

Editorial Notes

THE Annual Meeting of the Baptist Historical Society will be held at 4.30 p.m. on Monday, 25th April, in the Lounge at Bloomsbury Central Church, London. The speaker will be one of our own younger Baptist scholars, the Rev. W. S. M. West, B.A., D.Theol., tutor at Regent's Park College, Oxford, whose articles in our pages have brought us expressions of appreciation. Attendance at these meetings appears to increase each year and we hope that again members and friends of the Society will be well represented. For their convenience, it is hoped to arrange for tea to be served at a small charge.

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Of the valuable and varied services rendered to our denomination by Baptist deaconesses, there is a growing recognition. During the 64 years' existence of the Order their functions have considerably changed. At first sisters of mercy visiting the homes of want and woe, they are often nowadays ministers in all but name. The story of the Deaconess Order from the beginning to the present day has recently been admirably told by Miss Doris M. Rose, O.B.E., who has herself interviewed and advised hundreds of young women who have offered themselves for this underpaid, exacting but spiritually fruitful service. The contents of this booklet (*Baptist Deaconesses* by Doris M. Rose, Carey Kingsgate Press, 2s. 6d.), which has four pages of excellent illustrations, form a useful contribution to our denominational history and deserve to be widely read. The record of the Deaconess Order is one of triumph over disadvantage. Not the least of the hindrances to effective and settled progress has been the changing location of training centres, yet another removal taking place in the near future. What Miss Rose has written will be of assistance to those who are concerned about the several problems relating to the Order which remain unsolved. Basic to all others is the question, "What is a deaconess?" Until the denomination has decided the answer to that problem the solution of the others is likely to wait. But, then, we are not yet of a mind as to what is a minister.

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What the Southern Baptists of the U.S.A. are doing to serve the cause of their denominational history is told in an issue of their *Quarterly Review* which recently came into our hands. Its office located at Nashville, Tennessee, and with a full-time secretary and staff, an allocation for 1955 of \$26,000 and up-to-date equipment, the Historical Commission goes forward enthusiastically and

efficiently from achievement to achievement under the leadership of Dr. Norman W. Cox. In the Dargan-Carver Library 25,000 catalogued books, 50,000 volumes of pamphlets and periodicals are housed alongside a microfilm collection of Baptist historical materials to which 50,000 pages of microfilm are being added every month. By this means almost anything required by students doing research in the field of Baptist history can be made available. Last year saw the publication of the long-awaited first history of the Convention and now a Southern Baptist Encyclopaedia is projected and a contest is being promoted with awards each year for the best history of a church or association. Twenty-one state Historical Societies co-operate with the Commission. We rejoice with our friends in what Dr. Cox calls this "history renaissance" and look forward to meeting some of them at the appropriate sectional gathering during the Baptist World Congress in July.

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Ways and means of marking in 1962 the 300th anniversary of Nonconformity are being discussed by the Historical Societies of the Free Churches. A bibliography of the works on Nonconformity issued between 1660 and 1665 is planned. It is believed that some 400 of these have not been listed. A volume of a more popular nature, possibly in the form of a symposium, on the significance of 1662 is also contemplated. In these discussions the Baptist society is represented by Dr. E. A. Payne.

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Subscriptions to the Baptist Historical Society for 1955 which have not yet been paid should be remitted as soon as possible. New members are needed and will be welcomed. Donations to the Society's depleted funds would also be greatly appreciated. The burden would be considerably eased if, for instance, ten generous friends were to contribute £10 each. But smaller gifts, or increased subscriptions would also be gratefully accepted.