

mation of the true state of affairs. Further it was recommended that church members should be presented with a copy of the pamphlet "A Five-Point Programme of Christian Education," in order that they also might come to the conferences having done a little preliminary thinking.

It is impossible as yet to tabulate results, but on all hands churches are speaking of the value of the enquiry and conferences. One large church has even gone so far as to say that the enquiry is the biggest single event in its life for over forty years.

Since, however, the whole campaign may rightly be described as a mission to ministers, deacons, teachers and all church members, time alone will show how far it has been rightly planned and properly undertaken.

J. B. MIDDLEBROOK.

Mr. Seymour J. Price's "Popular History of the Baptist Building Fund."

The Centenary Volume: 1824-1924.

READERS of *The Baptist Quarterly* remember with gratitude the series of articles which were not long since contributed to its pages by Mr. Seymour J. Price, commemorating the centenary of the Baptist Building Fund. They revealed to a larger public than before that the Denomination possesses a writer of real historic ability—one who can explore regions but little known, quite romantic in their interest, and deeply significant in their value and influence. And now these articles may be had in permanent and attractive form, which deserves to be in the hands of a far larger circle of readers than the membership of the Baptist Historical Society. It is "popular,"—and it is fine!

Like many other religious societies of various denominations, fruit of the Evangelical Revival, the Baptist Building Fund had its birthplace in "The King's Head Poultry"; the date was the 10th November, 1824; and the name at the first was "The London Baptist Building Fund." Very clearly does Mr. Price trace the various stages through which the Society passed in the course of its evolution. In particular he dwells on the important change that was introduced in 1846 when the system of *Grants*

gave place to the far more beneficial system of *Loans*, repayable in *half-yearly instalments, free of interest*. That has saved the Churches concerned not less than £145,000! This, of course, is not the place to dwell upon details of a remarkable history that has already appeared in this Magazine; but one may rejoice to note that the excellence of Mr. Price's articles in this Magazine created a demand for their publication in book-form. The response to that demand is admirable, and the Kingsgate Press is to be congratulated on a volume worthy of the subject and of the Denomination. The type, the setting, and the clarity of the arrangement of its contents and statistics, all aid in enhancing the sustained interest of the History. It appears in two very slightly differing covers:—one, in green cloth, at the very reasonable price of three shillings and sixpence; the other a limited Presentation Edition, morocco grained, gilt top, seven shillings and sixpence. A delightful feature is the inclusion of eight portraits of men who have given devoted service to the Fund during the past eighty years. They are—William Bowser, who is credited with introducing the change from the *grant* to the *loan* system; Dr. Newman, whose contribution of £1,000 gave the initial impulse to the change; Alfred T. Bowser, Secretary, 1861-1885, and Treasurer, 1885-1890; Samuel Watson, Hon. Solicitor, 1868-1920; Joseph B. Mead, Treasurer, 1890-1897; William Payne, Treasurer, 1897-1908; W. W. Parkinson, Treasurer, 1908—; H. H. Collier, Secretary, 1908—; the portrait of James Benham, Treasurer, 1864-1885, could not be obtained. But these eight are but a few of the many, ministers and laymen, who with equal faithfulness have devoted sanctified common-sense and fine business talent on the Committee and in the Secretariat and Treasurership (both Honorary) of the B.B.F.

Very rightly Mr. Price says, "the Fund is really misnamed a *Building* Fund as it has ceased to take any active part in the stimulation of church extension. . . . As now worked and organized, it is a most successful and ably managed *Loan* Fund, but it is purely a Loan Fund." May he live to see the establishment of the larger organisation that he desires, under the direction of the Council of the Baptist Union; and may he live to be the historian of its early enterprise! This present book of his is beyond praise.

SIDNEY W. BOWSER.

FOR the ANNUAL GATHERING of the BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY, on May 3rd, members and friends are asked to assemble at St. George's Fountain, Bristol (frequent

trams from the Centre and from Old Market Street: allow *twenty* minutes). The party will be under the guidance of Rev. S. J. Ford, of Hanham, who will conduct them to various places of interest to Baptists, giving brief historical sketches of each, e.g., Terrill's "Terraces" and Conham House, at both of which Baptists held meetings in time of persecution, and Conham Ferry, where two Baptist ministers lost their lives in 1683, in trying to avoid capture by swimming. The tour will conclude at Hanham Old Meeting House (originally built in 1714 by Andrew Gifford) with tea at 4.30 (tickets 9d. each) and an hour's meeting at 5.15, after which those present can return by tram to Old Market Street.

MR. FORD'S keen interest in Baptist History and comprehensive knowledge of it is abundantly proved by the *World View of Baptist History*, which he has prepared in view of the Bunyan Tercentenary, and of which he has favoured us with a copy. It consists of a handsome chart, accompanied by brief explanatory chapters, in which are made apparent to the eye the course of Baptist principles in Church history from the primitive age onwards, and the various ramifications of the Baptists in the modern world. It testifies to considerable ingenuity and industry on the part of the author, and we think that ministers or other leaders of Young People's classes might find it of real service. The diagram with its incidental pictures is calculated to awaken interest in the subject beforehand, and the pleasant effort involved in tracing out the various currents of Baptist history would be likely to assist in fixing the facts of that history in the learners' minds. We hope that Mr. Ford may be rewarded for his labour by seeing it become widely useful.

THOUGH 'printed for private circulation,' we should like to draw our readers' attention to *Coming of Age: the Story of twenty-one years of the London Baptist Property Board*, by its Hon. Secretary (Kingsgate Press, 1928). The progress of the Board, and the amount of valuable work achieved by it for churches of our Denomination in that period, are really astonishing, and they have found an excellent historian in Mr. Price. His style is ideal for the purpose: at once simple and clear, crisp and easy, direct and vigorous. And he has the not too common quality of being able to evince the inherent interest of his subject, and of relying on this interest to make its own way with his readers. His is surely a rare combination of literary gift with business ability.