

**IN MEMORIAM: REVEREND JOHN
HEALEY HEYWOOD, MINISTER
TO THE CHURCH OF THE MESSIAH
OF LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY;
1840 TO 1880**

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In Memoriam: Reverend John Healey Heywood, Minister to the Church of the Messiah of
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VARIOUS

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MINISTER TO THE
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LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF THE
REVEREND JOHN HEALEY HEYWOOD

COMPILED BY REVEREND FRED V. HAWLEY,
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY.

The Reverend John Healey Heywood was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, March 30, 1818. His parents were Levi and Nancy Heywood. His father was a prominent and successful lawyer, but a man of frail health, and died before his son reached manhood. His letters to his son show him to have been a man of sterling character and refined tastes. In one of these letters he says: "My dear boy, I want you should be altogether a high-minded and honorable youth, and to be such, you must on all occasions speak the truth." In another letter to his son John, he says: "Nothing could give me greater pleasure than the account I read of your progress in learning. . . . Your mother informs me that you have been so punctual in your attendance that you have not gotten a mark for absence, and that in all other respects you have merited commendation. This, my dear son, is as it should be. Go on in the straightforward path of industry, truth, and virtue, and

you will have the applause of men, and, what is of much more consequence, you will have the approbation of your own conscience." Mr. Heywood was equally blessed in the character of his mother, who was a woman of excellent qualities and a sensitive, spiritual nature. Rev. R. C. Watterson, in a biographical sketch of Mrs. Heywood in the *Christian Register* for June 27, 1868, says of her: "She had always lived for the good of others, asking no greater privilege than to serve those who were dear to her, and knowing no human being so needy or so humble whom she would not gladly befriend and make any sacrifice or exertion to benefit. . . . Her entire life was one of benevolence and love." Mr. Heywood had one brother, Benjamin S., who became a valued partner in the well-known publishing house of Little, Brown & Co., Boston, Mass. This brother died in early manhood.

Mr. Heywood was prepared for college at the Worcester Academy, and in the year 1832 he entered Harvard College, graduating with honors in the Class of 1836. He then taught Latin in a private school in Boston for a year. In 1837 he entered the Harvard Divinity School, from which he graduated in 1840. About this time the Rev. James Freeman Clarke had resigned the pastorate of the Church of the Messiah, Louisville, Ky. Mr. Heywood was invited by the trustees to temporarily supply the pulpit of the church, as they had not

given up the hope of persuading Rev. James F. Clarke to return to his old field. These circumstances made the new work a trying one for Mr. Heywood. He was then but twenty-three years old, and had had no experience in his chosen profession. The following extract from a letter written by him to Rev. James Freeman Clarke, December 23, 1840, will indicate the real situation :

When I came to Louisville I had no intention of remaining for more than two or three months, and when the Society voted to ask you to return I felt strong hopes that you would, as I could then go back to New England feeling I had done all I purposed to do and fulfilled my engagement with the trustees. I am now staying without any definite plan as to length of time. I do not wish to leave the Society until some one shall be obtained who may be induced to supply permanently. On this account, if it is desired, I shall probably continue here for some months longer. I can not remain permanently here or elsewhere in the West. I have at home a mother, an aunt, and young brother for whom I feel myself bound to provide at no distant time a home, and as their affections are centered in New England, I don't feel it right to call upon them to make the sacrifice that a removal to the West would render necessary. I feel the more decided upon this point because my mother has always exerted herself greatly on my behalf, meeting cheerfully many and long-continued privations, and once already, she has left friends, home, and all her dearest associations to provide for my father's comfort. I can not, therefore, call upon her again to make another sacrifice, which, in her advanced years, must be greater than the previous ones. I have become much attached to the Society here and have never received more kindness from any than from some of our friends here. It has

been no small gratification to hear your name mentioned with so much affection. I have resumed the conversation meetings, having had two, and I have lately commenced a course of sermons which I give Sunday evenings. I began this course partly for the purpose of getting more persons out and partly to answer the questions that are frequently asked as to the belief of Unitarians, which questions have been more frequently put of late in consequence of a series of articles in the *Baptist Banner*, whose object is to prove Unitarianism to be infidelity.

Enough has been quoted to indicate the difficulties under which Mr. Heywood labored during the early years of his pastorate in Kentucky. When it was found that Dr. Clarke could not return to Louisville a unanimous call was extended to Mr. Heywood to become the minister of the Church of the Messiah. The church in Louisville being separated so far from other churches of the Unitarian faith, it was found more convenient to hold the ordination service in New England. So on July 19, 1841, in the church of his boyhood, Rev. John H. Heywood was ordained to the Unitarian ministry. Rev. Edward S. Frothingham, Rev. Dr. Hill, of Worcester, Rev. Dr. Ware, of Cambridge, Rev. Mr. Waterson, of Boston, Rev. Mr. Allen, of Northampton, and Rev. Mr. Sargent took part in the service.

On August 16, 1848, Mr. Heywood was married to Miss Sarah E. Burrill, of Providence, R. I., who died October 25, 1849. They made their home next door to the first church building, on Walnut Street. Here