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History: Too Much or Too Little?*

I

I COUNT it a great privilege to have been asked to give this second Henton Lecture on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Baptist Historical Society. The Society was formed on Thursday, April 30th, 1908, during the Annual Assembly. Just over fifty persons are said to have been present at the Inaugural Meeting. Dr. Gould, the Principal of Regent's Park College, was elected President and Dr. W. T. Whitley, Secretary. Three Vice-Presidents were appointed—Dr. Shakespeare, Dr. Tymms and Judge Willis. The first treasurer was Mr. James Ward, of Nottingham, soon replaced by Dr. J. W. Thirtle. The Assembly had listened to a presidential address from Dr. Charles Brown of Ferme Park, and also to one of Dr. Shakespeare's prophetic—but all too little heeded—utterances, entitled, "The Arrested Progress of the Church".

The membership figures of our own and other denominations justified that title. The peak had been passed in 1906 and has never since been regained. But of that none were aware. The general mood was optimistic. The Baptist World Alliance had been formed only three years earlier. Baptists were becoming conscious of themselves as a world-wide community. The National Free Church Council was only a dozen years old and many were expecting that before long there would be a united and strong Free Church in Britain. The controversy over denominational schools and the Passive Resistance Movement were regarded as a necessary but temporary deflection of interest. A Liberal Government had come to power with a substantial majority. Only a week or so before the Assembly met, H. H. Asquith had succeeded the dying Campbell Bannerman as Prime Minister. David Lloyd George had become Chancellor of the Exchequer. Winston Churchill had gone to the Board of Trade. Walter Runciman, of Methodist stock, had replaced Augustine Birrell, the son of a Baptist minister, at the Board of Education and was about to make another attempt to settle the question of Church Schools. A bill to disestablish the Welsh Church was eagerly anticipated.

The literary lights of the period included Arnold Bennett, Hilaire Belloc, G. K. Chesterton, Galsworthy and Barrie. In that year 1908, H. G. Wells published his *War in the Air*. But people did not really believe that anything like that was possible. Deeply perturbed because he was convinced that Europe was slowly but surely drifting towards war, Norman Angell had written a book called *The Great Illusion*. But he could find no publisher for it. So in 1908 he had printed at his own expense a booklet entitled *Europe's Optical Illusion*, and sent it out free as widely as possible to politicians and publicists. They com-

* The Second Henton Lecture, delivered to the Baptist Historical Society on 29th April, 1968.

pletely misunderstood his warning and took him to have shown that no further major war was possible because the bankers would not allow it!

In the summer of 1908 the first Pan-Anglican Congress was held and there was also, as this year, a Lambeth Conference. It was attended by 242 bishops compared with the nearly 500 expected on this occasion. In the midst of his preparations for these events, Archbishop Randall Davidson was exercised as to whether the Anglican Church should support the projected World Missionary Conference scheduled for Edinburgh in 1910. Certain of the Anglican missionary societies were very doubtful whether they could participate. The Archbishop had another anxiety. The Bishop of Oxford had not felt able to accept the application for ordination of a young Fellow of Queen's College, Oxford, named William Temple, because of the latter's hesitations about the Virgin Birth and the bodily resurrection of our Lord. It was in the spring of 1908 that Archbishop Davidson and Bishop Paget agreed that Temple's attitude towards the Faith had "undergone a change or a deepening" and that this, and his work in connection with the Student Christian Movement, justified his ordination by the Archbishop himself.

Other things were afoot at the time. Over in Cambridge T. R. Glover of St. John's was turning a set of lectures into his famous book *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*. P. T. Forsyth had recently published his *Positive Preaching and the Modern Mind*. It was already clear that R. J. Campbell's *New Theology* would not gain many Baptist supporters, though his social sympathies were appreciated. In March 1908 Baron von Hügel, much troubled about the suppression of the so-called Modernist movement in the Church of Rome, wrote to his Anglican friend, C. C. J. Webb: "What claims to be history cannot escape being judged by historico-critical methods and tests."

