AS previously announced, Dr. Winthrop S. Hudson of New York will be the speaker at the Annual Meeting of the Baptist Historical Society at 4.30 p.m. on Monday, 3rd May, in the Lounge at Bloomsbury Central Church. His subject will be “Who were the Baptists?” We hope for a good attendance of members and friends to welcome this distinguished Baptist scholar who is Professor of Church History at the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School and President of the American Baptist Historical Society. It is hoped to arrange for tea to be served, and those who intend being present will help by notifying the Secretary well beforehand.

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The significance of the Building Society movement has largely been overlooked by social historians in spite of the fact that, in its modern form, it has existed for well over a century. In 1952 there were 755 permanent societies with assets amounting to the amazing total of £1,477,071,000. Of these one of the most enterprising and influential is the Temperance Permanent Building Society, founded in 1854 and having today assets totalling £30,250,000. In a handsome, illustrated volume, issued as a souvenir of the Society's centenary, its story has been recorded by one of its directors, Mr. Seymour J. Price who, among other offices he holds, is of course the President of the Baptist Historical Society. Entitled From Queen to Queen, the book is published by Franey & Co. For Baptists it has a special interest, in view of the fact that members of our denomination have prominently figured in the Society's affairs throughout its existence. Of the present eight directors five—Mr. C. W. Black, M.P., Mr. H. H. Collier, Mr. T. Lister, Mr. Price and its brilliant managing-director, Mr. Ronald Bell—are Baptists.

The story is told with the literary skill, historical knowledge and business acumen for which Mr. Price is well-known. Of absorbing interest, the narrative is illuminated by vivid pen portraits of those stalwarts who have been leaders of the Society and its management. Generally they were, as now, Nonconformists and, reading about them in these instructive pages, one realises afresh what solid virtues they and others like them embodied in themselves, in the purpose for which the Society was established and the spirit in which their work was
done. Typical Nonconformist qualities they were, regarded by
many today as old-fashioned virtues yet, fortunately, still widely
cherished. Who can deny that these qualities of hard work, thrift,
sobriety, independence, integrity and love of home are as vital to
the national character and the stability of our country now as ever
they were? More of the "unmistakable puritanism . . . firmly
grounded in principles based on the rock of Nonconformist
integrity" and of the "stern Calvinist rectitude" which Mr. Price
here ascribes to the pioneers of the Society, would elevate and
strengthen social life today.

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Does the venerable language—now nearly 350 years old—of
the Authorised Version make the Bible obscure to numerous
people? Many experienced judges would say that it does. While
various modern translations of at least parts of the Bible have
been published, there is no complete version in good modern
English embodying the best scholarship and commanding general
acceptance. Soon after the war the Churches co-operated in
setting up a Joint Committee to supervise the making of a new
and authoritative version from the original languages. On this
committee the Church of England, Church of Scotland, the major
Free Churches, the Society of Friends, the Churches in Wales
and Ireland together with the British and Scottish Bible Societies
are represented. The chairman is the Bishop of Winchester, the
Secretary, Professor J. K. S. Reid, and the General Director,
Professor C. H. Dodd. The translation is being done by panels
of scholars chosen for their qualifications in the field of Old
Testament, Apocrypha or New Testament studies or as judges of
English style and language. Individual translators make the first
drafts of the books allotted to them and these are then criticised
by the panels in the interests of accuracy and good English and
are finished by a process of discussion and mutual agreement.
Steady progress is being made. The Gospels of Mark and John,
Romans, 1 Corinthians and Galatians, and Ruth, Ezekiel and Amos
with the first half of Exodus have gone through all their stages.
It is hoped to have the New Testament ready for printing in 1958
and the Old Testament not until several years later. This may
seem slow progress but the Joint Committee intend this to be an
authoritative translation, backed by the best scholarship, suitable
for private and public reading and fit to stand beside the great
translations of the past.

