

**A DISCOURSE, DELIVERED AT
FRANCESTOWN, N. H. ON THE LAST SABBATH
IN JULY, 1838, IN COMMEMORATION OF
THE CHARACTER AND USEFULNESS OF REV.
MOSES BRADFORD, FIRST PASTOR OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN THAT PLACE**

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A discourse, delivered at Francestown, N. H. on the last Sabbath in July, 1838, in commemoration of the character and usefulness of Rev. Moses Bradford, first pastor of the Congregational church in that place by Ephraim P. Bradford

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EPHRAIM P. BRADFORD

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DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT FRANCETOWN, N. H.

ON THE LAST SABBATH IN JULY,

1838,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

THE CHARACTER AND USEFULNESS

OF

REV. MOSES BRADFORD,

FIRST PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN THAT PLACE;

WHO DIED AT MONTAGUE, Mass.,

ON THE FOURTEENTH DAY OF JUNE,

1838.

BY
EPHRAIM P. BRADFORD,

Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in New-Boston, N. H.

Concord:

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FRANCESTOWN, August 2d, 1838.

REV. E. P. BRADFORD :

Dear Sir :

In compliance with a resolution of the church in this place, we tender to you their thanks for your very interesting discourse, delivered here on the last Sabbath, commemorative of the life and usefulness of their first pastor, the Rev. MOSES BRADFORD ; and, in compliance with the same resolution, we respectfully, in their behalf, request that you will furnish them with a copy of the discourse for publication.

In thus communicating to you the thanks and wishes of the church, we should do injustice to our own feelings, did we not express to you, as we sincerely do, the high gratification we received in listening to your discourse, and our own most earnest desire that you will comply with the request of the church.

Be pleased to accept assurances of our high consideration and esteem.

TITUS BROWN,
THOMAS EATON, } Committee of the Church.
P. H. BIXBY, }

NEW-BOSTON, August 2, 1838.

To the Committee appointed by the Congregational Church in Francetown, to request for publication a copy of the discourse delivered there on the last Sabbath in July ult., in commemoration of the life and usefulness of their first pastor, the Rev. MOSES BRADFORD :

GENTLEMEN,—Your communication, abovementioned, has been duly received. An affectionate and respectful regard for the church in whose behalf you have made this communication ; a grateful recollection of kind and valuable advice, received from the Rev. MOSES BRADFORD ; a sincere desire to be instrumental in preserving the remembrance of a father in our Israel, of eminent talents and piety, and to secure a memorial of the extensive good of which the great Head of the church made him an instrument to the christian community in Francetown, and in other places, have induced me to comply with your request, by submitting a copy of the discourse to the disposal of the church there. For the candor and kindness with which you listened to the discourse, I owe you the expression of my thanks.

I am, very respectfully, your friend, &c.

E. P. BRADFORD.

DISCOURSE.

II. CHRONICLES, xxiv. 16.

AND THEY BURIED HIM IN THE CITY OF DAVID, AMONG THE KINGS; BECAUSE HE HAD DONE GOOD IN ISRAEL, BOTH TOWARD GOD, AND TOWARD HIS HOUSE.

THIS is the memorial of a great and good man. The person of whom the sacred writer has recorded this honorable notice, was Jehoida, a high priest of the Jews. He was venerable for his age, having been born in the reign of Solomon, and lived through the reigns of six of the successors of that prince. The comprehensive views, the sound judgment, and long experience of this minister of the sanctuary, fitted him for eminent usefulness in the church of God. He had an ardent desire to be instrumental in promoting the knowledge, the practice, and the blessings of pure religion. The measures he adopted for this purpose were wise and prudent. The latter part of the period in which he lived was exceedingly corrupt. The contaminating superstition of heathenism had gained a strong ascendancy, both in Israel and Judah. The house of God had been broken up by the sons of Athaliah, *that wicked woman*, who employed her usurped authority for the advancement of idolatry. All the dedicated things had been taken from the temple, to enrich and adorn the house of a pagan deity. The remnant of Judah, *who had not bowed the knee to Baal*, were constrained, by the persecuting spirit of idolatry, to exercise their religion in secret places. Jehoida collected them from their dispersions in the land. He encouraged

them, by his exhortations and example, to put their trust in the God of their fathers. He combined them in a judicious enterprise for the suppression of idolatry, and the reëstablishment of the pure worship of God. The task he undertook was peculiarly arduous. *But God was with him.* He had given him favor with the king, on whom he prevailed to take an active part in the reformation of religion. By the divine blessing on the labors of this holy man, the house of Baal was demolished ; his altars and images were broken in pieces. The breaches in the house of Jehovah were repaired ; the altars, that had been thrown down, were rebuilt ; and this holy temple was in a good measure restored to the condition, in which it originally corresponded to *the pattern shewn in the mount.* The public exercises of undefiled religion were here resumed ; and the Lord was again worshipped in the beauty of holiness. A reformation in religion and morals was effected to some extent ; and though its influence seems to have declined at the time of Jehoida's death, he had done much good in Israel. Many had, no doubt, been led to cast their idols to the moles and the bats ; and to return to the Lord their God, from whom they had deeply revolted. Of the excellence of the character, and usefulness of the labors of this servant of the Lord, we have satisfactory evidence in the brief history of his life. But though we had no other proof than the salutary influence of his counsel and example on the conduct of the king, this alone would be an honorable memorial of him ; for it is recorded that *Joash did that which was right in the sight of the Lord all the days of Jehoida the priest.*

