

The Baptist History Series

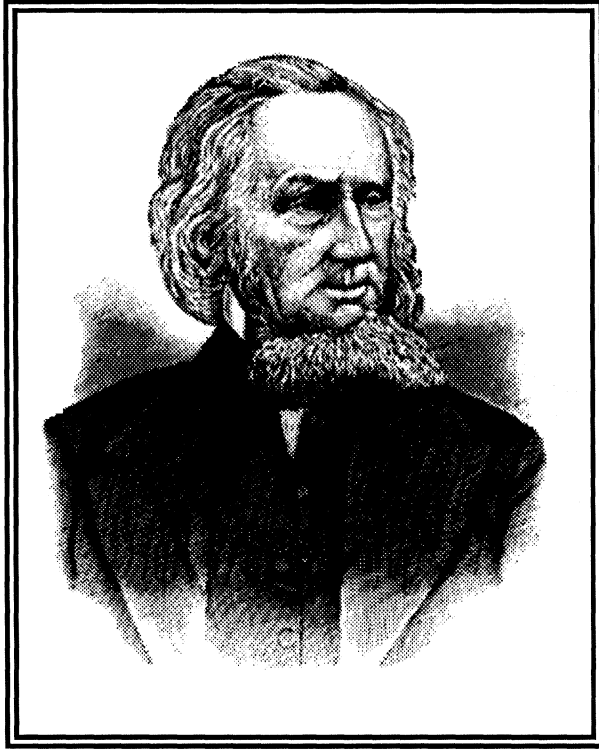
Number 5



50 Years Among the Baptists

David Benedict

FIFTY YEARS
AMONG THE BAPTISTS.



DAVID BENEDICT
1779-1874

FIFTY YEARS
AMONG THE BAPTISTS.

BY
DAVID BENEDICT, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "BAPTIST HISTORY," "ALL RELIGIONS," ETC., ETC., MEMBER OF THE
RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND OTHER KINDRED INSTITUTIONS.

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Thou hast given a *standard* to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth.
-- *Psalm 60:4*

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THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM

lux lucet in tenebris

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

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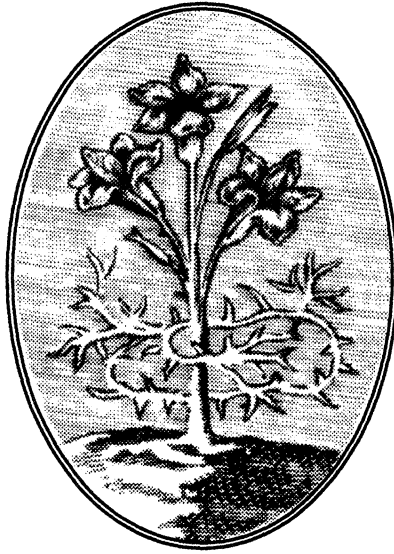
FOREWORD

DAVID BENEDICT was born on October 10, 1779, in Norwalk, Conn., the eldest child of Thomas and Martha Benedict. He became a member of the Baptist Church at Stanford, Conn., in 1799. Supporting himself as a shoemaker's apprentice and as a private tutor, he was able to graduate from Brown University in 1806, having early expressed a profound interest in Baptist history. For twenty-five years, he served as the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Pawtucket, R.I.

His major publications include: **The Watery War, or a Poetical Description of the Controversy on the Subjects and Mode of Baptism, by John of Enon**, published anonymously when he was in college; **A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America and Other Parts of the World**, published in 1813 and revised in 1848; **Fifty Years Among the Baptists**, published in 1860; and **History of the Donatists**, published after his death, which occurred on December 5, 1874.

