

**THE BAPTISM OF ROGER
WILLIAMS: A REVIEW
OF REV. DR. W. H.
WHITSITT'S INFERENCE**

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The Baptism of Roger Williams: A Review of Rev. Dr. W. H. Whitsitt's Inference by Henry Melville King & Jesse B. Thomas

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HENRY MELVILLE KING & JESSE B. THOMAS

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HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

- Historical Discourse at the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Dudley Street Baptist Church, Boston, Mass. (*Boston, 1871*).
- Early Baptists Defended: a Review of Rev. Dr. Henry M. Dexter's account of the Visit to William Witter in "As to Roger Williams." (*Boston, 1880*).
- History of the Baptists in Boston, in Memorial Hist. of Boston, Vol. III. (*Boston, 1881*).
- Memorial Discourse at the Semi-Centennial Celebration of the First Baptist Church of Fitchburg, Mass. (*Fitchburg, 1881*).
- Historical Discourse at the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Emmanuel Baptist Church, Albany, N. Y. (*Albany, 1864*).
- A Century of National Life: a Thanksgiving Discourse. (*Albany, 1868*).
- The Baptists and Religious Liberty in this Country: an Address at the Dedication of the Backus Monument at North Middleboro', Mass. (*Boston, 1866*).
- Religious Liberty the Trophy of the Baptists: an Address delivered at Indianapolis before the Baptist Young People's Union of America. (*Chicago, 1864*).
- Historical Address at the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the First Baptist Sunday School in Providence, R. I. (*Providence, 1834*).
- A Summer Visit of Three Rhode Islanders to the Massachusetts Bay in 1631: a new edition of "Early Baptists Defended," enlarged by the addition of valuable matter. (*Providence, 1899*).
- The Mother Church: a brief Account of the Origin and early History of the First Baptist Church in Providence, R. I. (*Philadelphia, 1899*).

**THE
BAPTISM OF ROGER WILLIAMS**

**A REVIEW
OF REV. DR. W. H. WHITSITT'S INFERENCE**

**BY
HENRY MELVILLE KING**

**PASTOR OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
PROVIDENCE**

**WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY REV. JESSE B. THOMAS, D. D.
PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY IN THE NEWTON
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To

THE SACRED MEMORY
OF

Rev. Samuel Lunt Caldwell, D.D.

FOR FIFTEEN YEARS PASTOR OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
IN PROVIDENCE, WHOSE FRIENDSHIP ENRICHED MY EARLY
MINISTRY AND INTO WHOSE LABORS I HAVE NOW ENTERED;
WHO, AS PASTOR, THEOLOGICAL PROFESSOR AND COLLEGE
PRESIDENT, GAVE TO HIS THREEFOLD SERVICE IN LIFE A
HEART OF UNQUESTIONED DEVOTION, A SPIRIT OF BROAD
CATHOLICITY AND A MIND OF BARE CULTURE; AND WHO,
BY HIS CAREFUL HISTORICAL RESEARCHES, DID MUCH TO
ELUCIDATE AND PRESERVE THE HISTORY OF
"THE MOTHER CHURCH."

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INTRODUCTION

“Eternal vigilance is the price” of truth as well as “liberty.” An uncorrected misstatement of historic detail, even as to circumstances apparently of minor significance, may prove like a trifling crevice in the levee which, neglected, rapidly swells to a devastating crevasse.

It is, therefore, a sagacious as well as honorable instinct that prompts suspicion and challenge of every proposed re-interpretation of the facts or documents of the past which involves a radical reversal of wide-spread and supposedly authoritative opinion. Especially ought we to be sensitive to the proposal of any novel and eccentric theory as to the acts or words of our spiritual ancestors where it may, even inferentially or remotely, bring into question their long established reputation for

sagacity, sincerity, and unflinching loyalty to conviction. A people not zealous to cherish and jealous to protect the good name of their fathers have already ceased to appreciate the legacy transmitted to them at so great cost, and will soon cease to imitate the virtues they have undervalued.

It is a cherished opinion of the Baptists that when men have been brought face to face with the Word of God, unhindered by the perversions of priests and the fogs of tradition, they have inevitably recognized not only *that* they ought, but *how* they ought, to be baptized: for the one is as unequivocally clear in the language of the New Testament as the other. Noticing Christ's test of loyalty, "If a man love me he will keep my *words*," it is not to be lightly presumed that they would ignore or toy with an express command in the one case more readily than in the other. Accordingly it turns out as was to be expected, that the departure from the rule and practice of the New Testament, the immersion of believers, in the history of the church,