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The BAPTIST QUARTERLY

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Editorial

DIAMOND JUBILEE ISSUE

IN this issue are some of the papers which were delivered at the Summer School held from 20th to 24th June at Spurgeon's College. The papers will show that one of the main aims of the programme was to expound and discuss techniques of historical investigation. It sought also to indicate some of the fruits of recent research in Baptist history. These published papers, however, can only give a partial impression of the School and cannot in themselves communicate the lively enthusiasm and interest which animated it, nor the very real sense of fellowship which was there from the outset. Dr. Payne in his presidential remarks at the Diamond Jubilee dinner on the Friday evening declared his opinion that the society was in a more vigorous condition than at any time since the first World War. This view was borne out by the success of the Summer School, the members of which were drawn from all age groups, with a particularly strong representation of younger members.

We were indebted to Spurgeon's College for the excellent hospitality arrangements which contributed greatly to the comfort of members. In the Heritage Room at the College there was displayed the Philpot collection of biblical documents and some of the Spurgeon materials in the possession of the College. In the library there was a special exhibition of books and pamphlets concerned with Free Church history and the techniques of historical research. On the Friday afternoon we were able to visit the Record Office at County Hall and

on Saturday the librarian of the Dr. Williams's Library displayed some of the riches of that collection, explaining how it originated and how to use it today. All in all, it can be said that the celebrations planned for this sixtieth year of our history have proved most successful and worthwhile. This is a moment to work for a major increase in membership, which in its turn would enable us to render increasingly effective service.

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Plans were formulated in July for the second meeting of the Conference of European Baptist Historians. This will be held at Rüschnikon, probably in August 1969 though this date awaits confirmation. This meeting of the Conference will study the historical effects on different European Baptist communities of being a minority group—effects for churchmanship and church relations, social and political attitudes, concepts of liberty, and so on.

Not all our readers may know of the Conference of European Baptist Historians because, almost as soon as it had been formed in July 1967, plans went into abeyance through the secretary's illness. The Conference was formed with the following purposes:—

- (1) To stimulate a critical interest in the writing of organized, accurate, well documented Baptist history in Europe.
- (2) To develop some system for the exchange of historical data and information as to where they can be found. A catalogue or bibliography of these materials would be shared with all European Baptist bodies.
- (3) To hold annual meetings for discussion of special problems encountered in the various European countries with regard to the writing of Baptist history, and to keep informed of the historical work in progress.

A small Leadership Committee of three members was appointed, consisting of G. W. Rusling (Chairman), J. Wheeler of Rüschnikon (Secretary), and D. Lagergren of Sweden. Any members of the Baptist Historical Society who would like to be kept in touch with the future work and plans of the Conference are invited to send their name and address to Dr. J. Wheeler, at the Baptist Theological Seminary, Rüschnikon-Zurich, Switzerland.

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