A recalling of these names and events may help to recover something of the background and temper of sixty years ago, so near is it and yet so far. It may help us to appreciate the words which Dr. Gould wrote as a Prefatory Note to the first number of the *Transactions of the Society*:

"By manifold signs it is evident that our denomination is freeing itself from the bonds of an excessive individualism, and is rejoicing as never before in a sense of brotherhood with brethren of like faith the world over. Such widened outlook cannot be restricted to the present: it will inevitably turn to the past and seek to scan it also. Joy in brotherhood should not and cannot dissociate itself from the desire to learn what we may of our spiritual ancestry."

A list of members of the Baptist Historical Society was printed in the first issue of the *Transactions*. It consisted of 117 names; 73 were of ministers and 43 of laymen. There was one woman, Mrs. Russell James. She was, of course, a notable figure in her day and in that

same year, 1908, the first meeting of the Baptist Women's Home Work Auxiliary (later the Baptist Women's League) was held in her drawing-room. But I notice that in the next list of members her name is replaced by that of her husband! Had she strayed by accident or design into the meeting of the Historical Society on April 30th, 1908? Or was it afterwards felt unbecoming for her to be the only woman in an otherwise male society, or alternatively, unfitting for the Society to have on its roll a member of the sex not at that time granted the vote? Was it simply a printer's error? Who can tell? To the best of my belief, there is only one whose name is on that first list of members who is alive, the Rev. Arnold Lewis, who left Regent's Park College sixty-three years ago!

II

So much for the beginnings. As we look back over the sixty years, what can we claim as accomplishments? It is something that the Society still exists and that it can look back on an unbroken series of the *Transactions* and the *Quarterly*. There have been times—particularly in the early 1940's—when it looked as if the Society would collapse and the publication of the *Quarterly* cease. That the present anniversary finds the Society in a stronger position than ever before (even though not as strong as it ought to be) is a matter for great satisfaction.

A denominational historical society serves a number of highly necessary purposes. It links together those who are interested in the study of the past. It serves as an agency for the gathering and preservation of documents and records. It should undertake or assist with the editing and publication of the more important ones. It should remind the denomination of its significant anniversaries and see that reliable and worthy material is to hand.

Our Society got off to a flying start and in its early years helped to make available a great deal of basic information. The *Transactions* consisted largely of documentary material and remain a storehouse for the student, the value of which is increasingly recognised and has been made much greater by Douglas Sparkes's *Index*. It is, I think, well to reiterate a point made by Professor Rupp at our jubilee meeting ten years ago. "I would plead that the denominational archives be not swamped or undervalued", he said. "For those are the only things in your *Quarterly* that the rest of us cannot find done as well—perhaps even better—elsewhere". There are still many Baptist documents and minute books that ought to be published, not a few of them gradually perishing. But let me recall what the Society had major responsibility for in the first years of its existence:

The Minutes of the General Baptist Assembly and Association, 1654-1728, (1909).

The Minutes of the United Assembly, 1731-1811, (1910).

An English edition of McGlothlin's *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, (1911).

Minutes of the Ford and Amersham Churches, (1912).

The Baptists of Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire & Cumberland (an augmented edition of two Association volumes), (1913).

The Works of John Smyth, C.U.P., (1915).

All of these had behind them the work of the eager and indefatigable Secretary, Dr. Whitley. Somehow or other he combined this with full-time pastoral service and the preparation of his remarkable *Baptist Bibliography, 1526-1837*, published in two volumes by the Baptist Union, the first in 1916, the second in 1922. All these works are now at a premium and diligently sought after by a new generation. To them should perhaps be added Dr. Gould's *Catalogue of the Angus Library*, issued by Regent's Park College some four months after the Society was formed. Dr. Shakespeare had already shown his personal commitment to the study of Baptist origins by his little book *Baptist and Congregational Pioneers* (1906), the importance of which lay in the fact that at the time it broke new ground.

