



incorporating the Transactions of the
BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDITORIAL

THE Annual Meeting of the Baptist Historical Society was held during the Assembly of the Baptist Union in the lounge at Bloomsbury Central Church under the chairmanship of Mr. Seymour J. Price. Having served as Secretary for ten years, Rev. Graham W. Hughes asked to be relieved of the office, and in his place the members elected Rev. W. M. S. West, D.Theol., tutor at Regent's Park College, Oxford. As from the issue of January, 1958, the editorship of the *Baptist Quarterly* will also pass to Dr. West, who will be assisted by an editorial board. In April, 1958, the Society will be celebrating its jubilee, and it is hoped that this anniversary will receive worthy notice at the Assembly. The other officers were re-elected but, in order to give the officers time to prepare plans for improved methods of election, it was agreed not to appoint a committee for the present year. A much appreciated reminiscent address, recalling the persons, ideas and books which had influenced his life and thought, was delivered with characteristic wit and wisdom by Rev. B. Grey Griffith.

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Up to now the *Baptist Quarterly* has occupied a unique position in the literature of the Baptists of the world. Its claim to be the only journal of its kind will be challenged next year, however, by the changes which are announced to take place in the *Chronicle* of the American Baptist Convention. Beginning with next January's issue the *Chronicle* is to be re-named *Foundations*, doubled in size and

devoted to Baptist history and theology. In the editorship Dr. George D. Younger will succeed Mr. R. E. E. Harkness, who has been editor of the *Chronicle* since it was founded twenty years ago. Eight others, including Dr. Winthrop S. Hudson, will be associated in the direction of the journal, and in addition a business manager and circulation manager have also been appointed. From the position we have hitherto occupied in solitary splendour we send our greetings to our friends of the American Baptist Historical Society and good wishes for the success of their new venture.

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Meanwhile the ever enterprising Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention have sent to their printers the last set of manuscripts for the *Encyclopaedia of Southern Baptists*, which is planned to appear early next year. Under the direction of Dr. Norman W. Cox 899 contributors and 57 editorial assistants have long been hard at work preparing this two-volumed publication for the press. It will include 4,349 articles and some 90 pages of pictures and will be published by the Broadman Press. We join with our friends of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission in looking forward to the appearance of what promises to be a most valuable work.

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The way in which many of our churches date their anniversaries is quite irresponsible. They appear to be incapable of distinguishing between the beginning of a cause, the erection of a building and the formation of a church. The dates supplied to the Baptist Union for inclusion in the Handbook are often wildly inaccurate, and the claims made for the age of a church can sometimes be almost fantastic. We know of churches which have held centenary, bi-centenary and similar celebrations, with special meetings, guest speakers, elaborate literature—linked, of course, to a big financial appeal—without having the slightest right to do so, because the date they commemorate is in fact that on which meetings were first held or when a building was put up. If they would only say so everything would be in order. But these events are called Church Anniversaries and, in blissful ignorance of the truth, distinguished denominational leaders, invited to adorn the proceedings, congratulate the churches concerned upon the great event and make eloquent speeches appropriate to the supposed occasion. The anniversary of a church has nothing whatever to do with the date when a building was erected or when meetings were first held, but is the anniversary of the date on which an independent, self-governing church was formally constituted. It is a pity that something cannot be done to put a stop to these “phoney” anniversaries and all our churches learned what is the difference between a chapel, a congregation and a church.