

**A SERMON, ON THE DEATH OF
REV. ALONZO HILL, D.D.,
PREACHED BEFORE THE SECOND
PARISH IN WORCESTER,
FEBRUARY 5TH, 1871**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649278084

A Sermon, on the Death of Rev. Alonzo Hill, D.D., Preached Before the Second Parish in Worcester, February 5th, 1871 by Edward H. Hall & Edward E. Hale

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

EDWARD H. HALL & EDWARD E. HALE

**A SERMON, ON THE DEATH OF
REV. ALONZO HILL, D.D.,
PREACHED BEFORE THE SECOND
PARISH IN WORCESTER,
FEBRUARY 5TH, 1871**

©

A SERMON,

ON THE DEATH OF

REV. ALONZO HILL, D.D..

PREACHED BEFORE THE SECOND PARISH IN WORCESTER,
FEBRUARY 5th, 1871, BY

Henry
REV. EDWARD H. HALL, PASTOR;

TOGETHER WITH THE

ADDRESS OF REV. EDWARD E. HALE,

AT THE

FUNERAL OF DR. HILL,

AND RESOLUTIONS OF RESPECT, PASSED BY THE SECOND PARISH,
BY THE AMERICAN ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY, BY THE WORCES-
TER ASSOCIATION OF UNITARIAN CLERGYMEN, AND
BY THE LADIES' BENEVOLENT SOCIETY OF
THE SECOND PARISH IN
WORCESTER.

WORCESTER:
PRINTED BY CHAS. HAMILTON,
PALLADIUM OFFICE.
1871.

FUNERAL OF REV. DR. HILL.

THE funeral services of the late Rev. Dr. Hill took place on Saturday, February 4, 1871, at 11, A. M., in the Church of the Second Parish, over which the deceased had officiated as pastor for more than forty years. Among those in attendance were many of the older citizens, the clergymen of the city, and distinguished gentlemen from abroad.

The arrangements for the funeral were made by a committee of the Parish, consisting of Messrs. J. W. Wetherell, F. B. Rice and L. Barnard.

The decorations of the church for the occasion, with laurel and white flowers, were very tasteful, but plain and simple, in accordance with the expressed wish of the deceased, that there should be no display. A star of laurel, enclosing a wreath of roses, ornamented the recess in the rear of the pulpit, and the four columns supporting the recess were twined with laurel. The pulpit was beautifully festooned with evergreens, interspersed with callas and wreaths, stars and crosses of rare exotics, the central ornament being a floral crown resting on a cross. The *catafalque* was entirely covered with laurel, and in front was suspended a rich floral wreath surrounding a cross. At either end were stands of bouquets. On the top of the coffin rested a rich and elegant collection of fragrant flowers, comprising a crown, an anchor and wreaths.

The pall bearers, eight in number, selected from the older members of the parish, were: John P. Kettell, Stephen Salisbury, John Barnard, Charles A. Hamilton, Dr. George Chandler, F. H. Kinnicutt, Walter Bigelow, and Charles H. Whiting.

After a solemn voluntary upon the organ, and an invocation of the divine blessing by Rev. R. R. Shippen, appropriate selections

from scripture were read by Rev. Joseph Allen, D.D., of Northborough. The choir of the church sang the hymn beginning

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah."

Prayer was then offered by Rev. Mr. Hall, after which the hymn,

"He has gone to his God, he has gone to his home;
No more amid peril and error to roam."

was chanted by the choir.

Rev. EDWARD E. HALE of Boston, made the following address:

ADDRESS OF MR. HALE

I cannot but feel that I should best meet the requisitions of this occasion, if, instead of attempting in my own words any account of the loving and effective life which our dear friend led in the midst of us here, I should read to you his own review of that life, as I hold it in my hand, in the address which so many of you heard him deliver here on the fortieth anniversary of his own ordination. In the unaffected statement here made of his own work, as he saw his home change from the village which he found it to the crowded city of to-day, he has given us such a picture as I cannot draw of the faithfully discharged duty of a conscientious, energetic, unambitious Christian Minister.

