come together to pay the last honors to our deceased brother, and those whom the severe storm of this day has prevented from being present, hear the voice which comes to each of you from his lips, as well as from those of our great Teacher, "Be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt receive a crown of life."

And now, on this the last day of the year, taken in connexion with the solemn occasion which has called us together, what shall I say, in a very few words, and in conclusion, to the assembly at large? What our deceased friend in the close of his semi-centennial discourse said to the multitude, then assembled,—“Respected friends, our next meeting will be at the judgment seat of Christ. Farewell till then. Be it our concern to prepare for that all

important event, that we may give up our account with joy, and enter into the joy of our Lord."

The following Hymn, by Montgomery, is very appropriate.

" Servant of God, well-done,
Rest from thy loved employ ;
The battle fought, the victory won,
Enter thy Master's joy."

The voice at midnight came,
He started up to hear ;
A mortal arrow pierced his frame,
He fell, but felt no fear.

Tranquil amidst alarms,
It found him on the field,
A veteran slumbering on his arms,
Beneath his red-cross shield.

The pains of death are past,
Labor and sorrow cease,
And life's long warfare closed at last,
His soul is found in peace.

Soldier of Christ, well-done ;
Praise be thy new employ ;
And while eternal ages run,
Rest in thy Saviour's joy.

MEMOIR.

Rev. ISAAC BRAMAN was the youngest of eleven children, whose parents were Sylvanus and Experience (Blanchard) Braman, of Norton, Bristol Co. Mass., where he was born July 5, 1770. It was said of him by one who knew him well in childhood, that his disposition was amiable, and in his deportment unexceptionable from his earliest years. At the age of twelve he lost his father. He remained under the care of his mother, who was a woman of consistent piety, until her second marriage, when he was still quite a youth. He then left the house of his birth and resided with his guardian, where he was employed in diligent labor, and enjoyed religious advantages. He cherished an early and strong desire for a Collegiate education, but meeting with decided discouragement from his guardian, he was withheld from entering upon the requisite preparations until the close of his 18th year, when he resolutely overcame all obstacles, and applied himself to the necessary studies, under the direction of Dr. Samuel Morey, of Norton, and Mr. Stephen Palmer, afterwards Minister in Needham. He entered Harvard University in 1790, and graduated in regular course, with an honorable reputation for diligence and scholarship. At the close of his Academical career, he made choice of the Ministerial profession, and for the purpose of fitting himself for its duties, there being then no Theological Institutions, he placed himself successively under the tuition of Rev. Dr. West, of New Bedford, Rev. Jason Haven, of Dedham, and Rev. Pitt Clark, of Norton. After a term of study, quite short compared with the usual course at the present time, he commenced preaching as a candidate for settlement, in East Medway, Mass. At the close of the year 1795, he was invited to become pastor of the church in that place; but as there was a strenuous opposition to the call by a portion of the people, arising from disaffection with his theological sentiments, he declined the proposal, and withdrew, having occupied the pulpit for six or seven months. He preached for the first time in Georgetown, then called New Rowley, Nov. 8, 1796. He received an invitation to take charge of the Congregational Society, Jan. 26, 1797, to which he gave an affirmative answer, after a deliberation of some weeks. The people were divided in opinion on the points in agitation between Hopkinsians and Calvinists, and there was a great warmth of feeling in both parties to the controversy. There was a considerable minority to whom the doctrinal views of the candidate were unacceptable, who did not unite in the call, and made great efforts to defeat his ordination, so that the public services on the day designated for this occasion, June 7th, 1797, were deferred many hours beyond the appointed time, and were performed in the evening. The fact that Mr. B. was the 64th candidate employed after the retirement and death of Rev. James Chandler, his predecessor, is an evidence of the ardor and tenacity with which the conflicting opinions were maintained among the people. Their divisions rendered the position of the young pastor, one of no small em-

barrassment, and required a good share of discretion and forbearance, for a successful prosecution of his ministry. He was however enabled to cope with the difficulties with which he was surrounded until the controversy subsided. Other forms of trial succeeded, which called into requisition his peculiar qualities of character, as long as he continued his pulpit labors. After a service in the pastoral office of more than forty-five years, and he had reached the age of 72, the Rev. Enoch Pond, Jr., son of Rev. Enoch Pond, D. D., Bangor, Maine, was associated with him as colleague, Dec. 5, 1842. Mr. Pond's health failed ere long, and he died at Bucksport, Me., Dec. 17, 1846, about four years from his ordination. He was succeeded by Rev. John M. Prince, who was inducted into office on the third day of Feb. 1847. In consequence of declining health he resigned his pastoral charge in 1857.* Rev. Chas. Beecher followed, who was installed Nov. 18th, of the same year. After Mr. Braman quitted the active labors of his profession, he passed a tranquil and cheerful life in the seclusion of his family, and the enjoyment of the regard and attentions of a kind people, until the period of his death. He was seized with a typhoid fever on the 10th of September, 1858, the effects of which, with the infirmities of an advanced age, brought him to his end the 26th of Dec. following.

