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A table of contents for *The Baptist Quarterly* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bq_01.php

The BAPTIST QUARTERLY

The Journal of the Baptist Historical Society

VOLUME XX

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We warmly congratulate the Rev. E. F. Clipsham on being awarded the B.D. degree of Oxford University for a thesis on "Andrew Fuller's Doctrine of Salvation." The valuable series of articles on Fuller and Fullerism which Mr. Clipsham has been contributing to this journal is concluded in the present issue, as is also Mr. I. Sellers' study on Liverpool Baptists of the 17th century. To forestall enquiries it should be said that Rev. N. Clark's usual feature "In the Study" will be resumed in the July issue, its place on this occasion being taken by his article on the "Pastoral Ministry."

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The Annual Meeting of the Society will be held on Monday, April 27th in the Institute Hall of Westminster Chapel. It will commence at 4.30 p.m. and will be preceded by tea. Our speaker is to be Mr. H. G. Tibbutt, F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S., and his subject "Social History in Nonconformist Church Books." Mr. Tibbutt has written several important monographs on 17th century history and a number of studies of Bedfordshire Nonconformity which have included some of the county's Baptist churches. He is Research Secretary of the Congregational Historical Society and Secretary of the Friends of Dr. Williams's Library.

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In the field of county history some valuable contributions have appeared in recent issues of our contemporaries. "The Lean Years

of Sussex Nonconformity" is the title of an article in the *Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society* (Volume XIX, No. 4), and it relates to the period c.1720-60. The decline of Nonconformity at this time is usually attributed to the effects of anti-Trinitarian heresies and of hyper-Calvinism but this theory does not fit the evidence for Sussex. The General Baptists were the only Dissenters who "held their ground quite well and even showed some evangelical zeal" and yet they were the only denomination whose ministry was notably influenced by Socinian or Arian views. The writer, Mr. N. Caplan, finds, on the other hand, little evidence of unorthodoxy among other bodies and suggests that one of the main causes of their decline was in the limited supply, and sometimes uneven quality, of ministers. Mr. Caplan also has an article on the numerical strength of Sussex Nonconformity, 1669-76, in the *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society* (Vol. XIII, No. 1). Of similar interest to Baptists is C. E. Welch's *Early Nonconformity in Leicestershire* published by the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (price 3s. 6d.). This study includes a discussion of the geographical distribution of Nonconformists in the county and their difficulties under the Early Stuarts. There were eight Baptist Churches in Leicestershire by 1651, some of which no longer exist and only one of which (Earl Shilton) appears to have had a continuous history to the present day.

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