



incorporating the Transactions of the
BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EDITORIAL

THE jubilee of the Baptist Historical Society was well and truly celebrated at the recent Baptist Union Assembly. We were well served indeed by our speakers. First, by Dr. Thomas Richards, who spoke at the Annual Meeting on "Some disregarded sources of Baptist History," and secondly by Professor E. G. Rupp who, on the Tuesday morning, addressed the whole Assembly, taking for his subject "The importance of Denominational History." Both these addresses were of the highest order and we record our thanks to these two distinguished church historians. Readers will find Dr. Rupp's address in this current issue and Dr. Richards's will follow in a subsequent number.

The one disappointing feature of the celebration was the fact that the business part of the meeting on the Monday afternoon was reduced to something of a farce by the inordinate length of the first Session of the Assembly. This is the second year in succession that this has happened and it is obvious that the officers of the Society will have to consider seriously whether this is the best time for the meeting. It was the more unfortunate this year in that, as we indicated in the editorial last quarter, certain matters concerning the purpose and functioning of the Society were due for discussion. In the event, there was no time to discuss, but agreement was given in principle to the initiating of necessary action. It is therefore proposed, in the near future, to begin work on the listing of material available for the writing of Baptist history.

The two addresses referred to above, each in their different ways, drew attention to the need for such work. Dr. Richards pointed us to many valuable sources of materials and, after suggesting the particular potentiality of records of Sessions, Registries and Somerset House, added: "Why should this Society not appoint a panel of competent researchers out of its own body to find out exactly how the situation lies in the several counties?" Why not indeed! Yet one feels that very probably there is much work to be done by such researchers first on materials *still in the hands of Baptists themselves*. Soon after writing the April editorial the editor visited a small Baptist church to look at its library. The books were very interesting, but still more interesting was the cupboard in the corner of the library. This cupboard yielded up some rare treasures, both manuscript and printed. The manuscripts consisted of eighteenth-century sermon notes and letters dating from both seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The printed matter was largely pamphlets on Baptism from the late seventeenth century. It is highly unlikely that this will prove an isolated case.

Dr. Rupp drew attention to the danger of the publications connected with denominational historical societies becoming too modern. By this is meant the filling up of such magazines as the *Baptist Quarterly* with articles dealing wholly with present-day theological issues to the exclusion of source material for, and the results of researches into, denominational history. This is a timely warning which we must heed. But we must find the matter for publication. We again invite readers to submit to the Editorial Board for possible publication any material concerning Baptist history, whether it be results of research such as E. P. Winter's article on "The Lord's Supper" published last quarter or a comment on manuscript material such as W. S. Davies's "An Early Sunday School Minute Book" in this issue.

In addition, there is a need, as Dr. Rupp also pointed out, to develop further research work by English Baptists on the Anabaptists. In this connection it is proposed to publish from time to time a substantial article on recent materials dealing with the Anabaptist movement many of which may not be readily available to the English reader. The first of these articles will probably appear next quarter. Amongst the recent publications which will be considered are biographies of Felix Manz, Pilgram Marbeck and Ludwig Hätzer, the writings of Hans Denck, and Professor Blanke's scholarly reconstruction of the beginnings of Zürich Anabaptism entitled *Brüder in Christo*. We would, however, take the opportunity of drawing the immediate attention of all those interested to the first part of a bibliographical survey "Studies in the Radical Reformation" by G. H. Williams published in the

American journal *Church History* for March of this year. This is of immense value to anyone desirous of making a serious study of the Anabaptist movement.

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The first two numbers of a new journal produced by the American Baptist Historical Society have recently reached us. This publication, called *Foundations*, replaces *The Chronicle*. It is an ambitious venture, being almost twice the size of its predecessor and having more than two dozen editors of one sort and another. Its purpose is to stimulate theological thought on Baptist practice and principles amongst American Baptists and to chronicle and examine Baptist history in this relevant context. We give this new journal a most hearty welcome and wish it great success. It is worthy of note that, amongst the book reviews in the April number of *Foundations*, there is an omnibus review of seven books by British Baptists under the general heading of "British Baptists Rethink Baptist Tradition." One somewhat surprising omission to the list, however, is Dr. Wheeler Robinson's *Baptist Principles* which, although brief, is very much to the point and is probably the best of all to put first into the hands of an intelligent enquirer after Baptist thought. It is very encouraging to read the generous reviews of the seven books (even if Dr. Leonard G. Champion is christened Lloyd G. Champion and the very much still with us Dr. Dakin is referred to as the "late Arthur Dakin"!!), and to discover that, although relatively small numerically, the denomination in this country may still be of assistance to the much vaster American Baptist Convention.

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From America too comes another publication which owes much to British Baptists, namely *Eleven Years of Bible Bibliography* edited by H. H. Rowley (The Falcon's Wing Press, Indian Hills, Colorado. \$7.50). This is a volume of some 800 pages and is a collection of the book lists of the Society for Old Testament Study from 1946-56. To libraries and individuals not already in possession of the book lists this volume is of inestimable value. Every book of any worth on the Old Testament published during the last eleven years in English, German, French and the Scandinavian languages is mentioned. Dr. Rowley, in the Preface, explains the purpose of the lists. "The notices on the books included are deliberately kept as short as possible, and are designed to indicate to scholars the area with which the book deals and the quality of the book." In addition to Dr. Rowley the following British Baptists have contributed notices: The Rev. L. H. Brockington, Dr. G. Henton Davies (the Secretary of the Society for Old Testament Study), Professor A. S. Herbert, Dr. A. R. Johnson,

Dr. T. H. Robinson and the Rev. J. N. Schofield—truly remarkable evidence of the contribution made by British Baptists to the field of Old Testament study.

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We are grateful to Dr. R. H. Fischer for giving our series on "Baptists and the Ministry" such an excellent send-off with his thorough examination of Luther's thinking on the priesthood of all believers. He has done this journal the honour of producing an article of the highest scholarship. Professor Fischer has spent the last year at Mansfield College, Oxford, in charge of a group of Lutheran students now connected with that College and his presence in Oxford has also benefited our own Regent's Park College. Next quarter the series will be continued with an article by Dr. Champion on the Nature of the Christian Ministry.

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