His funeral took place on Friday, Dec. 31st. The weather was extremely unfavorable, and prevented in a degree the anticipated attendance of clergymen and other friends in the County of Essex and elsewhere. The number present, however, was quite large. At half-past 10, A. M., the relatives and a few particular friends having assembled at the house of the deceased, prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Parker, of Haverhill, and the remains were then conveyed to the church, so long the scene of the ministrations of the departed.

As the body was borne into the church, the organ in its softest and most plaintive breathings gave expression to the sadness pervading the assembly. The church was draped with the emblems of mourning. The galleries were festooned with white and black drapery, which was also disposed in an arch over the pulpit. A chair near the latter, which had been frequently occupied by the venerable pastor, since his failing strength had prevented him from ascending the steps, was also draped with signs of mourning.

On the coffin was a plate with this inscription—

REV. ISAAC BRAMAN,
Died Dec. 26, 1858,
Aged 88 years.

Attached to the plate was a paper, upon which was written—

“Remember that you have a soul to be saved or lost.”

These words were spoken by Mr. Braman on the evening before his death, and were about the last he uttered.

The services commenced with a chant and chorus:—

“Sweet is the scene when Christians die.”

*Mr. Prince was subsequently settled at Bridgewater, Mass., Feb. 23, 1859, and died at that place Nov. 16, 1859.

Prayer was then offered, and the 90th Psalm read by Rev. Chas. Beecher, of Georgetown, the present pastor, and the Choir sang :—

“I heard a great voice from Heaven.”

Rev. J. M. Prince, former Colleague of the deceased, then offered prayer, after which was sung that beautiful hymn :—

“Why do we mourn departed friends?”

A discourse was then preached by the Rev. David T. Kimball, of Ipswich, an old and intimate acquaintance of Mr. Braman, after which Rev. Mr. Spalding, of Newburyport, offered the closing prayer, and the Choir sang :—

“Unveil thy bosom faithful tomb.”

The benediction was then pronounced by Rev. Mr. Kimball, and the congregation proceeded to look for the last time upon the face of their pastor and friend.

The remains were then conveyed to the Union Cemetery, the six oldest clergymen present acting as pall-bearers, the other clergymen preceding them. The relatives followed ; after them the members of the Church and Society, and others. The ceremonies at the Church and grave were conducted with taste and dignity by Richard Tenney, Esq., a member of the church, and a long tried and faithful friend of the deceased.

The people in Georgetown are entitled to the warmest thanks of the friends of Mr. Braman for their kind, provident and unwearied attentions to him during his illness, and by their labors of love in behalf of the surviving members of his household. They defrayed the entire expenses of the funeral, and contributed money for the purchase of mourning apparel.

Resolutions bearing testimony to the virtues of the deceased, and expressing the sorrow, sympathy and kindly feelings of the Church, were conveyed to the family of Mr. Braman.

It may not be uninteresting to state that this church, sanctified by so many memories of Mr. Braman, was erected in 1769. It has been thrice enlarged, and otherwise improved. The dedication sermon was preached by Whitefield, before the house was quite completed.

Mr. Braman married Aug. 31st, 1797, Hannah Palmer, (born June 12, 1773,) youngest daughter of Rev. Joseph Palmer, of Norton. She died Aug. 14, 1835. They had five children, viz :—1. Harriet, born July 17, 1798, married August 9th, 1821, Rev. John Boardman, minister in West Boylston, Mass., and afterwards East Douglass, Mass., at which latter place he died Nov. 8, 1841 ; 2. Milton Palmer, born Aug. 6, 1799, now minister of the First Church in Danvers, Ms. ; 3. James Chandler, born September 29, 1801, died at sea (on his passage from Calcutta for Salem, seventyfive days out) December 5, 1820 ; 4. Adeline, born July 10, 1805, died September 10, 1830 ; 5. Isaac Gordon, born March 12, 1813, is a physician in Brighton, Mass. Mr. Braman married for his second wife, March 22, 1837, Sarah Balch, daughter of John Balch, Esq., of Newburyport. She survives him.