A History of the Baptists

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CHAPTER XIX
THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF BAPTIST INSTITUTIONS AND CUSTOMS

The formation of Baptist Associations may be traced to the period of the Civil Wars and they were developed in the last half of the seventeenth century. They formed a source of healthful and pleasant intercourse to many. The Baptists were persecuted, the churches were often weak and widely separated, and intercourse was not easy. Roads existed more in name than in fact. No means of public transit existed, and commerce called individuals but rarely from their homes, or only to the next market town. These annual gatherings of the brethren were hailed as seasons of holy festivity. Men of note, both of piety and of action, were brought together, and by their counsel and preaching greatly aided the churches of God (Evans, Early English Baptists, II. 223).

It must be carefully remembered that the Particular and General Baptists did not act in concert nor did they always hold the same views on organization. The idea of an association seems to have originated with the Particular Baptists. The London Confession of Faith of 1643, article XLVII seems to anticipate an association. At least the germinal idea is there. That document says:

And although the particular Congregations be distinct (1 Cor. 4:17. & 14. 38, 36. & 16:1) and severall Bodies, every one a compact and knit Citie (Matth. 28:20) in itself; yet are they all to walk by one and the same (1 Tim. 3.15. & 6.18, 14) Rule, and by all means convenient to have the counsell (Rev. 22. 18, 19) and help one of another in all needful affairs of the (Col. 2. 6, 19, & 4. 16) Church, as members of one body in the common faith under Christ their onely head.

The day this was declared was the birthday of the modem association. The distinctiveness of the idea is seen in the fact that church order is made to rest on the principle of voluntariness under the authority of Christ, the only Head. But the times were too changeable and threatening for organization. The power of Charles I had been bridled but the Presbyterians were in power and they were as hostile to the Baptists as ever the Episcopalians had been. In 1649 Charles I was put to death, and the Baptists under Cromwell had an extension liberty. So the time was ripe for the organization of associations.

But while the idea of associations originated with the Particular Baptists, the General Baptists were the first to organize. They were not connected with the Independents or Brownists. Many of the General Baptists were royalists and favored a strong government. There was incorporated in their early meetings an authority invested in associations which would not now be tolerated among Baptists. Says Professor J. M. Davis, of The Baptist College, Cardiff, Wales:

The General Baptists, like the Particular Baptists, held the idea of the Independency of the Churches, but their General Conference was more Presbyterian in its legislation. By their connection with the Anabaptists and the Mennonites of the Continent, and their stay at Amsterdam, they obtained knowledge of the Presbyterian Synods of the churches of Luther and Calvin. Also they acknowledged an order of officers, which they called "Messengers," corresponding to the apostolic order, which they supposed continued partly in the church. "The Messengers" were appointed by the General Conference. Their work was to plant new churches and to confirm those that were already in existence; ordain ministers and visit churches to advise them and to confirm them, and to report their condition to the General Conference. They were a kind of "Baptist Bishops," with power of superintendency. They differed from the Bishops of the Church of England in that they were appointed by the General Conference and were under their authority. At first their power was moderate, but it was enlarged from the end of the 17th century on. (*The Western Recorder*, September 21, 1916. Translation by J. T. Griffith).

Many of the ideas of strong government and of church order were incorporated into the early associations of America. As a reaction from this monarchical idea many Baptists in this country favored the idea of a convention, where no power was lodged with the general body savve that of voluntariness. It has., therefore, followed in this country that many Baptist general bodies have taken the name and form of conventions rather than that of associations, and where the associational name has been retained the idea of organization is not far removed from that of a convention. The conception of a convention appeals to a liberty loving people rather than the stronger idea of an association. Generally the older bodies, from custom, have retained the name of association, while the newer organizations have adopted the name convention. Gradually, in England, these objectionable features have been eliminated.

The Particular Baptists, on the other hand, were more conservative, more independent of authority, more jealous of delegated rights, and consequently were much slower in forming associations.

Adam Taylor (The History of the English General Baptists, I. 457) gives the origin of associations among General Baptists and his account is here mainly followed.

