

**HISTORICAL ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE  
NINETIETH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF THE  
CONGREGATIONAL AND PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCHES OF NEW HAMPSHIRE HELD AT  
MANCHESTER, OCTOBER 10, 11, AND 12, 1899**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649250554

Historical address delivered at the ninetieth annual meeting of the general association of the congregational and presbyterian churches of New Hampshire held at Manchester, October 10, 11, and 12, 1899 by F. D. Ayer

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)

**F. D. AYER**

**HISTORICAL ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE  
NINETIETH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF THE  
CONGREGATIONAL AND PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCHES OF NEW HAMPSHIRE HELD AT  
MANCHESTER, OCTOBER 10, 11, AND 12, 1899**



MINISTERS' AND WIDOWS' CHARITABLE FUND.

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

NINETIETH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
GENERAL ASSOCIATION

OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL AND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES  
OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

HELD AT

MANCHESTER, OCTOBER 10, 11, AND 12, 1899,

BY

REV. F. D. AYER, D. D., PASTOR EMERITUS,  
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, CONCORD, N. H.

---

*PUBLISHED BY THE TRUSTEES.*

---

CONCORD, N. H.:

IRA C. EVANS, PRINTER, 12 SCHOOL STREET.

1900.

C 8135.7.9

~~US-11560-7.20~~

## GREETING.

It is a source of especial satisfaction that we are able to place in the hands of the Congregational ministers of New Hampshire, Dr. Ayer's admirable paper. He has made it possible for us to put in permanent form information of great importance, not only to the beneficiaries of the fund, but to the churches and active ministry of the state.

In this booklet will be found the constitution and other facts, which, together with Dr. Ayer's address, make a strong appeal to sympathetic people, and we hope it will be preserved for future reference. The need of the beneficiaries is so great, and the usefulness of the fund so manifest that they make their own appeal. The trustees will be satisfied if you will receive the facts as presented, having no fear but that the result will be that every Congregational church in the state, according to the measure of its ability, will wish to have a part in relieving the necessities of helpless workers, who, in their generation, have served men "by the will of God."

CHARLES T. PAGE, *President.*

WILLIAM P. FISKE, *Secretary.*



## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE MINISTERS' AND WIDOWS' CHARITABLE FUND.

---

The officers of the Ministers' and Widows' Charitable Fund, in their desire to increase the interest in the society, have thought it wise to present to the General Association a sketch of its history, and some facts in regard to the administration of the fund.

It is at their request that I have gathered some of the facts of the organization and history of the society, and added to them some considerations that appeal for increased gifts to its treasury.

The support of the ministry has been a vital question for the church from its earliest days. Ministers have constantly been worn out by their services, and many, becoming dependent, have by their sufferings appealed to the consideration of the people.

In the colony of Connecticut in October, 1748, the General Assembly voted to aid a needy minister, and again in 1772, repeated the act. In 1813, an "Annuity Society" was organized in that state, to aid ministers. As early as 1786, in Massachusetts a society was instituted, having for its object, in part, to meet the wants of the destitute families of deceased clergymen, called "The Massachusetts Congregational Charitable Society." It still continues. "The Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers" has quite a fund and continues to gather for an annual sermon.

It is worthy of note in the history of the Congregational churches of New Hampshire that the early years of this century gave birth to so many benevolent societies which have survived the generation that inaugurated them, and

become national in their adoption. The Home Missionary Society in 1801, The Female Cent Society in 1804, The Bible Society in 1811, and the Widows' Charitable Fund in 1813.

The men of that day saw clearly the need, and were wise to adopt means fitted to meet it. This state is thus definitely identified with the great national benevolent organizations of the denomination, most of which it antedated by its own state societies.

One cannot read the names of the pastors of that day without being reminded of the fact, that these were stalwart men in the ministry of our churches. It is well for us to remember them: Reverend Messrs. McFarland, Putnam, Church, Bradford, Lord, Woods, Burnham, French, Harris, Parker, Rowland, Webster, Sutherland, Shurtleff, Patrick, and Payson.

The next tier also: Reverend Messrs. Bouton, Barstow, Richards, Wallace, Savage, Curtis, Young, Toby, Davis, and Day.

The roll of the General Association bears these names, and others from year to year, and at the meetings they discussed vital questions, kept their hands on the spiritual pulse of the churches, watched the ministry, the education of young men entering it, the roll of the unemployed ministers, the character of the men coming to the state, and they kept themselves in vital relations to the neighboring states by receiving and sending delegates.

Such ministers raised up, and kept active, sterling laymen and noble women not a few, who gave character to our churches; they served their generation, and left a priceless and growing legacy of work begun, to us who came after them.

