
Rev. Rowland B. Howard.

DIED IN ROME, ITALY, JANUARY 25TH, 1892.

ADDRESS

IN MEMORY OF

REV. ROWLAND B. HOWARD,

Who died in Rome, Italy, January 25th, 1892.

DELIVERED ON

Sunday, January 31st, 1892, in the New Old South Church,

FARMINGTON, MAINE,

BY

REV. HUGH ELDER.

PRESS OF KNOWLTON, McLEARY & Co.

ADDRESS

IN MEMORY OF

REV. ROWLAND B. HOWARD.

Psalm CXVI: 15th. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

As was announced this morning our service this evening is in memory of the Rev. Rowland B. Howard, a former pastor of this church, who has just died in the City of Rome, the Capital of Italy. As Secretary of the American Peace Society Mr. Howard went to Rome, some time last October, for the purpose of attending a Peace Congress that was to be held there. And he did attend it. He got to Rome in time for the Congress, and in at least sufficiently good health to admit of his taking an active part in the management and conduct of its sessions. He spoke, we are told, several times, with great force, on the several subjects that came up for consideration before the Congress, and contributed not a little to make the Congress the success that it is reported to have been. But when the Congress had closed, when its sessions were ended, and its work was done, then it was found that Mr. Howard was ill. He was sent at once to a hospital in Rome, and there in that hospital, he was tended by two American physicians, and by a thoroughly-trained English

nurse. Everything, therefore, that medical skill and constant, watchful, kindly care could do for Mr. Howard in his illness, was, we may feel sure, done. He lacked for nothing. Christian friends from America, who were there in Rome, ministered to him along with his physicians and his nurse. And, at first, it seemed as if through their ministrations, and the blessing of God upon them, he was going to have a happy issue out of his sickness, and be restored again to health. The letters that came home at first spoke of his being better, and encouraged in the hearts of his family and friends the hope that he himself, restored to health, would speedily follow these letters home. But that hope was not to be realized. Mr. Howard, in leaving his family and friends last October, bade them, though he then knew it not, a last farewell, and set out on a longer journey than either he or his friends had then any thought of. Rome, which they thought of as the end of his journey, was only a stage in it. He reached Rome, but not as he and his friends expected, to return thence to his home in Arlington. He reached Rome, the so-called eternal city, only to go further even to his home in Heaven, to the city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. Accordingly, we learn that the first messages to his friends in this country which spoke of his being better were speedily succeeded by other messages which spoke of his being worse. His sickness required the performance of two operations. The first operation he had undergone safely, but it had drawn heavily upon his strength, and from the second operation performed on him he did not have strength to rally. He gradually after it sank, until, on Monday the 25th of this month (January), he, according to the message flashed along the wires under the ocean, passed away and was at rest. Such,

so far as I have been able to gather them, are the facts connected with Mr. Howard's death.

The facts connected with Mr. Howard's life are better known to most of you than they are to me. He was one of yourselves, a native along with you of this State of Maine. He was born in the town of Leeds, just below here, in the month of October, 1834. He graduated from Bowdoin College in the year 1856, and, after a year spent in the City of Albany in the State of New York studying law, he went to the Theological Seminary in Bangor. And there he graduated from the Seminary in 1860. His first and longest pastorate after his graduation was here in Farmington, over this church. He labored here for ten years, from 1860 to 1870, earnestly preaching the gospel and faithfully ministering to you as your pastor. He did not spare himself in his work. It was not Mr. Howard's way to do that. He threw himself with his whole heart and soul into whatever work he did. And of the work, which he thus did here amongst you as your pastor and teacher during those ten years, some of the fruit appears now in your own characters and lives, some of it appears in the characters and lives of many who have gone from you into other parts of the land, and some of it has been garnered and taken into safe keeping, in that world to which he himself has now gone. A gentleman who knew Mr. Howard well, while he was here, told me last week that Mr. Howard once said to him, "My aim is not to write or preach great sermons but to do good." And I believe that was his aim everywhere. In all his pastorates, as also in the Secretariate of the American Peace Society, his one aim was to do good. And so exemplify the spirit of the Master whose grand characteristic was that he went about ever doing good.

In 1870 Mr. Howard left Farmington and went to Princeton, Illinois, where he remained in the pastorate five years. In 1875 he left Princeton, Illinois, and went to another pastorate in Orange, New Jersey, where he remained four years. And in 1879 he left Orange, New Jersey, and went to Rockport, Mass., and it was there that I first met Mr. Howard and made his acquaintance. The church in Rockport, over which he was settled, was in the same conference with my own church in Salem, and for nearly six years he and I were together members of the same Ministerial Association. Of course this brought us a good deal into contact, and I very soon got to know Mr. Howard as a most devoted christian man, and as a most earnest and faithful christian minister and worker. He was all aglow with zeal in the service of his Master, and never failed to improve every opportunity he had of speaking and working in that service. He loved men for whom Christ died, and he loved to make the Christ who had died for them known unto them. One thing only he hated, and fought against, and that was the thing that came between men and the apprehension of Christ, and of their own highest well-being in Christ. Intemperance and gambling, especially in the form of lotteries at fairs, and most especially in the form of lotteries at church fairs, he openly and fearlessly denounced. Of course this did not win for him the love of the rumsellers, and of the promoters of these lotteries, but it did win for him the love and goodwill of all the right-minded, right-thinking and rightly-disposed men and women in the community. He approved himself to all such, as also to all his brethren in the Essex South Conference of Churches, a workman who needed not to be ashamed.

In 1885 Mr. Howard left Rockport and the pastorate and

became the Secretary of the American Peace Society. He had been on the battlefields of the South during the Rebellion, and had there seen the horrors of war, and learnt to hate it so, that when the Secretaryship of the American Peace Society was offered him he at once accepted it. From that time he devoted himself steadily, both in this country and in Europe, to the advocacy of Peace, and of Arbitration rather than war as a means of settling international disputes. One of the last meetings I ever attended with Mr. Howard was a Peace meeting held by him in the City of Minneapolis. We were both there together attending the meeting of the American Board in 1890, and when I found that Mr. Howard had appointed a Peace meeting to be held in that city, on the Sunday afternoon, in the little Quaker meeting-house, I made my arrangements to attend it with him. It was a stormy afternoon and there were not many present, but that did not damp the ardor of Mr. Howard's zeal. He spoke with great earnestness and power to the few who were present, and seemed to inspire every one of them with the hope, which himself so evidently cherished, that the time was not far distant when reason, rather than force, would be appealed to, and alone relied upon, for the settlement of all international disputes. That was the last meeting of any kind I ever attended with Mr. Howard. The last meeting he himself attended was the meeting of the Peace Congress held in the City of Rome. From that meeting, he, after a few weeks' illness, went, as I have told you, home, and has there doubtless received the blessing of him who is the Prince of Peace, and who, while he was on earth, said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Such, in outline and briefly told, is the story of Mr. Howard's

life. It's the life story, surely, of a man thoroughly good and noble and kindhearted—of a man, too, who in the several spheres of labor assigned to him by God did a thoroughly good and noble work. For him to live was, I think, Christ, and for him to die must, consequently, have been gain, which just means more Christ, a clearer apprehension of Christ, and a closer and more intimate communion with him. He has ceased from his labors, and has found Heaven just as near from Rome as it could have been from Arlington.

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

“The pains of death are past,
Labor and sorrow cease,
And life's long warfare closed, at last,
Thy 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.”

NOTE.—At the close of this address the Church by a rising vote, authorized its Clerk to convey to Mrs. Howard and her children an expression of sympathy with them in the great bereavement which had befallen them.

