

Editorial Notes

UNDER the chairmanship of Mr. Seymour J. Price the Annual Meeting of the Baptist Historical Society was held on 28th April in the lounge at Bloomsbury Central Church and drew the best attendance for several years. During the past year much quiet but valuable service had again been rendered, reported the Secretary, in answering inquiries from this and other countries and in assisting the researches of individuals and churches. *The Baptist Quarterly* had appeared regularly. Contacts with overseas societies had been established during the successful Historical Meeting at the Commonwealth Congress last year and the Society was also in touch with the Southern Baptist Convention's Historical Commission. The urgent need of the moment was for new members. Owing to rising costs expenditure had out-paced income and there was now an accumulated deficit of £148. The librarian, Dr. E. J. Tongue briefly reported on the use being made of the Society's library. All the officers and committee were re-elected, while to the three Vice-Presidents the name of Dr. F. Townley Lord (President, Baptist World Alliance) was unanimously added. The members then listened with close attention and evident appreciation to the address, "Baptists and the Great Church" (which appears in this issue) delivered by Dr. Hugh Martin, Vice-Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council. Principal K. C. Dykes moved and Rev. B. Grey Griffith seconded a vote of thanks which was heartily carried.

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"Our denomination cannot afford to do without the Historical Society," said Dr. E. A. Payne, General Secretary of the Baptist Union, interposing at one of the sessions of the Annual Assembly a plea for support for the Society. It had rendered notable service for nearly fifty years, he said, and the good name and standing of the denomination were involved in the continuation of the *Baptist Quarterly*. It was concern at the serious financial condition of the Society that prompted these words. Fifteen new Life members would solve the immediate problem. In order to sustain its comparatively small budget (about £200 a year) the Historical Society needs, in addition, a steady stream of new names to add to its—if not very large, certainly world-wide—membership.

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Ten years ago the Carey Press initiated a cheap and attractive series of popular biographies. It is regrettable that no more than three—those of William Carey, Andrew Fuller and Robert Hall—appeared. Were the series to be revived (and how else, but by means of such literature, is the rising generation to learn and value its heritage?) one who would undoubtedly be entitled to an early place is John Sutcliff, the bi-centenary of whose birth falls in August. We are glad to include in this issue a brief tribute—the substance of an address given on 10th May at the Sutcliff Baptist Church, Olney, by its present minister. Sutcliff's place in Baptist history, and especially in connection with the Baptist Missionary Society, has not been adequately appreciated. "The Baptist mission in India," wrote Hall in 1814, "is under incalculable obligations to his sagacity and prudence." The Northamptonshire Association and, indeed, the whole denomination felt the influence of this kindly, wise and strong-minded Yorkshireman. But as Dr. Payne wrote in his *The First Generation*, "Sutcliff has remained without the biography to which he was certainly entitled by his worth and influence." It would have been well had that omission been repaired in this bi-centenary year.

A Miscellany. Norfolk Record Society, Vol. xxii.

For Baptist readers of this excellently-produced volume the main item of interest is the reproduction of the accounts kept from 1726 to 1745 by William Watts, deacon and treasurer of the church now well known as St. Mary's, Norwich. Mr. Charles Jewson, who is responsible for their publication here, supplies useful introductory and explanatory notes. Preceded by a list of church-members compiled about 1723, with additions covering the period of the accounts, the various financial items give interesting side-lights upon Baptist church-life two centuries ago. Among other things they show that Communion was not observed unless a recognised minister was available to preside, that it was possible for a minister to conduct worship at a church for very lengthy periods before being appointed its pastor (or failing to secure the appointment, as in the case here of Deodat Hore who was not elected pastor after even a year's probation) and that the afflictions of the poor were of great concern to the fellowship. Gone are the days when beer for the refreshment of helpers might figure in a church-treasurer's accounts! In causing this account-book to be permanently recorded Mr. Jewson has performed yet another useful service.