

**A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BAPTISTS
AND THEIR DISTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES
AND PRACTICES, FROM THE
"BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL" TO
THE PRESENT TIME. PART FIRST**

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A Brief History of the Baptists and Their Distinctive Principles and Practices, from The "Beginning of the Gospel" to the Present Time. Part First by William Cecil Duncan

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WILLIAM CECIL DUNCAN

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A BRIEF

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THEIR DISTINCTIVE

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FROM THE "BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL" TO THE
PRESENT TIME.

PART FIRST:

FROM THE "BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL" TO THE RISE OF
EFFUSION AS BAPTISM AND OF INFANT BAPTISM,
28 A. D.—250 A. D.

BY

WILLIAM CECIL DUNCAN,

PROFESSOR OF THE GREEK AND LATIN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA.

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TO
JAMES HUGH LOW,
OF NEW ORLEANS,—
THE NEVER-FAILING FRIEND,
THE ZEALOUS AND CONSISTENT CHRISTIAN,
THE SELF-SACRIFICING AND WHOLE-SOUL'D BAPTIST,—
THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,
AS A SLIGHT TOKEN OF AFFECTIONATE REGARD,
BY HIS FRIEND AND BROTHER IN CHRIST.

PREFACE.

THE History of the Early Baptist Church has never yet been written. No book that treats comprehensively of Primitive Christianity, has viewed it, so far as I know, from a Baptist point of contemplation. Such an attempt is made, for the first time, in the present Volume.

In preparing this History, I have had the most scrupulous regard to accuracy ; looking at every point in the single light shed upon it by the Scriptures and by History. I am not conscious of having, in any instance, allowed what might be considered my Baptist predilections to influence, much less to direct, my researches for the Truth. Having taken the Scriptures and History as my guide, I have registered in the following pages, in a brief

yet comprehensive manner, the results of my study and reflection on the doctrines and usages of the Early Baptist Church.

I believe that not only all the leading, but all the subordinate, positions taken in this book, are strictly Baptist. Certain it is, that there is no one of its sentiments which is not entirely concordant with the *distinctive* principles and practices of that denomination. On some points of minor importance, there being room for a candid difference of opinion, the Baptists have no fixed and determinate doctrine. On these, I have felt at liberty to discourse with perfect freedom; not attempting to give,—what, in the nature of the case, can not be determined, and what, if it *were* determined, ought not, in any way, to bias the mind of a history-writer,—the present opinion of the majority of Baptists; but stating the conclusions which my own mind has reached after an independent and pains-taking investigation. No topic have I treated hastily; but have bestowed upon each a scrupulously careful examination. It has been my object to make a *true* rather than an immediately *popular* History; being firmly convinced, that, though error may meet with

favor for a time, the truth alone can stand the fiery trial of a rigid scrutiny, and live in coming years.

This book professes to be Part First of a "Brief History of the Baptists" in all ages. It is also an independent work; containing a compendious account of the History and of the Distinctive Principles and Practices of the Apostolic and *Early Baptist Church*. Another volume, bringing the History down to our own day, will be added in due time, if found advisable.

I have endeavored to make this Treatise a handbook of the History and Usages of the Primitive Baptist Church. If it bring to those who read it the same pleasure and profit it has brought to him who wrote it, I shall be content.—Go forth, then, child of labor, child of prayer; and mayst thou meet with a kind reception from candid and truth-loving hearts.

WM. C. DUNCAN.

NEW-ORLEANS, June 15, 1854.