

A Century of Baptist Achievement¹

By the Rev. W. H. P. Faunce, D.D.

President of Brown University.

THIS book is not in itself a history, but is the material for a history yet to be written. Professor Newman (recently elected President of Baylor University, Texas) has called to his aid about thirty different writers, and the result is a volume which gives us in five hundred closely printed pages a large amount of material concerning the progress of Baptists in every part of the globe during the last hundred years. Such information, put in compact form, it is not easy to acquire in case of a denomination of decentralized polity, and the book is therefore of great value to all who would study the growth of one great branch of the Christian Church. Nowhere else can the same historical material be found in the same space. Soon, let us hope, some organizing mind—why not Professor Newman himself?—will seize this mass of facts, trace events to causes, explain why the one hundred and fifty thousand Baptists of the year 1800 have become six millions in 1900, show the significance of the change from “Elder Knapp” to George Dana Boardman, and trace the relation of movements within this branch of the Church to the great movements, religious, scientific, social, and national, which have marked the nineteenth century.

The writers are commendably modest. They have a remarkable story to tell—the story of a people that were a century ago a feeble folk, numerically small, mentally acute but untrained, spiritually fervid but narrow, a people without any central authority, without a written creed, without a liturgy, yet advancing to a position numerically the second in America, in gifts to education perhaps the first, and spiritually far more sympathetic than their fathers. Yet there is here no waving of denominational banners, no adulation of great leaders or great achievements, no attempt to recount the number of chapels built in a day or the number of converts

made in a year. With the exception of the important article on the Publication Society—where the word “Society” occurs forty-seven times—there is a constant subordination of instruments and apparatus to the great work of extending Christianity in the earth. The polemic element is absent, and the great controversies of the past—over such matters as denominational translations of the Bible or denominational restrictions of the Lord’s Table—have obviously lost their interest, and appear here only as “burnt-out craters healed with snow.” The writers evidently believe that the growth of Baptists is due chiefly to a polity in harmony with democratic ideals and institutions, and to that profound reverence for the Bible which has always characterized Baptist thought and endeavor. The first of these causes has operated powerfully in America, while in Australia, where “the whole political trend is to State Socialism and concentration of all initiative and power in the executive,” the Baptists are still very weak.

But this book has the defects of its qualities. Not only is there a necessary lack of continuity and balance in such a symposium, but there is occasionally a peculiar obliviousness to the most significant facts and tendencies. Without for a moment accepting Renan’s dictum that “to write the history of a religious faith one must have believed it, but believe it no longer,” we may doubt whether busy pastors and missionaries and executives can perceive the historical significance of movements they themselves are shaping. The very names of some of the ablest Baptist writers and thinkers are barely mentioned or are wholly absent. Must one stand outside of a Church in order to perceive who are its leaders? Four great university presidents in America have grown up in the Baptist denomination and profoundly affected its history during the last twenty-five years—Presidents Andrews, Harper, Schurman, and Wheeler. Yet the writers of this book apparently know nothing of the educational

¹ *A Century of Baptist Achievement*. Edited by A. H. Newman, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Church History in McMaster University. American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia.

work of Dr. Andrews, make no mention of the impetus given to Old Testament study by Dr. Harper, and have evidently never seen the writings of Dr. Schurman or Dr. Wheeler. Among "Baptist Contributions to Literature" they number "Olney's series of mathematical textbooks" (1), but they fail to mention the work of their foremost New Testament scholar, Professor Ernest D. Burton, or of one of the most influential theologians of the present day, Professor W. N. Clarke. Historical perspective is strangely distorted when Baptist literature includes "To Have and to Hold," but excludes such interpreters of the Christian origins or the Christian faith as Clarke and Burton and Harper and Schurman. Is it true of a democratic Church, as of a democratic State, that its real leaders are seldom recognized until they are gone?

For a similar reason, probably, there is no sketch of the extraordinary work of the American Baptist Education Society. Since its founding in 1888 that Society, with one great giver and thousands of smaller contributors behind it, has done a work whose magnitude cannot yet be appreciated, but whose history would certainly be instructive and suggestive to every branch of the Christian Church.

We are glad to see that the book includes a succinct and well-balanced history of the Baptist Congress. This organization, which owes its early success chiefly to Dr. E. H. Johnson and to Dr. Norman Foss, has been a constant missionary force within the denomination. Refusing to become the "organ" of either the radicals or the conservatives, it has steadily maintained a platform on which every shade of denominational opinion may fearlessly express itself, and has visibly "set the bounds of freedom wider yet." It has thus obtained a place and function almost as important as that of the great Foreign Missionary Union; for while the Union has propagated the faith, the Congress has made the faith increasingly worthy of propagation.

The story of the work of the Baptist Young People's Union is full of interest, while the record of the Home Mission Society in "the winning of the West" reveals a Christian statesmanship rarely equaled.

There are some happy and significant

omissions in this new church history. There are here no discussion of liturgies or creeds or vestments or candles, no heresy trials, no record of the ingenuities of ecclesiastical politics. Will it not some day be possible to write the current history of all our churches without these excrescences? But why, in this record of a hundred years, is there so little to be said of Christian philanthropy? The Baptist Year-Book mentions in America "ten homes for the aged, fifteen for the care of orphans and children, three societies for the assistance of ministers who are worn out or unable to work, and six hospitals and sanitariums." No wonder Dr. Bitting pronounces these resources "pitifully inadequate"! For a denomination which is so loyal to the New Testament, which constantly inculcates the reproduction of "the primitive faith, the primitive hope, and the primitive love," thus entirely to neglect institutions for that kind of ministration which was the characteristic work of Christ in Galilee is an anomaly which cannot much longer continue.