As soon as any number of General Baptist churches were gathered, in any county or district, they united to support a periodical meeting, to consult for the common welfare. Such a meeting was called an Association, and was usually held at the principal place of the district, quarterly, half yearly, or annually, according to the convenience of the congregations supporting it. It was composed of two or more representatives from each church in the district, elected to this office by the church which sent them. The messenger or elder was more frequently chosen, and was joined to one or more respectable private brethren, who had equal rights with the ministers to deliberate and vote.

The business usually transacted at these Associations was-the reformation of inconsistent or immoral conduct, whether in ministers or private Christians-the prevention or suppression of heresy-the reconciling of differences between members and churches-the giving of advice in difficult cases, whether respecting individuals or societies-the proposing of plans of usefulness-the recommending of cases that required pecuniary support-and, in short, the devising of the most effectual means of promoting the prosperity of religion in the world at large, but especially in their own churches.

The first four of these particulars would scarcely come under the purview of an Association today. They occupied a large place in the proceedings of those early days.

It is not easy to ascertain the number of Associations into which the English General Baptists were divided; new unions bring frequently formed, and old ones dissolved. During this period there are found traces of Buckinghamshire, Cambridge, Dorsetshire, the Isle of Ely, the Kentish, the Lincolnshire, the London, the Northamptonshire, the Western and Wiltshire Associations. These all existed at the close of the seventeenth century; and appear then to have been, in a greater or less degree, flourishing. Several of them were composed of a considerable number of prosperous churches.

These Associations in different parts of the nation, maintaining only a local union, a more general cooperation became desirable. To effect this, occasional meetings were held, usually in London, as the center of the kingdom, which they styled General Assemblies. They were composed of representatives of the various Associations, and from such churches as chose to send deputies; which might be either ministers or private brethren.

It is not easy to ascertain the exact date of the first introduction of General Assemblies among these churches; but it can be placed with great probability, under the Protectorate. Mr. Grantham, in 1671, speaks of them as generally established and approved (Grantham, Sigh of Peace, 130-132); and, in 1678, having mentioned the assembly recorded in Acts fifteen, he says:

According to this precedent, the baptized churches in this age and nation have kept an Assembly-general for many years, for the better sett1ement of the churches to which they are related (Granthain, Christianismus Primitivus, 137. London, 1678).

This system of Associations and General Associations gave rise to a custom of Appeal from the decisions of churches. When any member thought himself aggrieved by the proceedings of his church, he might appeal to two or more neighboring churches, and require them to judge and hear the case. If the appeal was received, a meeting of deputies from: each of the societies to which the appeal was made was appointed; and, both parties having been heard at length, judgment was given. But if either party remained dissatisfied, the business might be brought before the Association to which they belonged; and have another investigation. And from the decision of the Association, there yet lay a final appeal to the General Assembly. For some time, the discontented persons appear to have been considered as having a right to claim a hearing; but this was found to protract altercations, and nourish a captious spirit. The Assembly therefore resolved, that no case of this nature should be received by them, without the mutual consent and request of all the parties concerned (Minutes of the General Assembly for 1711, I.113. London, 1909).

Furthermore they introduced an officer into their system whom they called a bishop or messenger. He was generally chosen by an Association of the representatives of the churches; and was ordained of those of his own order with great solemnity. Sometimes a particular church chose a messenger, but in that instance his business was to preach the gospel and regulate the churches which he founded. "They were appointed," says Jeffrey, "for the gathering of churches, and the establishment of them."

At the Lincoinshire Association, held at Coningsly, May 30, 1775, the office is thus defined:

The messenger, who is chosen by the unanimous consent and approbation of the churches which stand in a close connection together, hath full liberty and authority, according to the gospel, to freely enquire into the state of the churches respecting both pastor and people, to see that the pastors do their

duty in their places, and the people theirs; he is to exhort, admonish, and reprove both the one and the other, as occasion calls for. In virtue of his office, he is to watch over the several flocks committed to his care and charge-to see that good order and government be carefully and constantly kept up and maintained in the churches he is called and appointed to look after and to watch over; to labor and to keep out innovations in doctrine, worship, and discipline, and to stand up in the defense of the gospel.

