

Editorial Notes.

THE annual meeting of the Baptist Historical Society was held at Bloomsbury Central Church, on 23rd April, under the chairmanship of Mr. Seymour J. Price. After tea, guests from Canada and New Zealand were welcomed. The secretary reported another year of quiet but useful service, expressed regret at Mr. Payne's resignation from the editorial board, but congratulated him upon his accession to the General Secretaryship of the Union and the forthcoming conferment upon him of a doctorate by St. Andrew's. The plan to gain new members was outlined. Deep regret was expressed at the loss sustained by the Society through the death of Dr. P. W. Evans, one of its vice-presidents. In his treasurer's report, Mr. Calder stated that expenditure in 1950 totalled £197 while income was £155, leaving a serious total deficit of £106. All the officers were re-elected. Dr. Hugh Martin accepted a cordial invitation to become a vice-president. Members then heard a scholarly and witty paper, read by Rev. Gordon Rupp, of the Richmond Methodist College, on "Erasmus and Luther, 1525" which was greatly appreciated. Prayer by the President closed another interesting and enjoyable annual meeting. By the time these notes are in print, a historical session will have been held during the Baptist Commonwealth Congress in June, of which a report will be given in our next issue.

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The passing of Dr. John William Ewing at the age of eighty-six has been widely mourned. Born in Bythorn, Huntingdonshire, he was brought up in Kenninghall, Norfolk, where his father was part-time pastor of the Baptist church. Educated at Bishop's Stortford and Spurgeon's College, he was minister at East Hill, Wandsworth and Rye Lane, Peckham. Upon the setting up of the General Superintendency he was appointed to the Metropolitan area, retiring in 1934. One of the youngest ever to fill the office, Dr. Ewing was President of the Baptist Union as far back as 1912. To most of the younger generation Dr. Ewing was an old, gracious and rather remote figure seen each year on the Assembly platform. But there are those who recall his eloquence and power in the pulpit, his literary gifts and administrative abilities. He addressed each of the first five Congresses of the Baptist World Alliance, was a former Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council and an active supporter of the World's Evangelical Alliance. The General Committee of the Baptist Missionary

Society and the Council of the Baptist Union knew him as a loyal and trusted member and leader over a long period of years. His death breaks one of the remaining links with the days of Spurgeon and Samuel Harris Booth and that age of Nonconformist prosperity in which flourished the ministries of Silvester Horne, J. H. Jowett, John Clifford and others who are becoming only names to the present generation. Few have so ably and devotedly given themselves to the Denomination as this faithful, kindly servant of Christ.

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Two documents in Dr. Williams's Library which are frequently in demand by research students are now available on loan in microfilm form. They are (i) (Dr. Williams's Library MS. 35.4.), a list written by Dr. John Evans (1680-1730) and bearing the date 1715 (with corrections and additions down to 1729), giving lists of Dissenting congregations in England and Wales by counties with the names of ministers and some additional information. (ii) (Dr. Williams's Library MS. 35.5), compiled by Josiah Thompson and giving similar lists of congregations by counties for the years 1715 and 1773. That these lists are now available without a visit to London may be of interest to some of our readers, if they have access to the apparatus needed for microfilm reading. If these prove useful to students a number of other MSS will probably be made available in the same form.

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Both the *Twentieth Century* and the *Manchester Guardian* have sympathetically drawn attention to the plight in which many learned societies are now finding themselves. In no other land have they found so congenial and fruitful a soil as in Britain. But today, their resources failing to keep pace with ever rising costs, these indispensable institutions are facing critical problems of which increased membership charges would provide no solution. It is said that government assistance is to be given to those concerned with the physical sciences. What is to happen to those which serve the humanities? "There seems to be a case for an inquiry into the whole position," says a *Manchester Guardian* leader, "and without such delay as may result in some valuable learned societies coming to shipwreck before a remedy has been found." Government aid, which in some circles is now seized upon as the panacea for all ills, might not be accepted by some of these societies without considerable and understandable hesitation. Assistance from some source would, however, appear to be essential if many of these valuable media of knowledge and culture are not to be driven out of existence by economic pressure.

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The Bible and Social Justice is the title of a useful booklet of some forty pages (published by the British and Foreign Bible Society, 2s.) recently written by the Historical Society's new vice-president, Dr. Hugh Martin. While admitting that the record of the Christian Church in relation to social justice is somewhat chequered the author claims that the Church is the mother of prophets and pioneers who have roused the consciences of men and crusaded against evils and abuses. Since the Bible never ceases to cry for social justice this, states Dr. Martin, could hardly be otherwise and, choosing examples ranging from Clement of Alexandria to Charles Kingsley, he shows how fidelity to "God's Book of Justice" has inspired men of different lands and ages with a passionate concern for the rule of righteousness in every realm of life including business and politics. Written with that clarity, knowledge and skill which characterise all Dr. Martin's publications, this is a small but useful contribution to the literature of this subject. Baptists will be especially interested in the chapter on William Carey.

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Some months before the Baptist World Congress in Cleveland last year, a Commission on the Doctrine of Baptism was appointed, with Rev. E. A. Payne, then of Oxford, and Rev. Johannes Norgaard, of Denmark, as co-chairmen. A preliminary report, a bibliography and questionnaire were prepared and, on presenting the report to the Congress, Mr. Payne delivered an address on "Baptism in Present-Day Theology." These have now been printed in a small but valuable booklet, *The Doctrine of Baptism*, published by the Baptist World Alliance (obtainable from the Carey Kingsgate Press, 6d. plus postage). The report notes the wide and vigorous discussions now taking place on Baptism, welcomes the recognition by theologians of certain truths for which Baptists have contended and invites individuals, groups, churches, unions etc. to submit answers to the questionnaire with a view to issuing a fuller report on the basis of the information received. It is to be hoped that this booklet will have a wide circulation, be carefully studied and discussed, and call forth answers from many quarters, thus providing the Commission with ample material for the purpose of the extended report it has in view.