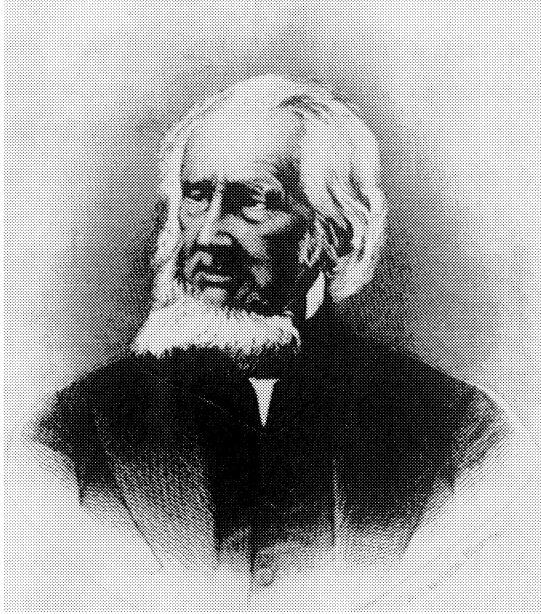
Dr. Benedict was the first American historian to write of the Baptists on a national scale. His research took him into all sections of the United States of the early 19th Century, one of our nation's most dramatic eras. A careful study of his **General History**. . . is essential to a study of the history of Baptists in America.

The value of **Fifty Years**. . . lies in its intimate and frank view of one of the most important half centuries in the development of our people in this country. This was a time when Baptists were searching for their true identity. The age of persuasion was past. A great unlimited field of expansion lay ahead on the frontier. Would Baptists maintain their age-old devotion to New Testament distinctives, or would they merge into the ever growing American Protestant movement? Dr. Benedict's work gives to us of today a unique glimpse at the dangers of such an assimilation.



Sicut lilium inter spinas sic amica mea inter filias

On The Cover: We use the symbol of the “lily among the thorns” from Song of Solomon 2:2 to represent the Baptist History Series. The Latin, *Sicut lilium inter spinas sic amica mea inter filias*, translates, “As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.”



David Benedict

P R E F A C E .

MY main object in preparing this small volume has been to collect and preserve such portions of Baptist history as could not be conveniently inserted in my former writings on this subject. Although most of the incidents here recorded are

of a very common character, yet they may be interesting to some of our people, who would like to review the doings of their brethren for the period they embrace; they may also afford aid to our future historians.

In the second part of this work, called the *Appendix*, I have given my comments on the model of the early Christians, in the construction of their churches, on the deaconship, on preaching, preachers and pulpits, and on church discipline generally, embraces the substance of my notes and comments on these matters for many years past.

As I have outlived most of my cotemporaries, and having from my youthful days cultivated a somewhat familiar acquaintance with all Baptist people, in all parts of the country, now in the evening of life, I leave for their perusal a few sketches of my experience and observations among them, for the last *fifty years*.

The form of *Decades*, or periods of ten years each, is a plan of my own, as I thought it would be more convenient, both for myself, and my readers.

PAWTUCKET, Rhode Island, *November 12, 1859.*

CONTENTS.

FIRST DECADE.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
Prefatory Remarks.—Five Decades, or Periods of Ten Years Each.	
—My Travels and Extensive Acquaintance with Baptist Ministers in Early Times.—Summary View of the Baptists about 1800.—No Periodicals.—Old Baptist Magazine.—Mite Societies.—But Few Educated Ministers.—Rise of Benevolent Institutions.....	15

CHAPTER II.

A Brief Account of My Early Efforts for the Collection of Materials for a General History of the Baptists in all Ages and Countries.—Baptist Ministers of Distinction in the Different States..	28
---	----

CHAPTER III.

Biographical Sketches of a Few of the Ministers Mentioned in the Preceding Chapter.—Stillman, Baldwin, Gano, Sharp, Cornell, Stanford, Parkinson, Williams, Staughton, Rogers, Jones, J. Richards, J. Healey, Furman, Bottsford, Fuller, Marshall, Mercer..	40
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

On Extempore Preaching.—The Support and the Neglect of Ministers.—Comments on their Various Habits and Conditions.....	55
--	----

CHAPTER V.

Missionary and Other Agencies.—Houses of Worship.....	69
---	----

CHAPTER VI.