I have a right indeed to appropriate other words of his, words which he used here so lately, in speaking to you of Judge Allen:

"I have come, not to eulogize him, for he of all men, had no tolerance of the language of empty praise; not to speak of the dead; for they only are dead who have passed away and left no memorial behind.—I have come to speak of life, not death; for he only lives whose influence still survives, and who has already reached that other life, so inconceivably grand that it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them, who, having kept the faith and obtained the promises, have already entered on its enjoyment."

As we surround his silent form to-day we cannot but feel that in such words he still speaks to us.

In the presence in which I stand, I know very well that I need

not attempt in any detail the history of that faithful ministry in which he has been and done so much for the people of this town. He was born in Harvard, on the 20th of June, in the year 1800. He was fitted for Harvard College at the Academy in Groton, now known as the Lawrence Academy, and graduated at Cambridge, in the year 1822. Those who were fellow pupils with him at school and in college, still recall traits of character which showed themselves even in boyhood, which have distinguished the current of his life. Even at school, he was a peace-maker among his companions, and the earnestness of his purpose commanded at that early age their regard and respect. After leaving college, and after a short service as teacher in Leicester Academy, he went through the Theological course at the Divinity School at Cambridge. He preached in your pulpit immediately after, this being, I think, the first parish to which he ministered. The congregation sent to him an invitation to become the colleague of Dr. Bancroft, and he accepted their call. To do so, he declined similar invitations which he received from the Unitarian Churches of Baltimore and Washington. He was ordained as your minister on the 28th of March, 1827, and in honorable and happy service here, he has spent his life, how well, you know.

It is the special dignity of such a life in our profession, if it have passed purely and wisely, that it leaves but little of detail such as belongs to the biography of the more noisy men in the world's history. Dr. Hill, certainly, was not the man who sought for any praise of men or cared to leave behind him any record, but that he had faithfully ministered to the needs of the people around him. Yet if you will look back on forty-two years of life thus spent, you may be surprised to see what is the majestic weight of the silent and steady power of such a consecrated man. You will see this whether you trace his work in the community at large, or listen to the echoes of his voice from this pulpit, or ask these who hear me what are their memories of the spirit of the man and how he has unfolded in them the germs of their own noblest life.

To speak of the work which fell on him as a Christian minister caring for all the interests of this town, I ought to say that he had no sympathy with the notion that would limit the service of a minister to the circle of any particular congregation, while

three were any others near him, though they were the meanest or the poorest, who were in need of Christian help or benediction. It would be impossible, of course, to describe the methods or even to recall special instances of such ministry. But I ought to remind the younger persons who hear me, of the daily service which he rendered for twenty-five years in the school-committee of this town, during much of which time he was its chairman. This was a service often thankless, always exacting, and of the most critical importance. The period was that in which Worcester was changing from a small country town to a large commercial and manufacturing city, and in which the standards and requisitions of public education in this Commonwealth were revolutionized. In that quarter-century of service, the leaders of the school-committee, and foremost among those leaders was Mr. Hill, fully appreciated the necessities, steadily advanced the standard of your schools, and placed them, thus early, at the very head of the public schools in the Commonwealth. For service such as this he asked no praise, nor did those who worked with him. But on an occasion like this, it should not be forgotten.

If, however, you had asked him about the service of his life, he would have passed by very carelessly such public duties as these. He would have spoken of them as trifles or as services which every good citizen owed to the town in which he lived. He would have told you, if you could have broken his guard of modesty, and made him speak to you of himself, that he had given the best thought and prayer and effort of his life to this pulpit, and to the instruction and renewal of those who listened to him. It has often been my pleasant duty to be present with him in ordaining councils, where the young men about to enter on the life of a minister, had, most naturally, asked from his long experience what was indeed an almost apostolic "Charge." I well remember how on one such occasion, with eager enthusiasm, he said "make this pulpit your throne!" And in all conversation on the duties of our professional life he was eager to assert the power of the pulpit, when its duties were bravely undertaken. With what spirit or what effect he entered upon those duties, I need not say here. Nor need I attempt here, to review his theological convictions or to describe his faith. He has left those convictions on record. He held them manfully, and in all manly ways he was

ready to impress them on others,—but he was too loyal to the great principles of the Congregational churches to ask for his creed any power other than for itself it commanded. I think the last public occasion on which I met him, now some years ago, was one when in his earnest way, he pointed out the danger of any attempt under any temptation, to limit the utmost freedom of opinion of our congregations. Yet this generous confidence in others was not the fruit of any vagueness or indifference in his own convictions.

