

**A SERMON DELIVERED AT THE  
FUNERAL OF THE REV. EZRA RIPLEY,  
D.D. PP. 3-22; A DISCOURSE  
PREACHED TO THE FIRST CHURCH AND  
SOCIETY IN CONCORD; PP. 25-43**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649266524

A Sermon delivered at the funeral of the Rev. Ezra Ripley, D.D. pp. 3-22; A discourse preached to the first church and society in concord; pp. 25-43 by Barzillai Frost & Convers Francis

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](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**BARZILLAI FROST & CONVERS FRANCIS**

**A SERMON DELIVERED AT THE  
FUNERAL OF THE REV. EZRA RIPLEY,  
D.D. PP. 3-22; A DISCOURSE  
PREACHED TO THE FIRST CHURCH AND  
SOCIETY IN CONCORD; PP. 25-43**



A

**SERMON**

**DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL**

**OF THE**

**REV. EZRA RIPLEY, D. D.**

---

**BY BARZILLAI FROST,**

**SURVIVING PASTOR OF THE FIRST PARISH IN CONCORD.**

---

[Published by request of the Parish.]

**BOSTON:**  
**JAMES MUNROE AND COMPANY.**  
**1841.**

US 13628, 11.25



Mrs John W. Ames

and each volume

CAMBRIDGE PRESS:  
METCALF, TORRY, AND BALLOU.

## FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

---

JOHN XVII. 4.

I HAVE FINISHED THE WORK WHICH THOU GAVEST ME TO DO.

It *is* finished. The last sand of life has fallen. The last message has been delivered, and the last prayer offered. The great work of the ministry and of life is accomplished. That form, which has gone in and out before this people sixty-three years, at first with youthful grace, and then in manly dignity, and finally in patriarchal beauty, is now before us in the silent embrace of death. That spirit, which has guided the religious interests of this community, appeared in its civil councils, been the life of social enjoyment; which was the first in the house of rejoicing, and the last at the bedside of the departing soul, is now gone to another scene of being. He has left us a cherished memory, a venerated character, the fruits of a long and useful life. These fruits we see every where among us; in the prosperity of the town, in the state of education, in the order of society, in the tone of morals, and in the spiritual state of your own hearts.

We have assembled to pay the last sad tribute to his mortal remains, for we love and venerate even his dust; we have come to do justice to his character, and gather up the lessons which such a life is fitted to impart. I would that this great and solemn duty had fallen to another, and one better fitted to do it justice. I would much rather have been a mourner on this occasion. It is scarcely less trying to my

feelings, than it would be to perform this service for my own father. The short time allowed for preparation, the weakness arising from a recent sickness, and my comparative youth in the ministry, will give me large claims on your candor. The materials, too, are not abundant. The deceased was not connected conspicuously with any great revolutionary movements, political or religious. He published but little, and that on no great public occasion, or deeply exciting subjects. It has been his highest ambition to excel in a sphere humble in the eye of man, but highest of all in the eye of God, the office of a faithful minister of Jesus Christ. Many of his best thoughts, his noblest acts, have been unrecorded, save in the book of life. He kept nothing in the form of a journal, except a memorandum of a few facts and resolutions, at intervals of five, ten, and twenty years; and even these he had scruples about preserving. "I have serious objections," says he in the memorandum, "to the keeping of a diary to be inspected after death, even if it could be kept with *exactness* and *truth*. What is bad in me, why should the world know, further than it observes? and if there be anything good, by the grace of God, will not the daily exhibition of it be the best evidence to the world?" I have not therefore many public acts, or documents, wherewith to illustrate the character of the deceased. But to this audience he might say, as Paul said to Timothy, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, patience." If I present the true points of his character, you will at once recognise them.

Dr. Ripley was born, May 1, 1751, at Woodstock, Connecticut. He was the fifth of nineteen children. His father was born at Hingham, Massachusetts, on the farm first purchased by William Ripley from England, at the first settlement of the town. On this farm the seventh and eighth generations now live. The deceased followed the business of farming till sixteen years of age. But he early manifested a strong desire for learning, and a marked love for the minis-