This right of appeal and appointment of messengers for the government of the churches was inconsistent with the independence of a church which these Christians strenuously asserted. The question was constantly raised: how far agreements made by a General Assembly do obligate the churches concerned by their representatives? Grantham answers as follows:

To ascribe infallibility to any Assembly since the Apostles' days, must in nowise be allowed, Wherefore, though we ought to consider with great respect what is concluded by a general council of Christ's true ministers: yet we may lawfully doubt of what they deliver; unless they confirm it by the word of the Lord (Grantham, Christianismus, 139).

The General Baptists were then in an experimental state in regard to organization and have long since discarded these views.

Although the Particular Baptists were slower in organizing Associations than the General Baptists, they had, as we have seen, in 1643, anticipated such a union. The especial cause for the organization of the first Particular Baptist Association occurred some ten years later. The churches in Ireand wrote a special letter to the churches in London. In this letter they say:

That their beloved and faithful brother, John Vernon, the bearer of the letter, will, through the blessing of God, be suddenly with you . . . His conversation hath been with zeal and faithfulness: the Lord having put it into the hearts of all his congregations in Ireland to have a more revived correspondence with each other by letter and loving epistles, in which practice we found great advantage, not only by weakening Satan's suggestions and jealousies, but it hath brought a closer union and knitting of heart; and, which is not an inferior consideration, we have hereby been enabled feelingly and knowingly to present each others wants and conditions before God. In the same manner, we shall be enabled to answer our duty towards you, and you towards us, and so hear each others burdens, and fulfill the law of Christ in our very near, relation. We hereby earnestly request the same brotherly correspondence with you and from you; and, by your means, with all of the rest of the churches in England, Scotland, and Wales, whom we trust will be

provoked to the same things, which we hope may be mutually obtained once in three months.

The same letter asks for a "perfect account of the churches of Christ owned in communion with them;" and offers "one request more," "if it hath not been lately practised," namely:

That they would send two or more faithful brethren, well acquainted with the discipline and order of the Lord's house, able to speak seasonable words, suited to the necessities of the people, to visit, comfort, and confirm all the flock of our Lord Jesus, that are, or have given up, their names to be under his rule, and government in England, Scotland and Ireland.

This letter greatly moved the Particular Baptist churches of England and doubtless resulted in the organization of the London Baptist Association. The circular letter sent out was the occasion, in November following, of an Association of Particular Baptist churches in the west of England. One of the questions of debate was: Whether laying on of hands on baptized believers was an ordinance of Christ? The majority agreed that there was no warrant for it, and that the question should not disturb the communion of the churches. The circular letter was signed by Thomas Collier, one of the many Baptist ministers singled out for abuse by Edwards. "He is a master-sectary," says Edwards, "and a man of great power amongst them. He had emissaries under him, whom he sends abroad to several parts." In other words he was the general superintendent and messenger of the churches.

The Midland Association of Particular Baptist Churches was formed, in 1655, at Warwick. After adopting a Confession of Faith of sixteen articles, after the manner of the Confession of 1643, the Association determined the objects of the union They were as follows:

The churches were to he helpful to each other: first, in giving advice, after serious consultation and deliberation, in matters and controversies remaining doubtful to any particular church, according to the plain example of the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch. (Acts xv. 23. &c.) Secondly, in sending their gifted brethren to use their gifts for the edification of the churches that need the same, as they shall see it to be reasonable, as the Church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to Antioch. Acts xv. 22. Thirdly, in giving and receiving also, in case of the poverty and want of any particular church, as plainly doth appear in the approved and due acting of the Churches of the Gentiles towards the Church at Jerusalem. Rom. xv. 20. Fourthly, in a joint carrying on of any part of the work of the Lord, as is commanded to the churches, as they shall have opportunity to join therein, to the glory of God. See 2 Cor. viii. 19-23. Fifthly, in watching over each other and considering

each other for good, in respect of purity of doctrine, exercise of love and good conversation, being all members of the same body of Christ (1 Cor. xii. 12), who, therefore, ought to have care for one another (ver. 25) especially considering how the glory of God is concerned in their standing and holy conversation.The churches now associated are desired to take these things into consideration, and to signify by their messengers, at their next meeting, how far they close with the same, and what they judge expedient to be further considered and done, for the glory of Cod and the good of the people.

