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incorporating the Transactions of the
BAPTIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY
EDITORIAL

THE Annual General Meeting of the Society held on May 2nd was a notable one. It was notable for several reasons. First, because it started punctually! This was made possible by the ending of the first session of the Baptist Union Assembly at 4.30 p.m. For this we are grateful to the President, Rev. F. C. Bryan, and to the Secretary, Dr. E. A. Payne. Possibly it helped that both these are members of the Society! Then, secondly, the Meeting was made noteworthy by the election of a new President of the Society. The Officers nominated Dr. E. A. Payne and this nomination was enthusiastically and unanimously accepted by the Meeting. No one doubted for one moment that Dr. Payne was the right person to assume the Presidency; the only doubt was whether he would feel able to add another responsibility to the many he carried already. We are all most grateful to him for his willing acceptance of the Presidency, and we look forward to much progress under his wise guidance. The Society owes much already to Dr. Payne for his service in the past, and there is no doubt at all that our debt to him will increase greatly as the days go by. The third matter of note at the Meeting was the appointment of the Rev. G. W. Rusling, Vice-Principal of Spurgeon's College as an Associate Editor of the *Baptist Quarterly*. Together with the Rev. Alec Gilmore of Northampton, who has been helping with the *Quarterly* for some time now, Mr. Rusling will share in the considerable amount of work involved in producing this journal. Incidentally, the work of the Editors would be made much easier if Baptists were a little less modest about their

work! By that we mean that so often we have to seek after a manuscript of an excellent lecture or address and rescue it from the depths of a storage file in which the all too modest author had laid it finally (so he imagined!) to rest. We are always glad to read manuscripts and no one need be afraid of submitting one. The Annual Meeting also heard with interest of the possibility of more direct denominational backing of the Society and the members encouraged the Officers to continue talks with the Baptist Union about ways and means whereby the Society may be helped to become still more effective. The news that the Union had granted £50 to the Society was received with acclamation and gratitude. And so to the address given by the Rev. R. E. Cooper on "Some Origins of Ministerial Training amongst Baptists." This was a fascinating talk based upon considerable original research. It had the effect of stimulating much interest in this often neglected subject and, no doubt, encouraged many of the hearers to purchase Mr. Cooper's book on the history of Regent's Park College.* Altogether, the Meeting was most satisfactory and the attendance was the largest for some years.

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Considerable changes in the structure of the theological degrees of London University have recently been approved by the Senate and come into force in 1961. The M.Th. candidate will have to submit a dissertation and do two written papers, one designed to test his general knowledge of the chosen field of study, and one related to the subject of the dissertation. There are two first degrees, a B.D. and a B.D. Honours, and a feature of the latter is that it allows for a considerable measure of specialisation. There are pleasing features about the new syllabus in Church History and some disappointing ones. In the old degree the history of the Church to A.D. 451 was a prescribed subject and another Church History paper was available among the optionals. The latter was confined to the English Church, however, and the periods followed a cycle so that the student had to do whichever happened to come round in his own final year. These limitations are to some extent overcome in the new syllabus. One of the most serious gaps is made up in a paper devoted to the Church in the West in the 16th century. Thus, at last, the Reformation as a whole, not just the English aspect of it, can be taken and the fortuitous element is removed for it can be taken in any year. Unfortunately, in the B.D. degree this Reformation paper is made an alternative to the Early Church among the prescribed subjects and this confronts the candidate with a particularly regrettable either/or. The B.D. candidate is also restricted to one period for his optional. Until further notice this is to be Religious and Ecclesias-

* *From Stepney to St. Giles'* (Carey Kingsgate Press, 10s. 6d.).

tical Movements, 1848-1948. This is, admittedly, an attractive paper but it is a little difficult to understand why it is a matter of Hobson's choice when the Honours man, on the other hand, has such a wide range offered to him. The latter may do all the periods mentioned, early, Reformation, or modern and there are other alternatives open to him. The texts for the early period will require facility with Greek and with one exception (English Church History, 1689-1795), all the others demand a knowledge of Latin. Greek is a necessity, in any case, for the New Testament papers but unhappily a lack of Latin will debar many present-day theological students. Certain of the prescribed texts may also be difficult to obtain and, speaking from a denominational point of view, one has to look hard for anything Baptist among them. Such criticisms apart, the syllabus as a whole is much more imaginative than the old and is to be welcomed.

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Our issue contains a note by Mr. A. de M. Chesterman on the work he is doing on B.M.S. archives. The importance and magnitude of this undertaking will be immediately apparent and it is right that we should express here our great indebtedness as a denomination to Mr. Chesterman and to his wife who is assisting him. In part, at least, they are performing a rescue operation and it is evident from what he says that with much of the material that awaits their attention this is urgently necessary.

His plan, however, looks much farther than that, catering not only for the preservation of existing materials but for the setting up of a centre in which all future B.M.S. records will be properly housed, classified and available to the researcher. We should like to draw attention to the fact that Mr. Chesterman will be glad of help from enthusiasts even though they may not be able to give long hours to the work.

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We include, also, the first part of a list of Norfolk Baptists up to 1700, compiled by another of our members, Mr. C. B. Jewson. The second part of the list, together with a Bibliography, will appear in the next issue. These lists of Baptists are of considerable value to the historian and we are very grateful to Mr. Jewson for this further contribution to the study of our origins.

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Four years ago conversations were begun between Congregationalists, Baptists and Presbyterians with a view to the due commemoration of the Great Ejectment of 1662. A joint committee of the three denominations began work in 1958 and its first bulletin describes the plans now in hand. A symposium of essays was early

mooted and it was subsequently learned that the S.P.C.K. was also arranging for one by Anglican writers. It has since been agreed to co-operate in the production of a joint volume under the editorship of Dr. Norman Sykes and Dr. G. F. Nuttall. This will be a major work entitled "From Uniformity to Unity, 1662-1962." Another item of importance for church historians will be a bibliography of the years 1660-65. This will be issued in duplicated form from Dr. Williams' Library. More popular publications and dramatic material, including a pageant and a full-length play, are also planned. It is hoped that commemorative meetings will take place in regional settings as well as in the central assemblies of the three denominations. A service of commemoration is to be held at the City Temple on St. Bartholomew's Day, 24th August, 1962, and the Royal Albert Hall will be the scene of a big joint meeting in the October. Notwithstanding Terjubilée commitments Baptists will want to play their part in this Tercentenary and those seeking fuller information about the various projects should write to the Rev. H. S. Stanley, 205, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.