Unfortunately, the publication of basic source material virtually ended with, or as a result of, World War I. The Society can claim no other publication of this kind save the probably mistaken facsimile reproduction in 1935 of Helwys's *Mystery of Iniquity*. The reissue of some of the tracts on liberty of conscience printed by the Hanserd Knollys Society in the mid-19th century would have been of more general service.

However, in his Prefatory Note to the first issue of the *Transactions*, Dr. Gould suggested that one of the main objects of the new Society was to prepare the way for a Baptist historian. "We may count with confidence on the coming of that historian," he wrote, "for a history of the Baptists more adequate than any yet attempted is due, and will become a matter of urgent demand". It was Dr. Whitley who set himself to meet this need. He was anxious to continue his bibliography to the end of the 19th century, but put the work aside, under the pressure of Dr. Shakespeare and others, and wrote his *History of British Baptists*, the first edition of which appeared in 1923. Those of us who were then students at Regent's Park College were paraded at the Church House to hear Dr. Whitley give eight "Angus Lectures" on successive Tuesday afternoons. Whether Spurgeon's College students suffered in the same way, I cannot recall. But we were promised a free copy of the book in return for an essay on the lectures. With one dissentient, we refused this bribe!

Dr. Wheeler Robinson, in his foreword to Whitley's history, expressed confidence that the work would "take a place of its own as the standard authority on the subject for at least a generation". That, of course, it has done, but even the second edition of 1932 has long been out of print. Whitley regarded his work as providing "a history of Baptists within the British Empire". Unfortunately, it is not attractive in style. Its continuing importance lies in the fact that it has never been superseded. For the last twenty years, we have contented ourselves with Dr. Underwood's *History of the English*

Baptists, which appeared from the Baptist Union Publication Department in 1947, the year of Dr. Whitley's death. This had a foreword by Dr. Rushbrooke and is an excellent piece of work within its own limits, but these exclude even the Baptists of Wales. For the Baptist story as a whole, we have to rely on Robert Torbet's *History of the Baptists* produced in 1950 as a real *tour de force* by a young American scholar who deserves great credit for his industry. But Dr. Torbet would not claim that his work is free of blemishes, is the last word on the subject, or is even adequate as an interim word.

This raises the question of the interpretation of the facts which a historian or a historical society gathers. Professor W. N. Medlicott said recently: "It is not the historian's task to direct policy or point a moral, but to supply data on which others may act." This is all very well. The supplying of the data and the interpretation of the data cannot be separated so easily or rigidly. The general historian and the ecclesiastical historian alike, however much they strive for impartiality, have a standpoint and a framework for the ordering of their material and have convictions which show themselves. The wise student does not disdain Macaulay, but he considers carefully what Professor Butterfield has to say in *The Whig Interpretation of History*. He looks into Kidd as well as Gwatkin and Lietzmann, when he is learning about the early Christian centuries. We need the denominational historian. We need to recognise the personal predilections and convictions which lie behind his work. We need to heed our opponents and critics, as well as our friends.

III

"Study the historian before you study his history",¹ said Professor E. H. Carr on one occasion. The idea that there is such a thing as complete impartiality has been called "the factual heresy". History is "an argument without end", said the great Dutch historian, Geyl. "All history perpetually requires to be corrected by more history", says Professor Butterfield.² After sixty years we are really only at the beginning of things so far as the recovering and understanding of Baptist history is concerned.

