



Rev. WILLARD BRIGHAM died at Winchendon, Mass., March 1, 1874. He was born in Marlboro', Mass. (now Hudson), May 4, 1813. He was the son of Willard and Betsy (Russell) Brigham. In his youth he was inclined to sceptical views of religion.

During his seventeenth year he resolved to test the evidences of Christianity for himself. After a protracted examination, he came to the final conclusion that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Soon after he began this investigation, he was deeply convicted of sin and of the justice of God in his own condemnation. He often said, "No one could study the evidences carefully and not be convinced that the Bible was the infallible Word of God." After his conversion he felt a strong desire to study for the Gospel ministry. Compelled to work his own way, he prepared for college at Phillips Academy, Andover, and was graduated at Williams College in 1838. Ex-Gov. Buss, of Chicago, and Judge Wells and Judge Colt, of this State, were his classmates.

His standing in college was good, and he won the respect of all who knew him as an upright Christian man.

He was graduated at Andover Seminary in 1842. May 24, 1843, he was ordained as pastor over a new church in Wardsboro', Vt., where he remained twelve years, a laborious and successful pastor.

A pastor in Massachusetts, who was a young lad under his ministry, says of him, "His ministry made such an impression upon his people, that they quote Mr. Brigham to this day, as the standard of ministerial character."

After leaving Wardsboro' he was installed as pastor of the church in Ashfield, Mass., where he remained eight years.

Leaving Ashfield, he served, as acting pastor, the churches in Wardell three years, and South Wellfleet two years. He came to Winchendon in the spring of 1869, where he ministered to the First Church two years. His health failing, he was compelled to give up active labor, and gradually wasted under the pressure of incurable disease.

An intimate friend, Rev. A. Stevens, of Westminster, Vt., gives this testimony to his character: "I knew him well as a true friend, a devoted Christian, and able minister. His ability as a minister was known only after intimate acquaintance. As a thinker he had few superiors. There was nothing superficial about him. I give this

testimony after an intimate acquaintance with him as a student and as a minister in a neighboring parish for twelve years."

Mr. Brigham was interested in all matters pertaining to the welfare of the people among whom he dwelt, and made special efforts in behalf of schools and all public improvements. He did not disparage any branch of knowledge, and was well informed in regard to the pursuits of his people; yet his first ambition was to be well read in his own profession.

In the first twenty-six years of his ministry he never lost a Sabbath's preaching through ill health. He was always punctual in his attendance upon the meetings of church conferences and ministerial associations.

Rev. A. Stevens says, "His presence at the association was always regarded as the guarantee of a profitable meeting. His subjects were well thought out, and his thoughts well put, and he was always heard with esteem and profit."

Mr. Brigham was a good specimen of the faithful Gospel minister. A good man, who gave himself "wholly to these things."

He had deep religious convictions and was fearless in giving utterance to them. Taking the Word of God as his point of departure, he was not afraid to declare its plainest truths.

During the last months of his life he said he only regretted that he had not preached the Gospel more faithfully. He loved the Bible, and continued to read it according to a prescribed plan till within two days of his death.

The last winter of his life was spent with a daughter, a teacher of the High School in West Springfield, Mass., where he found many friends, and was favored by constant tokens of kindness and esteem. He returned to his home in Winchendon but two days before his death.

A patient sufferer, a cheerful Christian, he was not afraid of death when the summons came, but sweetly fell asleep in Jesus.

Mr. Brigham was married May 4, 1843, to Miss Maria Davenport, of Boylston, Mass. She died at Ashfield, Mass., Sept. 21, 1857, leaving four children, all now living. He was married again to Miss Laura Cleveland, of Medfield, Mass., Oct. 2, 1860, who survives him.

D. F.