Such permanent results from transient ministries, such abiding forces that remain after the generation that harnessed them has passed away, such cumulative activities that are born of ordinary fidelities in daily life and so strangely spice the generations, are too often forgotten in the estimate of human



life, and especially in the verdict as we look for the influence of a "permanent and learned ministry," and its claim upon the churches.

The first suggestion of the Widows' Charitable Fund was perfectly natural. It arose from a single case that touched the hearts of those present, but that case was one of a multitude and an illustration of what was to be in years to come. A few people were present at the funeral of Rev. Ebenezer Flint, at Brentwood, in 1811, and touched by the condition of the family, a widow and four young children, Rev. Jonathan French suggested the duty of providing relief for indigent widows of ministers. Rev. John H. Church proposed the subject to the General Association, at the meeting in 1812, and a committee was appointed to devise measures for the establishment of such a fund.

At the meeting of the Association in Plymouth, September 21, 1813, the record says: "The committee appointed last year to devise measures for establishing a fund for the relief of the widows and children of deceased ministers of the gospel, who may need charitable assistance, reported the following plan, which was adopted:

#### PLAN FOR ESTABLISHING THE WIDOWS' CHARITABLE FUND.

"WHEREAS, Ministers of the Gospel do not always, at their decease, leave their families the means of a decent support;

"Therefore, the following plan is adopted for the establishing of a fund for the relief of the widows and children of deceased ministers who may need charitable aid.

1. "There shall be a board of twelve trustees, who shall, in the first instance, be chosen by this General Association, and shall be called the trustees of the Widows' Charitable Fund. Not less than seven, nor more than nine, of said trustees shall be ordained ministers of the gospel, and seven shall constitute a quorum.

2. "The said trustees shall annually elect, from their own body, a president, secretary, treasurer, and prudential com-

mittee, who shall continue in office till others are chosen. They shall also elect two persons to be auditors of the treasurer's accounts." Then the duty of the officers is defined.

The third article specifies the time and place of meeting and the business to be transacted. Vacancies are provided for in Article 4, and the methods of collecting money are stated in the fifth.

The sixth article, in regard to applications for charitable aid is as follows: "All applications for charitable aid from the fund aforesaid, shall be made by the widow or children of a deceased minister, or by their agent or guardian, to the prudential committee, or else such application shall be referred to said committee, who shall examine into the circumstances of the case and report the result of their inquiries and their opinion to the board. The board may determine how far the prudential committee shall answer the request of applicants in the intervals of the meetings of the board.

7. "This constitution may be amended by concurrence of the board and of this General Association."

A board of trustees was chosen, and the first meeting appointed to be held on election day, at 10 o'clock, at Concord. The trustees met at Doctor McFarland's study June 1, 1814. The choice of officers resulted as follows:

*President*—Rev. William Morrison.

*Secretary*—Deacon Amos Tappan.

*Treasurer*—Dr. Thomas Sargent.

*Prudential Committee*.—Rev. Walter Harris, Rev. Nathan Parker, Rev. John Smith.

*Auditors*—John True, Esq., Rev. Asa McFarland.

A committee was appointed to submit the business of this board to the convention and to report to this board some plan for raising the fund.

The convention to which allusion is made was the convention of Congregational and Presbyterian ministers, which was held annually in Concord on election week, and a sermon was delivered before it. That sermon, it was voted, should

also be considered the annual sermon before this board. This convention met till about 1856.

The next day, June 2, the committee reported, advising, "That a constitution be adopted at this session, and that hereafter there be an annual public contribution for this object, taken after the sermon delivered before the convention, also after the sermon delivered before the General Association.

2. "That each Presbyterian and Congregational minister in the state should pay at least one dollar annually and solicit donations from others.

3. "That a circular letter should be sent to the ministers requesting that there be one contribution annually in each church."

It was voted to hold the meetings on the first Wednesday in June, in connection with the convention.

The next year, 1815, the treasurer reported as holding \$221.98.

It was decided at this meeting that the money raised by contribution or subscription and all donations, unless otherwise ordered by the donors, should be considered as a permanent fund, and that one per cent. of the interest shall be annually added to the principal. The remaining interest, the annuities of the ministers, and the collections at the meetings of the convention and General Association may be expended annually.

This year a vote was passed to petition the legislature for an act of incorporation, and that the secretary report annually to the secretary of the convention and of the General Association.

At the meeting in 1816, the treasurer was authorized to make appropriations not exceeding forty dollars. He reported \$264.80 in the treasury.

(In 1817, the president, Rev. William Morrison, resigned, and Rev. William F. Rowland was chosen to the office.)

The act of incorporation was passed by the legislature, and approved by Gov. G. T. Gilman, June 23, 1815. It authorized the society to hold real and personal estate to the amount of \$4,000, free of taxation forever.