It is illuminating to notice where some of the Baptist historians of the past thought fit to begin their study. Thomas Crosby, the schoolmaster-deacon, regarded his four volumes as in part a reply or supplement to Daniel Neal's *History of the Puritans*. After a sixty-page argumentative preface, he begins with Wycliffe and reaches Smyth's church in Holland by page 90 of volume I, which appeared in 1738. Joseph Ivimey, the pastor of the Eagle Street church, who found time to be also a secretary of the Baptist Union and secretary of the Baptist Irish Mission, in the first of his four volumes, published in 1811, described his work, with its still unsurpassed local material, as "an attempt to prove that the English Baptists held the genuine principles of the Reformation, and pursued them to their legitimate consequen-

ces". He prefixed to his work, first, a 34-page extract from Dr. John Gill (d. 1771) entitled "The Divine Right of Infant-baptism examined and disproved", and, second, what he calls "The History of Baptism in England". This occupies the whole of his first volume and takes over 100 pages to get to 1602. Of Ivimey it was said by his contemporary F. A. Cox: "His heart was catholic, but his temper sectarian." George Brookes, of Bewdley, put it rather differently: "Rev. Mr. Ivimey believed . . . that when a man ceased to be a strict Baptist, there is no resting place for his feet till he finds himself a strict Papist."

Adam Taylor, the historian of the General Baptists, whose two volumes appeared in 1818, gave his first two chapters to "A Sketch of the History of the Baptists from the Commencement of the Christian Aera to the Reformation". He begins with Tertullian. Half a century later, Benjamin Evans of Scarborough, the first of our writers to have any serious claim to be a historian in the modern sense, begins with the Tudors and reaches Smyth only after nearly 200 pages of his first volume on the *Early English Baptists*. J. M. Cramp, in 1868, spends half his space on the pre-Smyth story. Similarly, H. C. Vedder, Professor at Crozer Seminary, divided his widely circulated history into three parts, the first on the Primitive Church, the second on the Persecuted Church, the third and the longest on the Evangelising Church; but only in the third does he come to Smyth, having then reached what he calls "solid ground".

It is worth noting how many of these earlier writers thought it right and proper to set their story in the context of Church History as a whole. This is important, whether or not we can now approve the way they did this. Dr. Whitley, on the other hand, after a brief introductory chapter, rapidly surveying 1,500 years, begins his task with the sentence: "Baptists are to be sharply distinguished from the Anabaptists of the Continent"—a verdict in striking contrast to his remark fourteen years earlier, that "the General Baptists are an English outgrowth of the Continental Anabaptists, acting upon the Lollards".⁸ Dr. Torbet offers a longer introduction than Whitley and comes to a different conclusion. "The facts of history", he remarks with due care, "indicate that there has been some historical continuity prior to the Protestant Reformation of those basic principles which have characterised the people called Baptists, whose origin as a formal organizational entity may be traced with certainty from the seventeenth century and whose spiritual forebears constituted the radical wing of the Protestant Movement of the sixteenth century." This statement he follows with a twenty-page chapter on "Anabaptist Heritage".

All this surely points to the need, as the Society moves on from its sixtieth anniversary, to look and prepare for the historian who shall serve the needs of the coming generation, setting our story in the context of the past and in a framework adequate to the present situation of the Christian mission throughout the world. Dr. Barrie White, in the January issue of the *Baptist Quarterly* pleaded for a review of

accepted Baptist myths and legends and a microscopic study of Baptist history. This is no doubt what has to be undertaken before Whitley, Underwood and Torbet are replaced, but replaced they must soon be!

IV

A number of matters merit careful examination or re-examination.

(1) The Anabaptist connection is one of them and there is now a wealth of material which needs sifting. Shakespeare and Whitley were anxious, I think, to prove Baptists a little more respectable and law-abiding than they actually were (or perhaps are or should be). We do well to remember the insistence of Professor Butterfield, a Methodist, on the importance of cherishing the radical tradition and realising the importance of "Christianity in Opposition".⁴ Professor Toynebee has pointed out how often "displaced persons" have proved valuable innovators in the communities where they have found refuge and opportunity⁵—a truth with many modern applications.

