



History of the Donatists (Dissent and Nonconformity)

David Benedict

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Excerpt from History of the Donatists: With Notes

Many eminent men in different Christian countries have borne the name of Benedict. Of Latin and ecclesiastical origin, it is supposed to have been adopted as a proper name out of regard for some individuals distinguished in religion. The Benedicts of America do not, however, trace the line of their ancestry to any patron saints. "The bones of the good old ministers and deacons, who bore the name, would hardly lie quiet in their graves should any attempt of that kind be made."

The authentic history of the family begins with Thomas Benedict of Nottinghamshire, England, who was born in 1617. He was an only son, and the name, according to the tradition, had been confined to only sons in the family for more than a hundred years. In the spirit of his time, impatient of civil or ecclesiastical oppression, preferring voluntary exile rather than to endure the cruelties of the Stuarts and Lauds, Thomas Benedict came to New England in 1638. He resided for a time in the colony of Massachusetts Bay, then on Long Island, and afterwards became an influential man in the Connecticut colony.

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