The first General Assembly of the Particular Baptist Churches, the greatest of the Assemblies, as Marlow calls it, was the one called by a letter from the London churches, the year after the landing of William of Orange. The meeting was called to assemble in London, 1689, "of two principal brethren of every church of the same faith with us, in every county respectively." Letters of acceptance of this invitation were to be sent to H. Knollys or W. Kiffin. "Brother Kiffin lives in White's Alley, Little Moorfields." The Assembly continued its sittings for eight or nine days, was pervaded by a solemn, earnest and united spirit, and transacted business of real importance to the welfare and prosperity of the churches. The first day was spent in humbling themselves before the Lord. The second day they agreed upon certain preliminaries, as the foundation or rules of their Assembly, in order to guard against any misapprehensions in the minds of the members of their respective churches, declaring that "they disclaimed all manner of superiority, or superintendency over the churches, having no authority or power to prescribe or impose anything upon the faith or practice of any of the churches of Christ, their whole intendment being to be helpers together of one another, by way of counsel and advice."

Differences in individual churches "in point of communion" were to be left undisturbed; and differences between one church and another were not allowed to be debated, "until the rule that Christ had given in the matter (Matt. xviii. 15) be first answered." Even their advice is regarded as not binding "to any one church till the consent of that church be first had, and they conclude the same among themselves." Moreover, "all things offered by way of counsel and advice were to be proved out of the Word of God, and the (particular) Scripture annexed." The "breviates" of the meeting were to be transcribed and sent to every particular church, with a letter. Each person was to present to the Assembly his letter of recommendation from the church to which he belonged, and none were to be permitted to speak without the general consent of the Assembly. After the letters from the several churches were read, and prayer offered, the meeting adjourned (Goadby, Bye Paths of Baptist History, 203).

Out of these meetings particular and general as devised and organized by Thomas Grantham, Thomas Collier, William Kiffin, Benjamin Keach, and others, have grown, with additions and subtractions and modifications, Baptist organizations. They have assumed their peculiar form on account of the fundamental conception that each church is an independent body, and its connection with other churches of the same faith and order, or general bodies was purely optional. It was recognized that some form of union and cooperation was desirable. At first there were cross-currents of opinion arising out of the fact that the Baptists while holding democratic principles were citizens of a monarchy. They were feeling after liberty. It is remarkable with their surroundings, with limited experience, under persecution, that they devised a system of organizations that not only became the bulwark of freedom but presented a method of cooperation and effective work.

It has frequently been assumed that the General Baptists did not encourage the support and education of the ministry. Most of the General Baptist ministers had secular employments and made their own living. But it is true that they did take steps to support and educate their ministry. Joseph Hooke, an elder among them in the last days of Charles II says of human learning:

It is nowhere said in the Word of God, "Let a bishop be an academic, a rhetorician, a logician, a graduate;" but it is said, "A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God, vigilant, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach, &c." And when we find them thus qualified according to the mind or God, we choose them to the ministry, whether they have or not been bred in the University . .. Let none mistake me, as though I should despise human learning, as some have done in a passionate zeal, because of its abuses, and others through sottish ignorance, being themselves strangers to it. No! I love and honour human learning, and give it my approbation; only, I would not have more ascribed to it than is due; nor, by any means, that it should be preferred above Divine learning, but only attended upon as a servant (Hooke, Necessary Apology, 58-62).