terial office and character. A large family and moderate circumstances would not allow his father, in justice to the other members of his family, to think of giving him a liberal education; but by his own exertions and the patronage of Dr. Forbes of Gloucester, he fitted himself for college, and entered Harvard University, July, 1772. The unsettled state of the times was very unfavorable to intellectual culture. The storm of the Revolution soon burst upon the country, and in 1775, in his senior year, the college was removed from Cambridge to this town. The studies were very much broken up, many of the students entered the army, and the class never returned to Cambridge. But where a true thirst for knowledge and a settled purpose of self-improvement existed, these obstacles only fanned the flame. There was an unusually large number of distinguished men in this class of 1776; Christopher Gore, Governor of Massachusetts, and Senator in Congress; Samuel Sewall, Chief Justice of Massachusetts; George Thacher, Judge of the Supreme Court; Royall Tyler, Chief Justice of Vermont; and the late learned Dr. Prince of Salem. Among these distinguished men, Dr. Ripley sustained a good rank as a scholar. But he was more distinguished for the high tone of his moral and religious character. Although remarkably social in his feelings, and having a keen relish for wit, and possessing a rare tact for giving point and spirit to an anecdote or incident, yet he never descended to what had the appearance of vulgarity or impurity, which was much more common at that time than at present, not only among young men in college, but older and graver men, of the highest cultivation and refinement. He was so remarkable for standing aloof from this, and from all the tricks and habits of college life, that savored of immorality or impropriety, that he was called by his classmates *holy Ripley*. He survived all his classmates except two.\* One

\* He had a strong attachment to his classmates, and a great regard for Harvard College, and generally attended Commencement. I find in his private memorandum the following entry:—

of them, Dr. Isaac Hurd, now present, was settled in this town about the same time as the deceased, has been equally successful in his profession, has been his family physician during all this time, and his steadfast friend during all the changes of sixty-three years, and is now permitted, by the providence of God, to unite with another generation in paying the last sad tribute of heart-felt affection and respect to the companion of his youth, his classmate, pastor, and friend for life.\*

After teaching for a time in Plymouth, and studying divinity about a year with the Rev. Mr. Haven of Dedham, he was approbated to preach. Soon after, he received the unanimous invitation of this church, and the unanimous invitation of the town, with one exception, to become their pastor. He accepted, and was ordained, November 7, 1778. He was now settled over a large congregation in one of the

"August 27, 1824. Attended Commencement at Cambridge, probably for the last time. My feelings and determination united in taking leave of Commencement, which has long been a day of enjoyment and delight to me. I find myself too old for the fatigue and long services of the day. I did not meet one classmate. I felt myself out of date, and though not treated with neglect, yet I am satisfied with scenes of the kind. I was highly gratified with the performances of the day, and by the manifest increase of learning and intellect in the college. The performances of the next day were excellent, and very animating. This and the preceding day were rendered more highly joyous by the presence of General Lafayette. I know not that I ever enjoyed a Commencement with a higher relish or less alloy; and I never was more gratified by evidence of the improvements made in the University. It is matter of rejoicing and gratitude, that I can bid adieu to Commencements with such high and well grounded hopes of the future splendor and usefulness of Harvard University. Will God multiply blessings on my venerated Alma Mater, to the latest generations!"

The last time he attended Commencement was in 1836, at the second centennial anniversary, at which he made a prayer.

\* It was a custom in Massachusetts formerly for physicians to attend upon the families of clergymen without charge. Dr. Hurd had done this upwards of sixty years. I was present the day after the funeral, when he called upon the family to manifest his sympathies with the bereaved. When the surviving son expressed his sense of the obligations they owed him, he replied with emotion, "I am a debtor to the family." What an amount of mutual benefits and blessings must have been conferred during that long life!

most flourishing towns in the Commonwealth. He had reached that station to which he had looked forward with ardor from childhood, for which he had made so many exertions and sacrifices, and which was, above all others, congenial to his mind and dear to his heart. He burned to devote all the energies of his mind, and all the powers and affections of his nature to it. But fresh obstacles awaited him. The times were disordered, and the currency depreciated. Five hundred and fifty pounds, settlement, when paid, was found to be worth only forty pounds. A year's salary would scarcely support him a month. For many years he did a man's work in the field, more than three days out of the week, on an average. When the times became more settled, the town made up the loss in part. But it could not repair the loss of ministerial studies and acquirements, and this he lamented the most deeply. I have often heard him say, that, if he could have recalled the first fifteen years of his ministry, and devoted himself exclusively to the studies and duties of his office, he would have gladly lived upon bread and water. As his circumstances became more easy, his heart, ever true to his profession, as the needle to the pole, turned to it with a more exclusive interest.

Let us now turn to his religious character and experience. From a very early period, he manifested a profound moral and religious sensibility. At the age of about five, he had been an attentive listener to what the Scriptures say of the liar and his doom. One day he was observed by his father to be in a flood of tears, and inconsolable. On inquiry, he found the cause to be, that a little brother had told a falsehood, and it was for him that he was dreading the divine displeasure. This deep moral and religious sentiment was what led him early to look with so much reverence and desire to the ministerial office. But it was not until sixteen years of age, that he dated the first decisive awakening of his religious nature. In a terrible storm of thunder and lightning, the bolt of heaven descended, and, in his own words, "licked up the