	PAGE
On the Changes in Baptist Customs in the Course of Fifty Years.— In Church Affairs.—Associations.....	77

CHAPTER VII.

On the Popular Prejudices Against the Baptists in Former Times. —Their Unwise Policy in Some Things.—Baptist Publishers.— No Baptist Press.—Old-Fashioned Pulpits.—Modern Platforms.	92
--	----

SECOND DECADE.

ON THE RISE OF THE FOREIGN MISSION CAUSE AMONG THE
AMERICAN BAPTISTS.

CHAPTER VIII.

Judson and Rice Become Baptists.—The Triennial Convention.— The Missionary Union.—Rice Becomes an Agent.—The Colum- bian College, Difficulties About Missionary Money.—Death of Rice.....	111
--	-----

CHAPTER IX.

The Early Correspondence of Mr. Rice Pertaining to the Foreign Mission Cause, and My First Acquaintance with Him.—Sur- prising Changes Throughout a Large Part of the Baptist Denom- ination on the Subject of Missions.—The Anti-Mission Party.— Mr. Rice's Correspondence with Marshman and Judson in In- dia.—Letters and Journals of Mr. Hough.—On the Hindoos, by Mr. Ward.—Languages of the East.....	124
---	-----

CHAPTER X.

New Phases in the Doctrinal Creed of the Baptists.—The Fuller System Comes into Vogue.—On the Changes which Followed..	135
---	-----

CHAPTER XI.

Unitarianism among the American Baptists.—My Investigation of the System.—My Conferences with Some of our Men who Adopt-	
---	--

C O N T E N T S .

	PAGE
ed it.—Also with Dr. Kirkland of Harvard University, Dr. Freeman of Boston and others.—General Remarks on the System.—My Conclusions against it.....	145

C H A P T E R X I I .

On Customs now Generally Abolished, which Prevailed More or Less among the Baptists in Former Times; as Laying On of Hands.—Washing Feet.—Devoting Children.—Ruling Elders.—Decline in the Use of Brother and Sister, and Elder.—Seven Deacons the Gospel Number for a Full-Grown Church.....	160
---	-----

T H I R D D E C A D E .

O N T H E A G E O F E X C I T E M E N T S .

C H A P T E R X I I I .

Quiet Condition of the Baptists Generally.—Agitations about Freemasonry and Southern Slavery.—The Troubles which Followed. The Division of Churches.—The Removals of Ministers.—The Name of Stayshort Applied to Many.....	171
--	-----

C H A P T E R X I V .

The Old Triennial Convention.—The Meeting in New York in 1826.—The Board Removed to Boston.—The Columbian College.—The Home Missionary Society Formed.—Dr. Going.—Dr. Peck.—State Conventions.....	183
--	-----

C H A P T E R X V .

The Manner of Settling Ministers in Former Times, and of Supporting them.—Imperfect Support of them.—Revivals.—New Measures.....	194
--	-----

FOURTH DECADE.

CHAPTER XVI.

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| A New Baptist Register, by I. M. Allin.—A List of Small Literary Institutions. — Manual Labor Schools. — American and Foreign Bible Society..... | PAGE
207 |
|--|-------------|

CHAPTER XVII.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| The Southern Baptist Convention Formed.—The Causes which Led to this Measure.—New Methods of Conducting Associations.—Comments on the Agency System..... | 217 |
|--|-----|

CHAPTER XVIII.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| The Old Triennial Convention Assumes the Name of the Baptist Missionary Union.—Diversities Between the Two Bodies.—Some Objectionable Things.—Too Little Freedom for Speakers.—Too Little Time.—Too Many Young Speakers Take the Floor, Too Often.—Too Long..... | 228 |
|--|-----|

CHAPTER XIX.

- | | |
|--|-----|
| Some Account of My Publications.—Old Baptist History.—By Whom Published.—Difficulties in Circulating it by the War.—Other Works.—All Religions.—Interview with Leading Men of all Parties.—The Shakers of New Lebanon..... | 241 |
|--|-----|

CHAPTER XX.

