

DEXTER P. SMITH, D.D.

[Dexter P. Smith, D.D., is probably the oldest Baptist minister now living in Iowa, and well deserves the following notice. As a retired parson he enjoys the evening of life, occasionally preaching, with easy competence.]

Dexter P. Smith, D.D., was born in Tully, Onondaga county, New York, December 16th, 1810. He entered Madison University, Hamilton, New York, in 1831, and graduated in 1835, but spent some time afterward in the theological department. He had intended to work in the foreign missionary field, but his health did not permit. He was pastor of two churches,—one in New Hampshire, the other in New York,—for several years, and was very successful. By the solicitation of the Baptist Home Missionary Society, he was induced to leave the East, and, in 1845, he came to Iowa City. During his first six years here he organized a flourishing church, and a house of worship was erected, then the best in the State. In 1851 he resigned his pastorate to accept the appointment of general agent for the Sunday-schools of the State, and organized about fifteen hundred schools,—a large number, when we consider the condition of our State in those days. In 1859 he resigned his position of agent to accept an appointment of the Iowa Baptist State Convention. He was, however, compelled to relinquish this office in three years, as well as other public services, on account of ill-health. Yet he could not remain idle for a long time, and when his health improved, he accepted the office of Corresponding and Financial Secretary of the Baptist Union, and is still an active worker for the church and its interests. He was married to Miss Hannah Borland in 1837. He, at a recent date, received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from his *alma mater*.

While engaged in his Sunday school agency, he made an urgent appeal in the Baptist Church at Davenport. A person present gave a written pledge for one thousand dollars, under an assumed name, payable at a bank in that city. No deposit was found to the name; but on the date when due, a stranger entered the bank and paid one thousand dollars in gold, and then went his way, unknown.

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