

In Memoriam.

WITHIN a few weeks of each other, two ex-treasurers of the Baptist Historical Society have passed into the unseen world, after long lives of honourable and distinguished service amongst things seen, viz. J. W. Thirtle, on December 5th, 1934, and F. J. Blight, on January 27th, 1935. Their united years of office have covered the whole life of the Society, apart from the first three years, during which James Ward, of Nottingham, was treasurer. Dr. Thirtle was appointed in 1911 and served until 1921, when the old *Transactions* were transformed into the new *Baptist Quarterly*. Mr. Blight then succeeded him, and held office until the spring of last year. Dr. Thirtle was eighty-one when he died, and Mr. Blight seventy-seven.

J. W. Thirtle was a journalist of nearly sixty years' standing, most of which were passed on the staff of *The Christian*, of which he had been editor since 1920. He was a man of scholarly interests, especially in linguistic study, and he published several books dealing with the Bible (*The Titles of the Psalms*, 1904; *Old Testament Problems*, 1907; and a later work on *The Lord's Prayer*). His loyalty to the Gospel was associated with what is generally known as "fundamentalism," but this did not hinder him from hearty co-operation with men of a like loyalty who did not share his own ways of interpreting Scripture. He was always genial and helpful, so that it was a pleasure to meet him and work with him. He rendered frequent service to the Society through his professional knowledge, as well as through the tedious work of gathering in belated subscriptions; nor did he cease to attend and help when he laid down the office of treasurer. We may well apply to him two sentences which he wrote for our *Transactions* in 1911, with reference to James Stuart and Judge Willis respectively, as part of their joint obituary notice; we may say of J. W. Thirtle that he "combined intellectual culture with a singularly genial disposition . . . his life was profoundly dominated by the Christian verities, and he was peculiarly interested in Baptist history."

F. J. Blight was a publisher of forty years' standing, and from 1899 to 1927 was head of Charles Griffin & Co., Ltd. The record of his conspicuous service in the publication of technical literature may be found in the "Centenary Volume" of the firm's work (1920). In 1931, there appeared a biographical sketch of him and his work by George Hawker, containing

lengthy autobiographical notes. He was proud of his Devonshire origin and of the long family pedigree which he could trace. The book bears frequent evidence of his artistic tastes, which had been developed and disciplined by early training for the profession of an architect. At an early age he heard the call to Christian service, and throughout his long life, almost to his last days, he was active in the Baptist Church life of London. All he did was done with exactitude and finish, from punctual and regular attendance at committees down to his very handwriting. From the time that he became treasurer, the Baptist Historical Society could always show a sound financial statement. In the publication of our secretary's *History of British Baptists* for the Angus Trustees, his care for both production and circulation showed part of the secret of his business success.

Both these men were loyal Baptists, but both of them recognised that denominational loyalty is but the means to a larger end, and neither confined his interests and voluntary work within denominational limits. Both of them felt the appeal of the past, but both of them recognised that true history is no museum of antiquities, but a moving stream that ought to broaden out into the full river of life, on the banks of which men live to-day. In their different ways they served the One God and Father of us all, and they have both left an honourable name for Christian character and Christian service.

H.W.R.

Thomas Matthew of Colchester, and Matthew's Bible of 1537.
Benham & Co., Colchester. 6d.

This reprint of contributions by Dr. Whitley to the *Essex Review* is handsomely produced. The folio English Bible of 1537 combined the best work of Tindale and Coverdale, and is the foundation of the modern Bibles used among both Roman Catholics and Protestants. Dr. Whitley here gives himself to a careful study of the real connection of Thomas Matthew with this Bible. He traces Matthew's career in Colchester, with special reference to his interest in Biblical study, and proves that Matthew has received far less credit than is due to him for the Bible of 1537. As usual, Dr. Whitley brings to his subject an amazing knowledge of the period, and shows his capacity for detailed and minute investigation.