- | | |
|---|-----|
| Authorship Continued.—Interviews with Catholics in Boston and Elsewhere.—With Scotch Seceders.—The Lutherans and Others in New York.—With the Moravians.—The Result of these Visitations.—My Last Baptist History.—Post Office Matters..... | 251 |
|---|-----|

CHAPTER XXI.

- | | |
|---|--|
| Authorship Continued.—My Compendium of Ecclesiastical History.—Motives for Undertaking the Work, to Make a Book for the People; To Give the Framework of Church History; To Bring | |
|---|--|

C O N T E N T S .

x i

	PAGE
out More Fully and Favorably the History of the Donatists and Other Reputed Heretics.—On the Term Puritan.—Miscellaneous Matters.....	264

F I F T H D E C A D E .

C H A P T E R X X I I .

Changes in Meeting-House Fixings and Comforts.—Changes in Church Music.—Organs.—Titles of Ministers.—My Efforts for Ministerial Education.—With Others.....	279
---	-----

C H A P T E R X X I I I .

A Review of all Collegiate Institutions among the Baptists in the United States.—A Review of their Theological Seminaries.—Theological Departments in Connection with our Universities and Colleges, to a Needful Extent, Recommended in Preference to Separate Schools.....	294
--	-----

C H A P T E R X X I V .

On Religious Newspapers in this Country and among the Baptists.—Difficulties at First.—Too Numerous at Times.—Their Secular Character.—First Sunday School.—On the Rise and Management of our Benevolent Institutions.—On the Death of Correspondents and Familiar Friends.....	305
---	-----

A P P E N D I X .

M I S C E L L A N E O U S A R T I C L E S .

C H A P T E R X X V .

On Church Organizations.—Arguments in Favor of the Early Christians Copying, in Substance, the Model of the Jewish Synagogues	325
---	-----

CHAPTER XXVI.

	PAGE
On the Baptist Deaconship.—The Original by Howell and Others.— Something Wrong in Our Deaconship.—The Scripture Qualifica- tions.—Crowell on Limited Appointments.—My Four Years' Rule.—Deacon Jones in the Sunny Side.—Arguments.—The Number 7.—Proofs from Antiquity.—Dialogue Between a Pas- tor and Deacon.....	339

CHAPTER XXVII.

Preaching, Preachers and Pulpits.—The First Preacher.—Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses.—The Prophets.—Ezekiel, Ezra—The First Pulpit.....	359
--	-----

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Preachers, Preaching, Pulpits and Clerical Manners.—Preachers under the Christian Dispensation.—John the Baptist.—Jesus Christ.—The Apostles.—The Early Fathers.—Chrysostom, Au- gustine, and Others.—Claude, Doddridge, etc.....	368
--	-----

CHAPTER XXIX.

On Church Discipline.—The Discipline of the Dutch Anabaptists, so called.—My Early Advisers.—My own MS. on Church Dis- cipline.—A. Fuller on the Discipline of the Primitive Churches. —Five Works Come Out Near the Same Time by Baker, Walker, Johnson, Howell, and Crowell.—Remarks on the Eighteenth of Matthew, on Councils, the Despotism of the Majority, and on Baptist Usage.....	386
--	-----

CHAPTER XXX.

A Letter to a Young Minister On Various Matters Connected with the Business of Preaching and Pastoral Duties.....	402
--	-----

CHAPTER XXXI

On a Model Church and a Model Pastor.....	416
---	-----

“A HISTORY of the Baptists should be understood in its objects and aims; and cleared, in the beginning, of misapprehension and perversion. It is not the history of a nationality, a race, an organization, but of people, *traced by their vital principles and gospel practices*. The unity to be exhibited and demonstrated was not brought about by force, by coercion of pains and penalties, by repressive and punitive Acts of Conformity; but by the recognition and adoption of a common authoritative and completely divine standard... the WORD OF GOD.”

Dr. J. L. M. Curry (1825-1903)

President of Howard College,
Professor of English & Philosophy at Richmond College,
Trustee of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and
United States Ambassador to Spain

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