At first the ministers only received traveling expenses, and then often on the narrowest scale. Afterwards, in 1656, it was decreed that the churches should defray the charges of their families. and "that our beloved brethren shall have ten shillings a week for themselves and their families." This was to cover their own traveling expenses, and the cost of their families' maintenance during their absence (Goadby, 225).

Francis Stanley, who long labored among the General Baptists, "without being chargeable to any," tells of his own knowledge:

That some ministers had spent the greater part of their outward substance in the service of the churches; some their all; and some more than their all, many being reduced to the affecting straight, either to neglect the worthy work of the Gospel, or else to be reputed worse than infidels (1 Tim. v.8).

Thomas Grantham took up the charge of Stanley and gently suggested:

Let the baptized churches be exhorted to consider that, whilst others have exceeded, they have been too short, in caring for their minister's, who, though they have generally with great cheerfulness served them in the Gospel of God freely, yet that will not justify the churches' neglect of their duty. And besides, the ministry are rendered, by this neglect, less capable to serve them, being generally much diverted by worldly employments from that serious study and exercise of reading which ordinarily conduces much to the furtherance of the Gospel, in the more ample preaching thereof.

The General Assembly gave the matter a practical turn in 1704. The churches in Kent said to the Assembly that "they were in a sinking and languishing condition;" and one reason assigned was, "the want of making provision for a Gospel ministry." The Assembly therefore advised:

That able and gifted persons be chosen and appointed to inform the churches in general of the duty, according to the Scriptures, to make provision for a Gospel ministry, and that the ministers be strictly enjoined in their respective churches to be diligent in this work.

That every congregation choose and appoint a person, or persons, to collect or gather at his, her, or their discretion, such moneys as shall be given for the use aforesaid, once a month, or as often as convenient.

That all such moneys so collected shall be delivered into the hands of a treasurer, or treasurers, as are chosen by the Association, or other churches distinct, according as they think convenient; and that such a treasurer or treasurers, by and with the consent and direction of the aforesaid Association, or churches distinct, shall apply or dispose of the said moneys for encouraging and supporting a Gospel ministry, as aforesaid, and to no other uses whatsoever; and that the said collections shall not hinder or prevent raising a stock to be brought to the General Assembly, for the messengers, or traveling ministers (Minutes of the General Assembly, 1).

The Particular Baptists were explicit on this subject. In the first General Assembly of the Particular Baptists, in 1689, it is affirmed of the pastors:

It is incumbent on the Churches to whom they Minister, not only to give them all due respect, but also to communicate to them of all their good things according to their ability, so as that they may have a comfortable supply, without being themselves entangled in Secular Affairs; and this is required by the Law of Nature, and by the Express order of our Lord Jesus, who hath ordained that they that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.

They provided a fund which was to be devoted to the following purposes:

To help the weaker churches in the maintenance of their ministers, so that they (the ministers) might give themselves wholly to the preaching of the Gospel.

To send ministers that are ordained, or at least solemnly called to preach, both in city and country, where the Gospel hath, or hath not been preached, and to visit the churches.

Such ministers were to be selected by at least two churches in London or the country. The fund was further devoted to:

Assist those members that shall be found in any of the churches that are disposed for study, have an inviting gift, and are sound in fundamentals, in attaining to the knowledge and understanding of the languages, Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

In replying to a number of questions it was affirmed that it was an unquestionable advantage:

For our brethren now in the ministry, to obtain a competent knowledge of the Hebrew, Greek and Latin tongues, that they may be the better capable of defending the truth against opposers,

Already had the Baptists anticipated the action of the Particular Baptist Assembly in 1689. Many of their ministers had been educated in the great universities of Oxford and Cambridge. In 1675 the Baptist ministers of London invited their brethren throughout the country to meet in the following May in the metropolis with a view to form "a plan for providing an orderly standing ministry who might give themselves to reading and study and so become able ministers of the New Testament."