(2) A kindred matter has in the past caused acute controversy in the United States and still has very important implications. It concerns the theological and historical bases of "Landmarkism", that strange movement in the southern states of America which, in an effort to maintain what were alleged to be the "old landmarks" of New Testament Christianity, opposed "alien immersion" (that is, the validity for membership in a Baptist church of baptism administered by a non-Baptist, even if on profession of faith and by immersion); opposed also any exchange of pulpits between Baptists and non-Baptists; would not allow members of different local Baptist churches to sit down together at the Lord's Supper; and questioned the formation of even a missionary society! Only seventy years ago the Louisville Seminary was being rocked by a controversy which resulted in President Whitsitt being driven from office because he asserted, what is quite certain, that in 1641, London Baptists were sent to Holland to secure immersion at the hands of Mennonites. There is much in American Baptist life today—and it affects what can and cannot be expected from the Baptist World Alliance—which cannot be understood apart from the continued influence, even if largely unconscious, of Landmark ideas.

(3) Historical myths and legends are strange things. We are well aware of the wiles of the advertiser and of their danger. We are less on the alert against those who set themselves to make some of the figures of the past rather more than life-size and so to distort the record. In an extremely interesting book entitled *The Legend of the Founding Fathers*, Wesley Frank Craven, of Cornell University, has pointed out that it was not until the American Revolution, that is, 100 years after his death, that Roger Williams began to be made into a national and Baptist hero; and further, that this was largely due to the Rhode Island Historical Society. In 1860 Williams's remains were exhumed and his canonisation was complete. Thereafter Baptists have had no difficulty in conveniently ignoring the brevity of

Williams's association with a Baptist church.

Nor are we in Britain free from the temptation to ignore what Professor Butterfield calls "the seamy underside of the tapestry".⁶ We try to forget that two of our outstanding missionary heroes, William Carey and Timothy Richard, spent their last years outside the B.M.S.! There has been no modern study of the voluminous material dealing with the Serampore Controversy, though it throws considerable light on the individuals who took part and on the outlook of the period. Missionary propaganda of recent years has exalted Carey at the expense of his colleagues. At this point, the 19th century was more just, as the works of F. A. Cox and John Clark Marshman show. Similarly, we appear to have lost interest in what took place in the West Indies *after* the abolition of slavery, and have left to secular historians the study of incidents like the Morant Bay insurrection of 1865, though English and Jamaican Baptists were closely involved. Lord Olivier's (1933) and Bernard Semmel's (1962) books on Governor Eyre, and now Geoffrey Dutton's *The Hero as Murderer*, are all indirect contributions to Baptist history, but need examination from our own standpoint. Moreover, we have not yet got round to facing the implication of those lines of Robert Bridges:

"See how cross-eyed the pride of our world-wide crusade
against Nigerian slavery, while the London poor
in their Victorian slums lodged closer and filthier
than the outraged alien; and under liberty's name
our Industry is worse fed and shut out from the sun.—
In every age and nation a like confusion is found".⁷

(4) The same has to be said, I think, in regard to the fortunes of the denomination in the 18th century. It is to the credit of the founders of this Society that in the first issue of the *Transactions* there was included a long and sympathetic article on William Vidler. A few years ago, the newly formed Baptist student society in the University of Sussex wrote asking me to suggest a name for it, similar to those used in other universities. The two most interesting Baptist names from south-east England, apart from Joan of Kent (who must presumably be classed as an Anabaptist) are Matthew Caffyn and William Vidler. But both strayed from strict orthodoxy and there would no doubt have been general outcry if either of these names had been taken. But we greatly need a closer study of the 18th century, of leading ministers and churches, of the relations between the Generals and the Particulars and the way individuals and churches changed their allegiance, and of the contribution to enlightenment and to *the* Enlightenment by those sometimes scorned for their use of reason and their refusal to repeat traditional phrases. The story is not nearly as simple as Principal Kingdon has suggested in a recent controversial pamphlet.

