



incorporating the Transactions of the
BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
EDITORIAL

THE Annual Meeting of the Baptist Historical Society will be held as usual during the Baptist Union Assembly week this year. The date is Monday, May 2nd; the place is the Institute Hall at Westminster Chapel; the time is 4.30 p.m. It is anticipated that tea will be available before the meeting. There are two items of Society business which are of considerable importance. We have, first of all, to elect a President in succession to the late Mr. Seymour Price. The officers have a nomination to bring to the meeting, but members are at liberty to make counter-nominations. Secondly, we shall receive an interim report on the discussions which the officers have had with the Baptist Union, in connection with possible further Union support. This matter was discussed at the Annual Meeting last year and the officers have proceeded in the light of decisions taken then. Following the business part of the meeting, Rev. R. E. Cooper, M.A., of Eltham College, will speak on "Some Origins of Ministerial Training amongst Baptists." Mr. Cooper has been engaged on research in this subject in connection with his Triple-Jubilee history of Regent's Park College, the manuscript of which he has recently completed. Undoubtedly Mr. Cooper will have some things to say about present-day Ministerial Training in the light of his researches. We hope that there will be time for some discussion. The time available, however, depends, in large measure, upon you who read this Editorial and who plan to come. Of recent

years the first Session of the Assembly has been growing longer and longer as a result of debates on Public Resolutions and amendments thereto. Consequently many Historical Society members, who have remained to the end (dare one say "bitter end"!) of the Assembly Session, have been late in arriving for tea and for the meeting. The result has been that the Annual Meeting has become shorter and shorter. Last year we had less than one hour. The officers have looked at other possible times for the Annual Meeting during Assembly Week, but every possibility clashes with other important meetings. We would ask members this year, therefore, if the afternoon session of the Assembly continues beyond 4.30 p.m., to forego the last few minutes and so make it possible for themselves to have some tea, on the one hand, and for the Society's business to be conducted, on the other.

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Our apologies are due for the late arrival of this issue. We would make it plain that neither the printers nor the publishers are to blame. The fault lies mainly with the Editor! Part of the reason has been his moving from Oxford to St. Albans. (Incidentally it should be said that the fact he has moved into the next road in St. Albans to the Society's Treasurer is purely coincidental!). There have, however, in addition, been certain difficulties arising from the non-appearance of promised material for this issue. As the Editor is unlikely to move again—just yet, and as the other difficulties are being sorted out, we do not anticipate so great a delay in the future.

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We are glad to hear that *Christian Baptism*, the symposium edited by Rev. A. Gilmore, has aroused considerable interest both inside the Baptist denomination and also amongst other sections of the Church. We understand that the second impression is nearly sold out and that a third impression is being considered. Interest has been particularly marked amongst scholars in the Church of England, which is not surprising, as the matter of Baptism is very much a live issue amongst Anglicans just now. In the light of this interest we hope to publish shortly some comments on the book by an Anglican scholar. As the debate on Baptism which was sparked off by the book within the Baptist denomination is still proceeding, we refrain from comment—at the moment!

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The Ter-Jubilee celebrations of the Baptist Union are now gathering momentum. We hear of much activity in Evangelism and of much thought being given to the raising of the money. This is as it should be. We need to recall, however, that there is a third strand in the suggested pattern of celebrations and that is Education. Education in the history and principles of the Baptists. There are

encouraging signs from some parts of the country that this important element is being taken seriously. It is greatly to be hoped that members of the Society will see to it that this very necessary theme is nowhere forgotten. It is essential that the denomination is taught the reasons for its very existence. Members of our churches must be Baptists by conviction. In these days of closer co-operation amongst the churches in England the older non-theological distinctions between Church and Chapel are disappearing. This is a matter for rejoicing, but if there do not remain theological distinctions, between Baptists and others, understood and accepted, then the distinctive Baptist witness—and ultimately the denomination—is doomed to extinction.

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