

## History of Baptists in Scotland.

A SUBSTANTIAL volume of more than 300 pages, well designed, well written, well illustrated, shows a new departure by the Library Committee of 1898. We appreciate the compliment by the now Glasgow Baptist Publications Committee in their adoption of our format.

There are hints at a very early emergence of Baptist principles. John Knox inveighed against Scottish Dippers: it would be interesting if some antiquary would follow up the clue and find some more about these men; that would give Scotland a very clear priority. As matters stand, the earliest man who is more than a name, appears to be Gilbert Gardin of Tallyfruskie—a place not catalogued in modern gazetteers. When a campaign of persecution, ordered by Cromwell, was carried out by Monk, a graphic description was given by Robert Pitilok in 1659. Of Gardin he said that he was “known to be pious and of a blameless conversation, who merely for conscience’ sake about seventeen years since suffered the sentence of excommunication by the national ministry in Scotland; and since for the same cause close imprisonment by their power above a year’s space and a half.” Is it possible that there was a pure indigenous Baptist movement in 1642?

It is clear that the second movement, of Sir William Sinclair, did depend on his being on military duty in England. He carried north one good Baptist innovation, and produced the first hymn book for Scotland, where the followers of Knox had limited themselves to Psalms of David.

Although Carmichael and M’Lean do not seem to have thought of mutual baptism, and the former did go to be baptized by Dr. Gill at the Barbican baptistery in 1765, yet the movement was so original that “Scotch Baptists” were long noted for their decided views on church order and worship.

The volume traces with care how another stream of influence came from the Haldanes. If they had been quickened by hearing of Carey, yet they were not precipitate in their advance from Mission work to the full Baptist position. But then they contributed the emphasis on Education which had hitherto been lacking; and their work at Grantown-on-Spey provided trained men for the wide evangelism in highlands, islands, lowlands.

Francis Johnstone contributed another element a generation

later. Trained at Bradford, he brought back that sense of perspective which is not always developed among stay-at-homes. Ample justice is done to his statesmanship. We are not rich in men who survey the field, try to realise needs and opportunities, then to persuade a denomination. Johnstone sketched a programme in 1843 which has hardly been improved upon after eighty years. He left, however, for Cambridge in 1856. Again and again we find this migration. The gain of England and the Colonies has been very great. But it may be questioned whether Culross, Landels, and others, might not have exercised an even greater influence in their own land.

The various movements began to coalesce in 1850, and since then the progress has been fairly steady. It is traced with some care, and the only point left obscure is the nature and the influence of Sunday-schools; perhaps they do not differ widely from those in England, but we have a suspicion that there is something the south might learn, if it only knew. As it is, there are ample materials for judging the contributions to Foreign Missions, to Literature, and the attention given to Social Work.

Half the volume is thus very readable and interesting. The other half presents an enormous mass of facts as to the separate churches. There have been 231 Baptist churches in Scotland, of which 154 are alive at this day. The full story of each is given, with occasional interesting detail, and a good picture of its present home. Then one skilful packer has compressed the whole into fifteen pages, which will be invaluable for reference.

The band of writers may be heartily congratulated on their presentation of the story, and we trust that their enterprise will both quicken the denominational life in Scotland, and awaken English Associations to complete a similar survey south of the Cheviots. For Yorkshire, Lancashire, Worcestershire the work has been done; for London it is nearly ready, and Lincolnshire is in good hands. Other districts will find a good model in Scotland.