A similar stricture is made by President Wood when he writes of "our lack of share in the thoughtful life of our century." This is, he says, because "our spirit has led us rather into executive and administrative service." But it is impossible to lead in action for any length of time unless we lead in thinking as well. Baptists need to develop schools of thought, not opposing but supplementary. They need, in Dr. Storrs's phrase, "two wings to fly with." Under the powerful influence of the University of Chicago, which is leavening the entire ministry of the Western States, and of the Baptist Congress, which is a growing force for honest thinking, Baptists may now be expected to develop a stronger intellectual life, a higher type of periodical literature, and take that place in the progress of the world which some of their distinguished leaders have taken already. There are to-day thousands of young men in their ranks for whom the old shibboleths are meaningless, to whom the newer Biblical study has come as a glad release and spiritual inspiration, and whose ideal of Christian service is not exhausted in "contending for the faith." These men know what service their Baptist forbears rendered to

the cause of civil and religious freedom, and they are quietly resolved to enjoy the same freedom to-day. They realize that the strength of their great denomination must lie, not in its millions of adherents, not in its literalistic interpretation of

ancient writings, but in its ever-growing apprehension of the spirit of Jesus Christ, its ever-fresh translation of that spirit into the language of the twentieth century, and its constant application of that spirit to the institutions and the lives of men.

Books of the Week

This report of current literature is supplemented by fuller reviews of such books as in the judgment of the editors are of special importance to our readers. Any of these books will be sent by the publishers of The Outlook, postpaid, to any address on receipt of the published price.

Chapters on Greek Metric. By Thomas Dwight Goodell. (Yale Bicentennial Publications.) Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. 6½×9 in. 251 pages. \$2.

The subject of this volume is one of the more recondite problems of classical philology, viz., the recovery of the ancient meters, and a reconstruction of the series of sounds which Greek verses represent. Professor Goodell aims to carry forward the progress which has been made in this direction by a critical discussion of ancient authorities and the theories of eminent foreign scholars, in which our conceptions of Greek verse-forms may be brought a little nearer to the reality. It is for specialists to pronounce upon the points of controversy here raised with other scholars. One who shrinks from venturing opinions upon these may yet affirm that the chair of Woolsey and of Hadley is worthily filled by Professor Goodell.

Composition and Rhetoric for High Schools. By Sara E. H. Lockwood and Mary Alice Emerson. Ginn & Co., Boston. 5×7½ in. 470 pages.

This book is not so commonplace as its title. As a manual of the art of thinking clearly and writing correctly it bears the stamp of individuality and originality, and evinces the hand of accomplished teachers. It combines the fundamentals of grammar and rhetoric suitably to the requirements of secondary schools, and calls the critical faculty into constant and vigorous activity. The method of treatment is cumulative, and lays stress throughout on the pupil's own thinking and writing. Pupils who have "done" the exercises in this book need never fear their college entrance examinations.

Crazes, Credulities, and Christian Science. By Charles M. Oughton, M.D. E. H. Colegrove, 65 Randolph St., Chicago. 8×5 in. 121 pages. \$1.

The author feels that medical men have hardly done their due part in public criticism of Christian Science. As a physician he bears testimony against it in a brief, good-tempered, but incisive argument. His exposure of its fallacies, his contrast of rational with irrational therapeutics, and his exhibition of what medical science has achieved, are to be commended to those who are looking for wholesome and tonic counsel.

Don Quixote. Retold for Young People by Calvin Dill Wilson. Illustrated. T. Y. Crowell & Co., New York. 7×4½ in. 251 pages. 60c.

Daniel, Darius the Median, Cyrus the Great: A Chronological Historical Study. By the Rev. Joseph Horner, D.D., LL.D. Eaton & Mains, New York. 7½×5 in. 142 pages. \$1.20.

This scholarly monograph undertakes to support the traditional belief as to the date and authorship of the Book of Daniel. It is mainly, though not exclusively, concerned to vindicate the accuracy of the historical references of the book to the times of Darius and Cyrus.

Goethe's Poems. Selected and Edited by Julius Goevel. Henry Holt & Co., New York. 5×7 in. 244 pages. 80c.

Guide to Wonalancet and the Sandwich Range of New Hampshire. The Out-Door Club, Wonalancet, N. H. 4½×6¾ in. 59 pages. 50c.

Gulliver's Travels. By Dean Swift. Illustrated. T. Y. Crowell & Co., New York. 4½×6½ in. 383 pages. 60c.

This favorite of nearly two centuries here appears newly dressed in type and illustration, all equipped to win a new generation of readers.

Heart: A Schoolboy's Journal. By Edmondo di Amicis. Translated by Isabel F. Haggood. Illustrated. T. Y. Crowell & Co., New York. 5×7 in. 371 pages. 60c.

The Italians are a people who make up a large part of our present population, and of whom little is commonly known. This book shows us the very heart of Italian youth, and is charged with the spirit of nobility and broad humanity. The versatility of boy nature and the courage and gentleness of the school-master leave on the mind pictures not to be forgotten. In style the little book is a masterpiece. It has had scores of editions in Italy, and has more than once been translated into English.

Horace's Odes and Epodes. Introduction and Notes by Charles E. Bennett. Allyn & Bacon, Boston. 7½×5½ in. 424 pages. \$1.40.

This is an attractive edition of a favorite author. An outline of contents and a designation of its meter prefixed to each poem is a new and desirable feature. The Notes appended to the collection are ample and generally judicious. They are, however, confined to an elucidation of the poet's meaning, and of his references to persons and events, and pay little if any attention to literary forms and values.