(5) The study of the 18th century has an important bearing on the question of creeds and confessions, a question which is again agitating a number among us. Baptists have been averse to their regular repeti-

tion in worship, but have never departed far from the central affirmations of the faith. Long ago, most Baptists came to see that any attempt to enforce subscription as a basis of membership, or even to insist on an elaborate declaration as a basis of association, is self-defeating. We can never be certain that our neighbour is using or understanding phrases exactly as we ourselves do; and, as Evelyn Underhill once said: "In religion, our exclusions are nearly always wrong, and our inclusions, however inconsistent, nearly always right." This is surely true of the local church fellowship and of the denomination as a whole. The secular historian has been accustomed to give our Baptist forebears of the 17th century credit for being in the van of those fighting for religious toleration and freedom of conscience. They have been regarded as worthy of praise because they sought these things not solely for themselves but also for Jews, for the followers of Mohammed and for Roman Catholics. This is one of the most precious parts of our heritage and one that the historian must emphasise and guard, for these are dangerous times. Only recently President Duke McCall, of the great Louisville Seminary of the Southern Convention, declared: "We are developing an oral creed which majors on shibboleths and sacred phrases."⁸ This is not the way forward. Some other words of Bridges have received all too clear illustration in the last few days:

"Time eateth away at many an old delusion,
 yet with civilization delusions make head;
 the thicket of the people will take furtive fire
 from irresponsible catchwords of live ideas,
 sudden as a gorse-bush from the smouldering end
 of any loiterer's matchsplint."⁹

Is not the question we should ask ourselves when we study, for example, the Down Grade Controversy, with all its unfortunate episodes, this: Would it really have been to the advantage of the denomination and to the mission of the Christian Church in Britain, if the Baptist Union in 1887 had done what Spurgeon asked and adopted as its basis the 1846 Declaration of the Evangelical Alliance? The truth is that the denomination would at that moment have disintegrated, for the secessions would have been many times greater than those withdrawing with Spurgeon, and in fact, practically no one of any standing supported Spurgeon in his suggestions. The leaders of 1887 realised that "the pinning-down of the Christian gospel in creeds", unless these are used with the greatest circumspection, is contrary to the letter and spirit of the New Testament and would "entangle us again in a yoke of bondage" (*Galatians* 5, 1), and bondage to a Declaration, the limitations of which were clearly stated when it was drawn up.

There is, of course, a false antiquarianism, which is sentimental and dangerous. The American Baptist Convention has asked some of its ministers to arrive for the forthcoming Convention in Boston on horseback as a tribute to the old-time "circuit rider" preachers!¹⁰

V

In a book published a few years ago which purported, according to its title, to throw light *Inside the Free Churches*, it was suggested that I had some responsibility for "the preoccupation of the Baptists with their past".¹¹ It is true that I believe, with Nathan Söderblom, that "if you want Christ, you must take history with Him". Not long ago Neville Clark said something similar, though rather less elegantly: "The curse of modern theology has been its failure to take history seriously."¹² But though life can only be understood backwards, it has to be lived forwards. The constant re-examination of the past, the revision of our verdicts, the setting of our story in a wider perspective is for the purpose of wiser decisions on current issues and the better fulfilment of our continuing tasks. There is real danger that we may act unwisely because we do not know the past or are stampeded by those whose account of it is superficial or distorted.

Among our greatest needs is a history of the B.M.S. Its lack is really extraordinary and quite shameful. Money for it was provided when the B.M.S. celebrated its terjubilée in 1942. But on this occasion we should pay tribute to the patient work done by Mr. and Mrs. Arnold Chesterman in sorting papers and helping with their cataloguing. The tragic death of Mr. and Mrs. Chesterman is a considerable loss to this Society.