Four years later, or in 1679, Edward Terrell, who was an elder in the Broadmead Church, Bristol, executed a deed to considerable property, in trust to the pastor of that church, under the following conditions:

Provided he be a holy man, well skilled in the Greek and Hebrew tongues, in which the Scriptures were originally written; and devote three afternoons in the week to the instruction of any number of young students, not exceeding twelve, who may be recommended by the churches, in the knowledge of the original languages, and other literature (Ivimey, History of the English Baptists, II. 389).

This fund became available in 1717 and since that date Bristol College, the oldest of Baptist institutions of learning, in England, has had an honorable career.

After the New Connection of General Baptists was formed, June 6, 1770, steps were taken to organize an academy. A manuscript found among the papers of Dan. Taylor, under date of 1779, is entitled a plan for assisting in studies of preachers. The writer adds: "The design has annually obtained credit and reputation, since it was first begun by a poor blind brother in Wadsworth church and myself. As the churches increased in number and respectability, the necessity for such an institution became more apparent: the subject, therefore, became the frequent topic of conversation among individuals, and on public occasions. The Boston Association in 1796, recommended the churches to adopt measures for facilitating the design, and to open subscriptions for the purpose. This recommendation prepared the churches for the consideration of the subject at the ensuing Association. At that meeting funds were established and the books were opened for subscriptions. In January, 1798, an Academy was opened under the superintendence of Dan. Taylor at Mile End, London.

It is thus manifest that both the General and Particular Baptists of England fostered education. They differed in methods, details and ideals; but they did not differ in regard to the necessity of education. The primary, and at first the only reason for fostering schools among the English Baptists, was the education of the ministry. Their insistence was that a minister should be an educated man. It was furthermore determined that this education should include a knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew.

The earliest Confessions of both sections of the Baptists recognized only two officers in the churches-ministers and deacons. The Confession of Faith of certain English People, living in Amsterdam, contained, Article 76, the following statement:

That Christ hath set in his outward church two sorts of ministers: viz., some who are called pastors, teachers or elders, who administer in the word and sacraments, and others who are called Deacons, men and women: whose

ministry is, to serve tables and wash the saints feet (Acts vi 2-4*;* Phil. i. 1; 1 Tim. iii. 2,3, 8, 11 and chap. v.).

The London Confession, Article XXX VI., says:

That being thus joyned, every Church has power given them from Christ for their better well-being, to choose to themselves, meet persons Into the office of Pastors, Teachers, Elders, Deacons, being qualified according to the Word, as those which Christ has appointed in his Testament, for the feeding, governing, serving, and building up of his Church, and that none other have power to impose them, either these or any other.

In many churches two, or even four, ministers were associated. In fact a plurality of pastors was very common among the General and Particular Baptists in the time of the Stuarts. when such a union was once formed between an elder and a church, it was regarded as indissoluble as marriage, and only to be severed by death, or the apostasy of the preacher. The following resolution was passed in the Lincolnshire General Baptist Association in 1696:

That there is nothing which we can justly fix upon that can warrant an elder to forsake his people; nor can any elder, who has gone away from his own people, be established as an elder over another people in another place (Goadby, 22:1).

An Elder might be displaced from a church on account of an erring life, or false teaching. The wife of the elder must likewise be a member of the church. The church looked out young men with appropriate gifts, and often arranged meetings where they could exercise their gifts for preaching.

The deacons were "helps in government," and they were to assist in the spiritual development of the church and to care for the poor. Such was the declaration of Grantham (Christianimus Primitivus, 126). Many of the. churches had deaconnesses. The Broadmead Church, in 1678-9, elected four sisters who were widows as deaconesses (Broadmead Records, 187, 188).

Grantham claimed for "the baptized churches" "the only true ordination" both of bishops and deacons; since "they only have true baptism;" and "they only have due election of officers;" they only have "the true form or order, of ordination." The right of the people to elect their officers, he says, has been invaded "by great personages and magistrates," and "by the rich and strong." But now this privilege is restored and maintained in the baptized churches, where none are elected messengers, bishops or deacons without the free choice of the brotherhood where such elections are made. And after

such election of persons of known integrity and competent ability, we proceed to ordination, with fasting, and prayer, and the laying on of hands all which apostolic practices are religiously observed in the baptized churches, without any devised adjuncts or ceremonies of our own or others (Grantham, 129).

