

Editorial Notes.

DURING the Commonwealth Congress a conference on Baptist history was held in the Lounge at Bloomsbury Central Church, on Tuesday, 5th June, delegates being generously entertained to tea beforehand by Mr. Seymour J. Price, who presided over the meeting. There was an excellent attendance and a special welcome was extended by the chairman to the numerous overseas representatives present.

Rev. N. R. Wood, of New Zealand, was the opening speaker. To take a keen interest in the history of our churches—which was part of the story of God's redeeming purpose—was, he said, a duty we owed to Him and an obligation we should discharge to our forefathers and to our sons and daughter in the faith. Dr. W. C. Smalley, of Western Canada, then gave a witty and informative account of what was being done by the Canadian Baptist Federation to preserve records, gather together in a central place all available data and to encourage research. He was followed by Rev. Graham W. Hughes (Secretary, Baptist Historical Society) who stressed the need for closer co-operation in studying and recording Baptist history, suggested the founding by Commonwealth Baptists of a historical bursary or scholarship, voiced the hope that a history of Baptists in the Commonwealth would be written, indicated the need for a clearing-house for information and suggested the forming of a Commonwealth Baptist Historical Society with the existing *Baptist Quarterly* as the medium for recording new information.

There followed an interesting and valuable discussion during which numerous suggestions were advanced by representatives of the various countries. Dr. E. A. Payne emphasised the urgency of preserving minute-books, diaries, letters, family papers etc., called for a greater exchange of information and the development of contacts and drew attention to the important *History of the Baptists*¹ published last year by Dr. Robert Torbet of Philadelphia. He urged overseas Baptists to send copies of historical publications to the *Baptist Quarterly*,² the library of the Historical Society here,³ the Baptist Union library,⁴ and the Angus library at Regent's Park College, Oxford. One member inquired what libraries there were in the Dominions,

¹ Reviewed in *Baptist Quarterly*, January, 1951, pp. 44-46.

^{2, 3, 4} All c/o Baptist Church House, 4, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.

and the editor of this journal will be pleased to print the information in these pages if overseas readers will be good enough to send it to him. At the close, Mr. Price was warmly thanked for his hospitality, and an enjoyable, enlightening and stimulating meeting was reluctantly concluded.

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With deep regret we record the death on the 20th May, of one of the Historical Society's vice-presidents, Rev. Arthur S. Langley. Born at Manchester, the son of a superintendent of the City Mission there, Mr. Langley entered the Manchester Baptist College in 1893 and, with the exception of five years at Louth, spent the whole of his long ministry in Staffordshire. He was secretary of the West Midland Association from 1941 to 1945, and of the West Midland Federation of Free Church Federal Councils from 1940. Mr. Langley served on innumerable committees, was deeply devoted to the cause of education, the Liberation Society, the Baptist Union and the B.M.S., and had such an affection for his college that only once in fifty years was he absent from its annual reunion. Among the chief of his varied interests was the history of his own denomination. One of the original members of the Historical Society, he claimed to be the possessor of one of the best private libraries of Baptist literature in the country and, having published a book on the Baptists of Birmingham, he had also gathered material with a view to issuing a volume on Lincolnshire Baptists. His death brought to a close a life of faithful Christian discipleship and devoted and valuable service to noble causes.

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Few cities in England have such eminent Free Church associations as Norwich. Robert Browne, John Robinson, Elizabeth Fry, J. J. Gurney, James Mursell Phillippo are among the distinguished names which spring immediately to mind in connection with the city, while Baptists do not need reminding of St. Mary's Church, its famous ministries and the no less notable families which that great church has nurtured. As part of the celebrations there during this Festival year the Norwich Free Church Federal Council arranged an exhibition to illustrate the contribution of the city to the history of the Free Churches and the influence of Nonconformity in the life of Norwich. According to the catalogue many treasures were on view. These included many of particular interest to Baptists, such as Thomas Grantham's *The Prisoner against the Prelate* (1662), an early "Church Book," Communion cups and a copy of the articles of a sick-benefit society from St. Mary's, a seventeenth-century Communion table from Silver Road, a copy of the Stalham

church's ancient Covenant, copies of Edward Trivett's hymnbook and that of John Ash and Caleb Evans, a letter from Andrew Fuller to Joseph Kinghorn and a Bengali translation of a booklet on church membership by Dr. Gilbert Laws. The organisers of the exhibition are to be congratulated on their enterprise and it would be good to know that similar events have been arranged in other places.

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Congregationalists will not be alone in commemorating the 200th anniversary, on 26th October, of the death of Philip Doddridge. To most people Doddridge is known as a hymn-writer but his claim to grateful remembrance rests on a wider basis for he wrote books which have enriched private devotion, presided over a famous Academy which educated such men as Caleb Evans, Andrew Kippis, Caleb Ashworth, Samuel Clark and others, fought for freedom and, in his own character, manifested gifts and graces which won the confidence and affection of those who knew him. "It is not too much to say," Professor Victor Murray has written, "that the history of Nonconformity in the middle years of the eighteenth century is the history of Doddridge and his influence." To the studies of Doddridge and his career which have appeared in the past have been added recently a volume edited by Dr. G. F. Nuttall and the re-issue of a masterly sketch of the great man by Alexander Gordon. Baptists will unite with their Congregationalist brethren in doing honour to the memory of one who although he died two centuries ago, left an inspiration and influence which abide to this day.

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In this issue we include, from the pen of Principal Cawley of Spurgeon's College, an outline of the life and work of the late Dr. Percy W. Evans. We are grateful to the Principal for his careful record of the many bodies with which his predecessor was connected, illustrating as it does the manifold services rendered by this shrewd, far-seeing, modest and courageous son of Wales to the Free Churches of this country. To the life of his own denomination Dr. Evans made a notable contribution, the influence of which will long remain.