There are also neglected personalities whose story needs to be told—Dr. James Foster (1697-1753), for example, of the West Country and London, able in the mid-18th century to write a *Discourse on all the Principal Branches of Natural Religion and Social Virtue* and to gain an Aberdeen D.D.; or the more remarkable and almost totally forgotten James (Diego) Thompson, who arrived in South America from Scotland in 1818 as a delegate of the British and Foreign Schools Society. He became an agent of the Bible Society and soon found himself one of the leading figures in the new republics of the Argentine, Chile, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia, still famed in all of them. Later he was in Mexico and the West Indies, and finally before his death in 1854, in parts of southern Europe. This extraordinary man, Diego Thompson, does not seem to have found a place in any of the standard Baptist histories.

The historian of the future will, without doubt, proudly record the story of Martin Luther King. But he will also have to explain how it was that, as recently as 1932, W. J. McGlothlin refused to attend a public dinner because a Negro pastor was to be at it! He will have to admit that Governor Faubus, of Little Rock, was an influential Baptist!

But our greatest immediate need is to help our people to see our history as part, but only a part, of the progress through the centuries of the Christian faith as a whole. One of the necessary tasks forced on us by the Ecumenical Movement—and one that may become one of its greatest blessings—is the re-writing of the story of the different Christian traditions as parts of a single whole. "Universal history",

said Acton many years ago, "is not a burden on the memory, but an illumination of the soul". It is the historian's duty, in the words of Professor Butterfield, "to show how men came to differ, rather than a story which is meant to reveal who is in the right".¹⁸ "No single nation or nation-state . . . can show a history which is self-explanatory", said Toynbee on the first page of his *Study of History*. That is true also of denominations, even those that claim to base all their doctrine and practice on the New Testament. The day of the merely denominational historian is nearly over. The task of the Christian historian has hardly been begun.

Let me end by recalling a conversation between two of the greatest modern historians, L. E. Namier and A. J. Toynbee, very different in their method and approach, and sometimes sharply at issue with one another. Said Namier to Toynbee: "You try to see the tree as a whole. I try to examine it leaf by leaf. The general run of historians try to take the tree branch by branch; and you and I agree that this last approach, at any rate, is an unpromising one".

The Society as it passes its sixtieth milestone needs followers of both Namier and Toynbee. There are many leaves still to be examined with minute care and sympathy. But we must also try to see "the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit" (*Revelation* 22.2). To take merely our own branch, to extol it and exaggerate its importance, has now little or no purpose for the genuine seeker after truth. Let us not forget the warning contained in that delightful fable in *Judges* 9, which tells how the trees were seeking a king. The olive, the fig and the vine were wise enough to keep their place. It was the bramble which was foolish enough to bid the rest of the trees, including the cedars of Lebanon, come and take refuge in its shade. "History", said Professor Geyl, the Dutch historian whom I quoted earlier, "is a restraining influence, an influence making for sanity".¹⁴ That is why this Society must continue and, indeed, extend its activities.

NOTES

¹ P. Geyl, *Debates with Historians*, pp. 166 f.

² *The Whig Interpretation of History*, p. 131.

³ *Minutes of the General Baptist Assembly*, p. ix.

⁴ *Christianity and History*, p. 133. *History and Human Relations*, p. 152.

⁵ *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, p. 186 n.

⁶ *Christianity and History*, p. 57. Cf. Geyl, *Debates with Historians*, p. 25 for a reference to a comment by Meinecke, the veteran German historian, who died in 1954, about Ranke's tendency to let "the night side of life" recede to the background.

⁷ *The Testament of Beauty, IV*, 356 ff.

⁸ *The Tie*, May 1955.

⁹ *The Testament of Beauty, I*, 599 ff.

¹⁰ *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 April, 1968.

¹¹ G. T. Brake, *Inside the Free Churches*, p. 51.

¹² *New Christian*, 25 January, 1968.

¹³ *The Whig Interpretation of History*, p. 130.

¹⁴ *The Use and Abuse of History*, p. 81.