

THE BAPTIST QUARTERLY

VOL. XVI., No. 3.

JULY, 1955.

Editorial Notes

THE event of the year so far as Baptists are concerned is, of course, the Jubilee Congress of the Baptist World Alliance. Included in the crowded programme is a Conference for Baptist Historians and Librarians on Friday, 22nd July, at 2.30 p.m. in Dr. Williams's Library. The chairman is Mr. Seymour J. Price. We understand that Dr. Theron D. Price of Louisville, Kentucky, has been invited to speak on "The Revival of Anabaptist Studies and the Baptist View of the Church," and that Dr. W. M. S. West, of Oxford, and Dr. S. L. Stealey, of Wake Forest, Carolina, have been asked to open the discussion. Admission is by ticket.

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By the death of Mr. W. Nefydd Lewis, of Gilwern, Abergavenny, the Baptist Historical Society has lost an ardent and persistent advocate and friend. Its need of support was the subject of his last address to the Monmouthshire Association. On his father's side Mr. Lewis was descended from James Jewis, pastor from 1791 to 1837 of the historic Llanwenarth church. His grandfather was William Nefydd Roberts, a Baptist minister who was one of the most distinguished Welshmen of the nineteenth century, and whose Letter to the Monmouthshire Association was reprinted in our issue of July, 1953. Other ancestors included Rev. Daniel Rowland, of Gainsborough, and Rev. Daniel Jones, well-known preacher and hymnist. It is not surprising that, coming from such stock, Mr. Lewis delighted in matters historical.

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"The Lesser-known Writings of John Bunyan" was the subject of an enlightening address by Dr. Morris West, of Regent's Park College, at the Baptist Historical Society's Annual Meeting at the Church House on 25th April. In spite of an enforced, last-minute change of meeting-place, there was a good attendance and, after tea, a short business session was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Seymour J. Price. This included the usual reports and elections. General approval was given for an appeal to be made for donations to clear the large, accumulated deficit. One gift of £10 had already been promised. It is hoped that when the appeal is issued there will

be a generous response. It was noted that in three years' time the Society will celebrate its jubilee.

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Just as today the question is debated as to whether certain eminent persons of the past, such as Bunyan and Milton, were or were not Baptists, so at future times it may well be that "Was Lloyd George a Baptist?" will be the subject of argument. This thought has been prompted by the stimulating experience of reading Frank Owen's recent biography of the Welsh Wizard, *Tempestuous Journey*, published by Hutchinson. Throughout the book Lloyd George is described as a Baptist. His baptism at the age of twelve in a brook at Criccieth is recorded, his arguments as a boy on the subject of baptism with the theologically-minded village blacksmith are recalled and there is an amusing account of how, when the Diocesan Inspector visited the village school to hear the pupils recite the Creed and answer questions on the catechism he led his classmates in a conspiracy of silence as a protest against the paedobaptist tenets in the latter.

Was the magnetic orator-statesman a Baptist? The Welsh Baptists regarded him as such. He delivered an annual address at their church in Castle Street, London, and appeared more than once on their Union platform. He took part in the B.W.A. Congress of 1905. But although referring to him as a Baptist, Frank Owen mentions that Berea Chapel, Criccieth, of which Lloyd George was a member, was "of the strictest Baptist sect of the Campbellites . . . 'The Disciples of Christ' they called themselves" (p. 17). This chapel has an interesting history. Toward the end of the eighteenth century it followed the famous preacher J. R. Jones, of Ramoth (Merionethshire)—in spite of the efforts of Christmas Evans to dissuade them—in withdrawing from the Baptists and accepting the teachings of Alexander McLean. This meant, among other things, that its ministry was vested in two elders. One of these was the gifted and versatile shoemaker David Lloyd, grandfather of Lloyd George. In 1843, four years after his death, Berea seceded from the "Scotch Baptists" upon acceptance of the principles of Alexander Campbell. Sixteen years later, David Lloyd's son, Richard, was called to the joint eldership of the church. A man of rare spirit his influence upon his famous nephew was considerable. It seems clear that but for the fact that his people's principles were opposed to a professional ministry Lloyd George would have become a Baptist minister. What a genius was lost to the Baptist pulpit by the action taken in 1798 by Berea Chapel members! It was not for nothing, however, that Lloyd George was described by Lord Rosebery as "the great protagonist of Nonconformity." We notice that Berea is, however, included in the 1955 *Baptist Union Handbook*.