

THOMAS GUY: A NOTE

BAPTISTS lay claim to the allegiance, in his time, of Thomas Guy (1645?-1724), the founder of the hospital in St. Thomas's Street, London, S.E.1, but as Seymour Price recognised when he was Secretary of our Society, the precise nature and detail of that allegiance still needs to be spelled out. Although Seymour Price appealed for someone to make a study of Thomas Guy and his relationships with Baptists,¹ the work has not yet been done, and a further thirty-five years have passed. Account has been taken of the fact that P. T. Edden received approval from Keele for a thesis on Guy,² but there is nothing to indicate that his research will meet our interests.

W. T. Whitley complained that Thomas Crosby ignored Guy in his *History of English Baptists*³ but he made no reference to him in his own *History of British Baptists!* A. C. Underwood makes a brief mention.⁴ G. H. Pike cites William Maitland as being his authority for claiming that Guy's father, also Thomas, "was a Baptist lighter-man and coalmonger".⁵ Another note states that Guy's mother came from the Voughton family of Tamworth, and that her sister, Johanna, married into the Blood family.⁶

Thomas Guy's fortune came from three major sources. He printed Bibles and other devotional literature; he purchased seamen's tickets; he sold at a most opportune time his South Sea stock. Some references to the first of these enterprises is made in earlier copies of our journal.⁷ T. Roy Jones contributed an article on the sale of South Sea holdings which reinforces the warning that there are errors in the article on Guy in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.⁸

A further extended note on Guy deserves to be reproduced here in full:

. . . Thus he began to accumulate money, and his gains rested in his hands; for, being a single man, and very penurious, his expences (sic) were next to nothing. His custom was, to dine on his shop-counter, with no other table-cloth than an old newspaper; he was also as little nice in regard to his apparel. . . . To show what great events spring from trivial causes it may be observed, that the publick are indebted to a most trifling incident for the greatest part of his immense fortune's being applied to charitable uses. Mr. Guy had a maid-servant, whom he agreed to marry; and, preparatory to his nuptials, he had ordered the pavement before his door to be mended so far as to a particular stone which he marked. The maid, while her master was out, innocently looking on the paviers at work, saw a broken place they had not repaired, and mentioned it to them; but they told her that Mr. Guy had directed them not to go so far. "Well," says she "do you mend it: tell him I bade you, and I know he will not be angry." It happened, however, that the poor girl presumed too much on her influence over her wary lover, with whom the charge

