MEMOIR OF EBENEZER FISHER, D.D.; 1880

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

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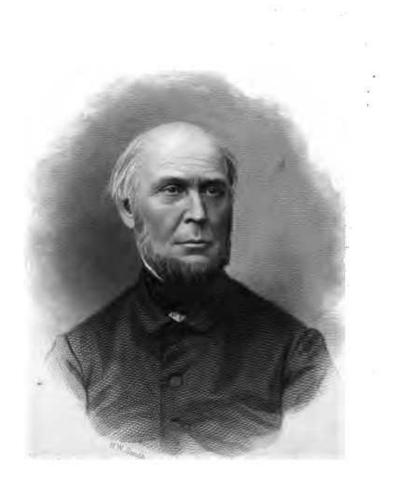
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GEORGE H. EMERSON

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GEORGE H. EMERSON, D.D.

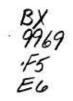
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The Alumní

OF THE

CANTON THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL,

PARTICULARLT THE MEMORERS THEREOF WHO ARE NOW ACTIVE IN THE MINISTRY OF THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, WHO CHERESH THE MEMORY OF ERENRZEE FISHER AS THEIR GREAT INSTRUCTOR, COUNSELLOR, AND FRIEND,

This Bolume

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

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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 asve 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 bey, 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,

PREFACE.

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 proparation, 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 dwalling 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, anxisties, 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 Hoese 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.

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