

**MEMOIR OF
EBENEZER
FISHER, D.D.; 1880**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649645930

Memoir of Ebenezer Fisher, D.D.; 1880 by George H. Emerson

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

GEORGE H. EMERSON

**MEMOIR OF
EBENEZER
FISHER, D.D.; 1880**



Eben Fisher

MEMOIR

OF

EBENEZER FISHER, D.D.

BY

GEORGE H. EMERSON, D.D.

BOSTON:

UNIVERSALIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.

1880.

BX
9969
.F5
E6

TO

The Alumni

OF THE

CANTON THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL,

PARTICULARLY THE MEMBERS THEREOF WHO ARE NOW ACTIVE IN
THE MINISTRY OF THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, WHO CHERISH
THE MEMORY OF EZEKIEL FISHER AS THEIR GREAT
INSTRUCTOR, COUNSELLOR, AND FRIEND,

This Volume

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

WHEN the word came to me that the Alumni of the Canton Theological School had, by formal vote, entrusted the preparation of a biography of the late Rev. Ebenezer Fisher, D.D., to my hands, I gratefully confess that I felt honored. But I shrank from the task. In the midst of duties that press without intermission, I feared that I might not be able to gather the essential facts and present them in the form and proportions of a volume. Yet I reflected that of the living probably no one save those who have been professionally associated with him knew Dr. Fisher so intimately as myself. For thirty years we had been friends, mutually trusting and trusted. I resolved to attempt the work. The result is the book herewith submitted.

In many regards, I have found the task a difficult one. I have discovered that witnesses, even if honest and intelligent, may differ in their statements of fact; that official records are often at variance; and that different memories recall not only different but conflicting incidents. Yet I trust that no essential error of fact mars the general accuracy of this history: it is inevitable that in incidental detail an occasional error will escape detection. I have — to give two or three examples — discovered that intelligent memories are not in full accord as to the school-house which Dr. Fisher, when a boy, first entered as a scholar; as to his age when he became a convert to the Universalist faith; and as to some minor phases of the theological beliefs of his parents. But in regard to events and experiences which are vital to a proper appreciation of the boy and the man, I have found essential agreement. I believe that this book,

in its general quality and in the impression it leaves, will be found every way reliable. It has been my constant study to make it so.

I have found the toil exacting, yet I confess it has proved, in its general preparation, a pleasant, almost an enviable, task. At times I have felt very near the great and good man who for thirty years was my constant friend, — never more so than when we differed as to opinions and methods. The theme has at times cast its spell over me. It has almost seemed that he was a companion by my side, — that I could look into his noble face and hear his kind, sympathetic word. I arise from my labor of love, grateful for the quickening which must come from dwelling so continually upon the congenial theme. I give the testimony that I have grown to a more profound appreciation of his great work, and of his marvellous fitness for its responsibilities. I shall ever be grateful that his living students have by formal act pronounced my name worthy to stand beneath that of Ebenezer Fisher, on the same title-page.

In the body of the work I have indicated the parties who have been of special service to me, not alone in reporting information for my use, but in some instances in giving shape to the recital. But for their very copious and sympathetic aid, this volume could not have been prepared.

May I record the hope that the subject-matter of this book, if not its form, will secure for it sympathetic, appreciative readers; that through the trials, anxieties, and final triumphs it records, they will be led into a deeper apprehension of the importance — the indispensable necessity — of that institutional work in the founding of which Dr. Fisher did a lion's share.

In the time of great need, providential men are raised up. Such was Martin Luther. Such was Hosea Ballou. I make no doubt that the faithful verdict of time will proclaim that such was Ebenezer Fisher.

Upon this humble tribute to his memory I humbly and reverently invoke the Divine favor. May it go forth on a mission of good to the world.

G. H. E.

CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH	1
II. LED TOWARDS THE MINISTRY	18
III. ENTERS THE MINISTRY.	33
IV. THE SALEM PASTORATE	47
V. THE ESSEX MINISTERIAL CIRCLE	71
VI. THE PASTORATE AT SOUTH DEDHAM.	83
VII. THE UNIVERSALIST MOVEMENT.	89
VIII. FIRST EFFORTS TO FOUND A THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL	101
IX. THE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL ESTABLISHED	108
X. THE CALL TO CANTON	120
XI. DARK DAYS	131
XII. A CRISIS.	144
XIII. THE WAR CRISIS	160
XIV. MINOR CRISES	175
XV. WITHIN THE SCHOOL	185
XVI. WITHOUT THE SCHOOL.	191
XVII. WITHIN THE HOME	194
XVIII. FRIENDS OF THE INSTITUTION	203
XIX. CLOSING YEARS	207
XX. "LAST OF EARTH".	211
XXI. TRIBUTES	219
XXII. ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER.	227
APPENDIX	243