

**CENTENNIAL PAPERS PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF
THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF
CONNECTICUT. THE MINISTERS OF
CONNECTICUT IN THE REVOLUTION. THE REPORT
OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY THE
GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT**

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WM. CHAUNCEY FOWLER

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HARTFORD:

PRESS OF THE CASE, LOCKWOOD & BRAINARD COMPANY.

1877.

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INTRODUCTION.

At the eighth annual meeting of the General Conference of the Congregational Churches of Connecticut, convened in Park church, Norwich, November 9, 1875, on the recommendation of the Standing Committee, it was

Resolved, That at the General Conference of 1876, two historical discourses be delivered, on successive evenings, referring in part, at least, to the relations of the Congregational churches of Connecticut to the civil government, and to popular education and social reforms; one of these discourses to cover the period preceding the declaration of independence; the other, the period subsequent to that event.

Rev. Leonard Bacon was appointed to deliver the first of these discourses, and Rev. Myron N. Morris, the second.

At the ninth annual meeting of the General Conference, convened in the First church, New Haven, November 14, 1876, a committee of the General Association presented an overture relating to a paper on the ministers of Connecticut in the revolution, and it was

Resolved, That the General Conference will accept and publish the paper on the ministers of Connecticut in the revolution, prepared under the direction of the General Association, and offered to us by a committee of that body.

On Tuesday evening, November 14, Rev. Leonard Bacon delivered a historical discourse, and on Wednesday evening, November 15, Rev. Myron N. Morris delivered a historical discourse, thus fulfilling the appointments made for them by the General Conference in 1875.

On Thursday evening, November 16, the last evening of the annual meeting, by an arrangement of the Standing Committee, several brief addresses were given upon assigned topics, including one by Rev. Joseph Anderson, and one by Prof. Cyrus Northrop.

The printing committee, under instructions from the General Conference, decided to group, in one bound volume, the paper accepted from the General Association, the discourses of Messrs. Bacon and Morris, and the addresses of Messrs. Anderson and Northrop, with an index prepared by the Registrar of the General Conference, and to issue and distribute fifteen hundred copies of the book.

WILLIAM H. MOORE, *Registrar*.

HARTFORD, June 15, 1877.

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THE
MINISTERS OF CONNECTICUT
IN
THE REVOLUTION.

THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

APPOINTED BY THE

GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT.

*Committee on the Ministers of
Connecticut in the Revolution.*

WM. CHAUNCEY FOWLER, LL.D.

"A vestal state, which power could not subdue,
Nor promise win—like her own eagle's nest,
Sacred—the San Marino of the west."

—HALLECK.

HARTFORD:
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PREFACE.

At the meeting of the General Association in Danbury, June 16, 1875, the following committee was appointed "On the Ministers of Connecticut in the Revolution," namely: Leonard Bacon, Henry Jones, Dennis Platt, Leverett Griggs, Samuel Rockwell, William Thompson, Adam Reid, John Churchill, Anson C. Beach, William C. Fowler, Joel Mann, Hiram P. Arms, Abram Marsh, Joseph Ayer.

Leonard Bacon was made chairman of this committee.

At the meeting of the General Association at Norwalk, June 20, 1876, the committee of 1875, "On the Ministers of Connecticut in the Revolution," presented a report, which was accepted and discussed, and it was

Resolved, That William C. Fowler is hereby instructed, in conference with the registrar, to condense the materials presented, and publish them in the Minutes, or, if too voluminous, in some religious periodical, or in any manner that may seem to them advisable.

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

THE MINISTERS OF CONNECTICUT IN THE REVOLUTION.

If we would take a correct view of the "Ministers of Connecticut in the Revolution," it is necessary to look at the historical position of the Order, both before and after that era; just as in viewing an object with the bodily eye, it is necessary to look at the field of vision in which that object is placed.

The earliest ministers of Connecticut, in learning, general intelligence, good manners, and Christian graces, were superior to the congregations that followed them into these parts. Society being then in its elements, they very naturally, in the new order of things then instituted, had the pre-eminence. The universal cry of the people was, "To the worthiest!" To the ministers, therefore, as the worthiest, the leadership of the people was given. One of these leaders, Rev. Samuel Stone of Hartford, described Congregationalism as a "speaking *aristocracy* in the face of a silent *democracy*."

In the "Assembly of Divines' Catechism" is the following question and answer: "What is required in the fifth commandment? The fifth commandment requireth the preserving the honor, and performing the duties belonging to every one in their several places and relations, as superiors, inferiors, or equals."

They continued to be leaders of the people from 1636 down to 1776, during the Revolution and afterwards, because they continued to be superior to them in learning, general intelligence, good manners, and Christian virtues. They had that knowledge which is power, and that goodness which is wisdom, for using the power for noble ends.

In Roman Catholic England, down into the reign of Henry the VIII, the people distributed large measures of veneration

and love to popes, cardinals, bishops, and the inferior clergy. In Protestant Episcopal England, during the reign of Elizabeth and James I, and afterwards, the people distributed veneration and love to archbishops, rectors, and deacons. In Puritan Connecticut, the people of the several congregations concentrated their veneration and love upon their own minister, as the accredited "ambassador for Christ," and clothed with his authority.

The earliest ministers were educated in the best institutions of learning in England. After they passed off the stage of human action, the ministers succeeding them received their education at Harvard College for sixty years or more, and subsequently to 1700, generally at Yale College.

An examination of the history of the times would show how it was that the "Ministers of Connecticut in the Revolution" should be much the same in principles and character, as the ministers of Connecticut had been from 1776 back to 1636, when the first English settlers established themselves at Wethersfield, Hartford, and Windsor. Within that period most of those who were destined for the pulpit pursued classical studies, at first under some minister, with whom they were fitted for college, and afterwards in the college founded by the ministers. Under the guidance of the older ministers, many of them studied the same text books in theology, and when settled in the ministry pursued the same course of instruction with their people that the older ministers did.

The ministers of Connecticut were strongly inclined to educate their own successors in the ministry. They were not disposed to permit tramps in the highways and by-ways, or religious squatters and gypsies to establish themselves on the public domain. It was a beautiful custom among the churches of Connecticut that when a minister died, his place was supplied for a number of Sabbaths by the members of the Association. These visits were like balm to the bereaved hearts of the wife and family, if there were any, and it gave the Association an opportunity of knowing what was the condition of the parish, and enabled the committee of the Association, appointed for the purpose, to recommend a suitable