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From 1913 until he retired in 1953, Dr. William Wright Barnes
was teaching Church History in the South-western Baptist Theo-
logical Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky. He has crowned a
distinguished career by writing the first, comprehensive history of
the Southern Baptist Convention. Through kindness the writer
of these notes has received a copy of this new and important
volume The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845-1953, which is
published by the enterprising Broadman Press, at $3.75. Our
college libraries, as well as all British Baptists who wish to inform
themselves on denominational history and progress, should obtain
a copy. The story Dr. Barnes so ably tells is a remarkable one.
When the Convention was formed in 1845, it comprised some
4,000 churches and 350,000 members. The figures for 1952 show
nearly 29,000 churches and nearly 8,000,000 members who, in the
year, raised more than $248,000,000 and recorded 354,000 bap­
tisms! The formation of this virile, powerful and expanding body
grew out of differences among American Baptists in the field of
home missions, later accentuated by disagreement on the slavery
issue (and it is not always realised that there was opposition to
slavery in the South as well as the North). Attempts at re-union
failed and the Southern and Northern groups went their separate
ways, though with the avowed determination to maintain fraternal
relations and to co-operate wherever possible. One of the fields in
which they have worked together is that of Negro ministerial
education. But the principles of comity agreed by the two Con­
ventions, as a result of meetings in 1911 and 1912, are likely to
be strained in the immediate future for, as Dr. Barnes states,
"The constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention specifies
the United States as its field," while Northern Baptists have
significantly renamed themselves The American Baptist Conven­
tion and there is already considerable overlapping of activity.
That this will turn, in course of time, into a yet closer and deeper
fellowship will be the confident hope of many. In the Baptist
World Alliance the Southern Convention plays an active, leading
part, but it has declined membership of the World Council of
Churches (not, however, without protest from within its own
ranks). By the publication of this timely volume—well docu­
mented, with useful indeces and bibliography—Dr. Barnes has
met a real need and rendered notable service to Baptist history.
Elsewhere, as well as in the United States, he will be congratulated
upon telling with unique knowledge and devoted skill the amazing
progress of what must be one of the most rapidly expanding
Christian bodies in the world.

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If the Southern Convention is the largest of the world's Baptist
groupings, among the smallest though by no means the least virile
are the General Baptists of America. With these brethren we
have recently made a welcome contact. General Baptists first made
their appearance in America in 1700 but the present General Association was formed in Indiana in 1870 on the basis of thirteen articles of faith. We look forward to the forthcoming publication of their history by one of their leaders, Dr. O. Latch, of Poplar Bluff, Missouri. From a reading of their official General Baptist Doctrine and Usage and their weekly journal, The Messenger, much may be learned. Rather conservative theologically and keenly evangelistic, the local churches are formed on the basis of a covenant and co-operate through, first, the district presbytery (comprised of ordained ministers, licenced preachers and deacons), then the local Association and finally the General Association. Home and foreign (in the Pacific islands) missions, publications, religious education, with a college at Oakland City, Indiana, are among the denominational activities. Deacons, we note, are solemnly ordained by the presbytery and the accepted practice is to regard that ordination as perpetual. Many General Baptists consider feet-washing to be one of the ordinances of the Church, and in a number of congregations it is practised in connection with the Communion service; others, while unable to accept it as an ordinance, view it as an example of humility worthy of being perpetuated in the Church. To our General Baptist friends across the Atlantic we send greetings, and wish for them a continued progress.

Essays in Orthodox Dissent, by Bernard Lord Manning. (Independent Press, 7s. 6d.)

A reprint of these stimulating essays by Bernard Manning is most welcome. First published in 1939, they offer a vigorous presentation of the Free Church position. For the most part they were addresses given to Congregational and other Free Church bodies in the immediate pre-war period. The addresses still have pungency and directness: the title reveals the two aspects which are emphasised—a defence of the Free Church attitude and a challenge (primarily to Congregationalists but indirectly to others) to loyalty to the fundamental spiritual ideas on which that attitude rests. The chapter, "Our Inheritance in Faith and Practice" is most stimulating. The re-reading of these essays has been refreshing and we realise anew what a loss Congregationalism and the Free Churches sustained by the early death of Bernard Manning.

W. S. Davies.