This benefactor of the church was beloved and respected, while he lived. He was lamented in death. Those who duly valued his character and usefulness, deemed it their duty and privilege to manifest their affectionate respect for him, after his decease. The manner in which this was

done, is stated in the former clause of the text. *They buried him in the city of David, among the kings.* But he was incomparably more honored by the reason assigned for the respect thus shewn him; which was, *that he had done good in Israel, both towards God and towards his house.*

The commemoration of the lives and actions of those, who have served their own generation by the will of God, is proper and useful. A solicitude in the living to preserve the memorial of such persons, is justified by scripture. *The righteous, says the psalmist, shall be had in everlasting remembrance. The memory of the just is blessed.* The following are the words of our Savior respecting the woman, who had shewn her love to him by anointing his head with precious ointment. *Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also, that she hath done, shall be mentioned as a memorial of her.* The laudable desire of the living to secure from oblivion the lives and usefulness of the wise and virtuous, *who have fallen asleep,* is displayed in a variety of ways. The divine goodness toward them, while living, and toward the individuals, or particular communities, of whose happiness they have been instrumental, is often acknowledged in public exercises of religion, specially appointed for that purpose. Monuments are erected, of the most durable materials, with brief inscriptions of their good deeds. Their remembrance is not unfrequently perpetuated by the impartial pen of the biographer. Among those, who have been blessed by means of their instruction, and example, parents love to tell, and children to hear, of them. By these and other means, God causes their memorial to be preserved and blessed.

The remembrance of the just is often rendered a great blessing to the living. Serious reflection on the death of those, who in their life time did good in Israel, reminds us

of the frailty and uncertainty of our hold on the best created sources of good. It illustrates the solemn and humbling truth, *that all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field.* From this consideration, so powerfully suggested by their decease, we should be led humbly to seek the friendship of Him, who ever liveth to protect and save them that trust in him. We should also be excited, without loss of time, to hear with reverence the solemn admonition—*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might ; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.*

I have endeavored to explain the text, and to shew the general propriety and advantage of preserving the memorial of those who have done good in Israel. I proceed to some remarks on the life and usefulness of the first pastor of this church, and minister of this people. The church, no doubt with the concurrent feelings of the congregation, have deemed it proper publicly to manifest their respect for the memory of this servant of Christ. You have requested me, brethren, to assist you in this interesting service ; and I have been induced to comply with your request, by several reasons, among which are the following : In my childhood, an affectionate intercourse subsisted between your first pastor and my beloved parents. At an early period of my youth, I was favored with his kind and judicious advice, on subjects of great importance. From the time of my settlement in your vicinity, I enjoyed the privilege of an intimate correspondence with him during more than twenty years of his ministry in this place. I have, however, felt some difficulty in preparing a discourse for this occasion ; having been unable to find any written documents respecting his early education and employments. For this reason I must speak of facts, as they occurred to my personal observation, or as

they came to me from those whose integrity and correct judgment are satisfactory evidence of their truth.

The Rev. MOSES BRADFORD was early designated to the gospel ministry.* For this office he possessed qualifications of a high order. The native powers of his mind were strong and active. His ideas were conceived with great energy, and the train in which they were arranged in his mind was remarkably natural and clear. Possessing a large measure of the spirit of enquiry, his attention was powerfully attracted by every subject of importance which presented itself for contemplation. He was particularly pleased with meditation on the scenes of nature. Nor was this exercise devoid of benefit to his religious character. Few persons have probably conceived more exalted thoughts of the *eternal power and godhead* of the Creator, than he did, from *the things which are made*.

The moral government of God, as unfolded in the course of his providence, was to him a subject of profound thought and interest. His personal experience and observation, in connection with extensive reading, had enabled him to accumulate a rich fund of useful knowledge. And from a memory uncommonly capacious, retentive and ready, he could at will select the most suitable matter for proof or illustration. He was in the habit of examining subjects of importance with great care; nor did he give a decided opinion, while he thought he had a prospect of more light, which might enable him to decide more correctly. The care thus exercised in his investigations, contributed much toward the formation of the sound judgment which his intimate and intelligent friends knew him to possess. It was also a prominent means of rendering him a sound and discriminating counsellor in cases of ecclesiastical and other difficulties. For

* See Note A, in the Appendix.