"I believe in God" he said. "I believe in God; and he who can say that does a greater thing than if he could say, 'This world's wealth is all my own.'—God, not as mean, selfish men conceive of him, a reflection of their own mean minds, a monster of cruelty, but God, the scale of whose being is measured by the infinitude of the universe, who travels 'in the awful pathway of the stars, and the majesty of whose rule is seen in the tranquil order and unbroken silence of creation,' and yet God whose benignity is equal to his greatness. His loveliest attribute is his mercy. He stoops to our lowness. I have been jealous, and I have taught you to be jealous, of every representation of Him which clouds our apprehensions of his exceeding love. Terror, we have learned from our schoolrooms and our homes, is a poor instrument of moral and spiritual training. The contemplation of exceeding love only wins to goodness; and God's love seen in all nature and all life and religion, is the great agent in the reform alike of the obstinate and the broken-hearted sinner and the gentle training of the innocent and good. I believe in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, the image and the appointed emblem of the good God, that miracle of the ages, expressly raised up, and endowed with heavenly gifts, that he might reveal the will of God, and bring the whole human family to his footstool. I believe, and have taught, that he saves us through the influence of his word, his life and death, by his sublime revelation, by the spirit which he breathes and the undying sympathies which he awakens, sanctifying the earth which he trod for our sakes, and opening the heavens, where he has gone, to our hope. I believe in the great meaning of human life, its mysterious allotment, its births and deaths, and marriage solemnities, its joys and temptations and woes,—all under the direction of a beneficent Providence, all designed to help our progress and secure our peace. I believe, and have taught, the infinite worth of Christianity, and of its doctrines of a resurrection, retribution, and a life to come—a resurrection whose truth embraces also the vital meaning of a resurrection from the grave of worldliness and sin; a retribution beginning the moment the good or evil is done, and ending—when or where? and a life to come, revealed to us in that more abundant life which the Saviour promised to bestow, and which his

faithful servants receive, and perfected in those upper domains where God unveils his glory, and will make clear the final destiny of man."

But I can see that you are saying that if I estimate Dr. Hill either by the measure of his services to the community or his services in his pulpit, I am not looking back upon his life as you are. You are lamenting to-day, not so much the active fellow-worker in the affairs of the town, no, nor even the preacher whom you were so glad to hear, but the loving personal friend who shared all your sorrows and your joys,—was the most favored, and perhaps the most frequent guest at your homes,—was the adviser and guide of your children,—was in all the more important things of life, the sympathizing companion, whom you do not know how to spare. It is just here, my friends, that I am one of you and know how to sorrow with you. How well do I remember the greeting he gave me the morning after the first Sunday that I preached here, when I felt in a moment that I had gained a friend, welcomed indeed, with a sincerity and cordiality which I have often tested since, and which has never failed me. What that sincerity and cordiality were, you know. He says somewhere in one of his addresses, that he believed he knew every child in the church by name. Whether he knew them by name or not, I am sure that he knew them by heart,—that he always went and came with eager and tender interest for every household here, which had been entrusted to his care. That interest never died. I found it as intense and individual as ever the last time I ever saw him, only a few weeks since, though he was weak from illness, he told me, and he asked me of those whom we both knew and loved in your parish with the old tender interest of a warm personal friend. Do you remember how he expressed this interest in a letter which he wrote to be read to the congregation, after his colleague here was settled,—in which he expresses his readiness to be of service to them always, and his hope that they will call for him on any occasion when they may need his help. That wish of his is the wish he has carried with him to another world.

Of such a life as that we do not lose the blessing. Such a life as that does not cease when this heart stops its beating. With such memories as these of his abiding tenderness, one recalls his own words, as he parted from his friend:

"As I looked and listened I thought I saw more clearly, I compre-

