MEMOIR OF THE REV. EBENEZER HILL, PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, IN MASON, N.H., FROM NOVEMBER, 1790, TO MAY, 1854

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REV. EBENEZER HILL,

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CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

IN

MASON, N. H.

FROM NOVEMBER, 1790, TO MAY, 1854.

WITH SOME OF HIS SERMONS,

AND HIS DISCOURSE ON THE

HISTORY OF THE TOWN.

BY

JOHN B. HILL.

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PREFACE.

To write the biography of a parent, is a delicate task. It has not been undertaken in the present instance, without a full appreciation of the difficulties in its accomplishment. Neither the feelings of the writer, nor the proprieties of the occasion, would permit any other tone than that of eulogy. My endeavor has been in this sketch, to exhibit fairly, the prominent traits of the character and incidents of the life of my father, especially in their effects upon the church and people of his charge; and in doing so, I am not conscious that I have stepped beyond the line of propriety, either in the exhibition of commendable traits, or in the concealment or suppression of faults or imperfections. For the main body of this sketch, I am indebted to my brother, the Rev. T. Hill, of Saint Louis, Mo.

The discourse upon leaving the Old Meeting House, is printed from a manuscript transcribed from the original, soon after it was delivered. The other discourses, are reprints of the first edition, with no change, but the correction of manifest errors. The portrait accompanying this volume, is engraved from a painting made at the age of about seventy years. The engraved page of a sermon, is a fac simile of the sermon preached at the dedication of the meeting house, in 1795.

J. B. HILL.

BANGOR, May 1, 1858.

MEMOIR.

"Every man's life is of importance to himself, to his family, to his friends, to his country, and in the sight of God. They are by no means the best men, who have made most noise in the world; neither are those actions most deserving of praise, which have obtained the greatest show of fame. Scenes of violence and blood, the workings of ambition, pride and revenge, compose the annals of men. But piety and purity, temperance and humility, which are little noted and soon forgotten of the world, are held in everlasting remembrance before God." *Hunter's Sacred Biography, vol.* 1, *p.* 24.

No two men have ever existed, whose lives were, in all respects, exact counterparts of each other. Every human being, is thoroughly individualized by his own will, and has a history that is peculiar to himself, which can never be so blended with that of another, as not to possess points of interest, in contrast, to attentive observers. No two persons can be found, whose physical endowments are not such as to render them distinguishable by their intimate friends. So also, a marked distinction will be found in the mental powers, the modes of thought, and manner of action of individuals most closely resembling each other. Each, in all these respects, will have traits in a good degree original and peculiar to himself. Hence, the faithful portraiture of the character of any individual will afford instruction to others. They will recognize in it, situations similar to their own, and by observing how difficulties have been overcome, and trials borne, or how temptations have led to ruin, they may be encouraged to struggle for victory, and shun the path which led another to destruction.

If it be true, that every man is so individualized as to render his real life instructive to others, it is peculiarly so, with the life of a christian; for with him a new element of power is introduced, and grace controls and silently renovates the man, evolving its own light from the darkness of nature, and so moulding the original elements, that upon all is enstamped the glorious image of Jesus, and the man is formed anew, and fitted for heaven.

Could the real life of any christian be written, it would form a most interesting volume, and it would matter little, what position in life the subject of it might have occupied. The life of Moses is rich and varied, but the simple sketch of Lazarus, sitting at the rich man's gate,—dying alone, and borne by angels to Abraham's bosom, has a touching beauty, equalling in interest anything found in that of the law-giver.

If these views are correct, the life of any earnest, successful preacher of the gospel, must have an intrinsic interest in whatever station his lot has been cast. He may not have been as eloquent as Whitfield, as deep a theologian as Edwards, nor have possessed the finished grandeur of Robert Hall; but he has fought a good fight himself, has pointed many sinners to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world; and trained many souls for immortality, and fitted them for heaven. The memory of such a man is enshrined in the best affections of many who have felt always his influence, and a view of his life will furnish them, and others also, with new motives for leading a life of faith.

Such was the humble, earnest life of him, of whose history and character, it is proposed here to give a brief outline. His was the quiet life of a retired pastor of a country church; of one, whose highest ambition it was, to be a faithful preacher of the gospel, to those whom God had placed under his care. It is the object of this sketch, to enable those who read it, to form a distinct idea of his individual character, of his manner of life, and of the general results of his labors; and the many friends who revered and loved him

while living, to preserve a fresh and vivid memory of their departed pastor, counselor and friend.

Ebenezer Hill, the subject of this memoir, was born in Cambridge, Mass., January 31st, 1766. He was the youngest son of Samuel Hill and Sarah Cutler, his wife. His father was born in Boston, but of his parentage and ancestry, nothing is certainly known. He was a carpenter by trade, but never rose above the condition of the most humble poverty. He served as a common soldier, in the war of the revolution, and returned to Cambridge at its close, to resume his occupation as a carpenter. After his son Samuel settled in Mason, he came to that place, and resided there with him, most of the time, till the close of his life. He died at Mason, June 21st, 1798, aged about sixty-six years. His mother, Sarah Cutler, was born in the year 1733, in what was, April 24th, 1746, incorporated as the second precinct of Concord, and afterwards on the 19th of April, 1754, incorporated as a town by the name of Lincoln. Her father, Ebenezer Cutler, was one of the petitioners for the incorporation of the precinct. She was a woman of great energy. With very scanty means, and, in a great measure, with the labor of her own hands, she provided for the support, training and education of her children. In October, 1781, she purchased a lot of land in Cambridge, thirty feet square, for the price of "nine pounds, twelve shillings, lawful money of this Commonwealth." It is described in the deed, as lying "on the north side of the house of Moses and William Boardman, deceased; on the road leading to Lexington." It was about one mile northerly of the colleges. Upon this plot, she placed a small cottage house, in which she and her family resided. The building was a portion of barracks occupied by the Revolutionary army, when stationed at Cambridge. The land was appraised by three disinterested persons, in June, 1796, at one hundred and thirty-five dollars. It undoubtedly comprised, at that time, the principal part of the family estate. About the year 1790, she went to Mason, and resided there