

[Tomlinson, Vincent Eaton]

REV. VINCENT E. TOMLINSON

Death of Rev. Vincent Eaton Tomlinson, pastor of the First Universalist Church of Worcester, Mass., occurred in that city on June 16. His age was 76 years. Dr. Tomlinson was born in Perry on March 20, 1862, a son of Rev. Dewitt Clinton Tomlinson, who was pastor of the Universalist Church of Perry at that time. The family moved from Perry in 1865. They are distantly related to the Tomlinson family of Perry. Dr. Tomlinson served as pastor of the Worcester church from 1900 to 1937, declining many calls from other churches during that time.

In Worcester he became a civic leader as well as a church leader. Besides being president of the Board of Aldermen, he had been president of the Library Board, president of Worcester Economic Club, an organizer of the Worcester Welfare Association, Advisory Board member of Worcester District Nursing Society, director of Worcester Y.M.C.A., charter member of Worcester Country Club, trustee of the National Universalist Board, trustee of Tufts College, director of the Pawtucket Sash and Blind Co., chairman of the school committee and member of the Masonic fraternity.

Perry Record, Perry NY, Thu. 30 Jun 1938

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DR. VINCENT E. TOMLINSON

A letter came to the State Office from Dr. Vincent E. Tomlinson, pastor emeritus of the First Universalist Church in Worcester, in May with his annual contribution to the Emergency Fund of the New York State Convention of Universalists and with the good news that he had improved in health. He had tested himself with twelve holes of golf and there were no ill effects. His world tour was abruptly terminated last December near Colombo, Ceylon, by the order of the ship physician who advised Dr. Tomlinson to return to Worcester at once. The letter referred to the annual golf game with Dr. Fred C. Leining in August and there appeared to be no upset in the plans. The newspaper clippings, sent by Miss Ruth Tomlinson, his daughter, stated that he suffered a cerebral hemorrhage on Sunday, June 5, and his death occurred early on the morning of the 16th. He was in his seventy-seventh year. He and Mrs. Tomlinson celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1937. His daughter is a teacher of history in the North High School of Worcester.

Dr. Tomlinson was the son of the Rev. DeWitt C. and Emeline C. Tomlinson who were very prominent in Universalist circles sixty years ago. The birthplace was in Perry. He was graduated from Buchtel, now Akron University, in Akron, Ohio in 1880. He intended to be a civil engineer, but an interest in the ministry arose and he entered the Theological School of Tufts College, graduating in 1884. His classmates were Dr. Frank Oliver Hall and Dr. Lee S. McCollester.

He began his ministry in the Universalist church in Valley Falls, R.I., in 1884. At the end of three years, he went to the pastorate of the Ballou Universalist church in Providence, serving three years. At this time he also served the churches in Georgiaville and Cumberland Chapel. During his pastorate at Hudson, N.Y., he was active in the establishment of the new church in Middletown. He had a pastorate of five years in Hudson and then went to the St. Paul's Universalist church in Little Falls for five years' service. While in this pastorate he went to Dolgeville, each Sunday, aiding this church to grow. In every instance his record was constructive. He began his greatest pastorate in 1900, succeeding Dr. Almon Gunnison as minister of the First Universalist Church in Worcester. Dr. Gunnison had become president of St. Lawrence University. Dr. Tomlinson retired from this pastorate in 1937. He received his doctorate from Tufts College in 1904.

His civic positions were as follows: Member of the school committee and its chairman, 1907-1915; member and president of the board of alderman, 1916-1918; he was projected into the mayoralty campaign in 1935 but withdrew; president of the Library Board; president of the Worcester Economic Club; an organizer of the Worcester Welfare Association; a member of the advisory board of the Nursing Society; a director of the Worcester Y.M.C.A; a charter member of the Worcester Country Club. His other positions: A trustee of Tufts College; a director of the Universalist Publishing House and trustee of the Universalist General Convention; president of the Massachusetts Convention; a director of the Pawtucket Sash and Blind Company. While he was in New York state, he was secretary of the New York State Convention of Universalists, 1893-1894, and editor of "The Empire State Universalist." He regarded

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himself as a New Yorker, never losing his interest in the churches of this state. The new church at Floral Park was a delight to him. Always, an annual contribution came from him for some phase of the work in the Empire State.

During his ministry, Dr. Tomlinson married more than thirteen hundred couples and his funeral services were twice the number. He had crossed the Atlantic Ocean thirteen times and had visited all parts of the earth but South America, Australia and New Zealand. His travelogues were always popular and as a lecturer to the theological schools of St. Lawrence University and Tufts College he gave most practical advice. He was one of the founders and enthusiasts for the Wayside Inn Retreat of Universalist ministers, missing the session only when he was on the world-tour.

He was one of the most powerful and popular ministers in the Universalist fellowship. He was loyal to the Universalist cause, backing it with his whole heart and purse. He was a minister of Jesus Christ, serving his Master faithfully. As a pastor, he was the good shepherd and he certainly loved his sheep. As a friend, he was jovial, cheerful, loyal and generous. As a companion, he was rich in humor and an ardent golfer, putting all that he had into the game, just as he did in his ministry.

At seventy-seven, he was a young man in spirit. His sudden return from his world-tour in December was surely a shock to his friends. His death is one of those events hard to believe—we cannot think of him as dead.

The church was crowded on the day of the funeral, Sunday afternoon, June 19. His friends, Dr. Lee S. McCollester and Dr. Frank Oliver Hall, officiated, assisted by the Rev. Joseph N. Beach, his successor in the pastorate. Dr. McCollester delivered a short eulogy, calling attention to the fiftieth anniversary of their graduation from Tufts College in 1934. The photographs of the three appeared in one of the Boston papers at the time and was used by "The Christian Leader" on June 25. Dr. McCollester said, "To honor him we should give him not only our tears but our lives. We should go from here with courage, determined to make this a better world."

Empire State Universalist, Cortland NY, July-August 1938

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