The discipline of the churches was strict and persistent. "Their general conduct," says Goadby, "their domestic life, their business, their connections in civil society, their recreations, and even their dress, were all deemed legitimate subjects for the strictest supervision." They were required to be strictly orthodox. A pertinent example is that of a man who had been treasurer of the General Assembly who was expelled from the Petty France Church, London. The account is as follows:

Mr. Robert Eristow was rejected and cast out of the communion, after much patience exercised towards him, and strenuous endeavors used to recover him out of dangerous errors he was fallen into; namely, the renunciation of the doctrine of the Trinity, and particularly the deity of Christ, and of the holy Spirit, and so rooting up the very foundation of the Christian religion.

A certain Mr. Irigello, one of the early pastors of the Broadmead Church, Bristol, "offended divers members of his congregation with his flaunting apparel; for he, being a thin, spare, slender person, did goe very neate, and in costly trimm, and began to exceed in some garments not becoming ye Gospel, much lease a minister of Christ." He was accordingly dealt with. One John Bowes, a minister, attended a foot ball game, which was adjudged "a great evil" and was accordingly dealt with by the church. This did not end the matter. The brethren resolved:

Some debate was had about the matter that seeing he had, first, dishonored the Lord: secondly, grieved the people of God; thirdly, given great occasion to the adversaries to speak reproachfully, he should not be suffered to preach, until further fruits meet for repentance did appear.

The General Assembly of the Particular Baptists, 1689, answered the query: "Whether it were not necessary to take note of those excesses that were found in their members, men and women, with respect to their apparel" affirmatively. Their sober reply was:

It is a shame for men to wear long hair, or long perriwigs, and especially ministers (1 Cor. xi. 14), or strange apparel. That the Lord reproves the daughters of Zion for their bravery, haughtiness, and pride of their attire, walking with stretched out necks, wanton eyes, mincing as they go (Isa. iii. 16). as if they effected tallness, as one observes of their stretched-out

necks; though some in these times seem, by their high dresses. to outdo them in that respect.

Great stress was laid on marrying "in the society." A solemn meeting was held in the Cambridge Church, 1655, to determine an answer to the query: "Whether, or no, it is lawful for any member of the congregation to marry with any one out of. the congregation?" The query provoked debate, but the church adhered to the answer that "it was not."

The records of the churches of those times contains all kinds of charges preferred against members. Some of them were "for beating his wife," drunkenness, not keeping a promise, not speaking the truth, borrowing money and making no sign of paying it again," "backbiting and idleness."

Dr. Wall commends their discipline in the highest manner. This is all the more complimentary when his well-known dislike for the Baptists is taken into account. He says:

They have their way of adjusting differences that arise among themselves on account of trespasses, dues, or other money matters; which I recite as being worthy of imitation. If any one of them does wrong to another, or refuse to do or to pay what is equitable in any case; if he will not be brought to reason by a private arguing of the matter, nor by the verdict of two or three neighbors added; the plaintiff brings the case before the congregation, when they with their elder are assembled in the nature of a vestry. And in difficult cases, there lies an appeal from a particular congregation, to some fuller meeting of their church under a messenger. And he of the two that will not stand to the ultimate determination of the assembly by their usage appointed, is no longer acknowledged by the rest as a brother.

And this is very much according to our Saviour's and Paul's direction in such cases; so I have been told that it has the good effect to prevent abundance of lawsuits, and end many quarrels; very few of them offering to withstand the general verdict and opinion of all of their brethren. And there is no reason to doubt but that a like course would, if it were put in practice have a like good effect among other societies of Christians.

The discipline (of renouncing brotherhood) they use against such of their communion as are known to be guilty of any such immorality, as is a scandal to the Christian profession of a sober and godly life; for which care of their members there is no man but will commend them (Wall, History of Infant Baptism, I. 560).

For a period the imposition of hands upon the baptized, fasting as a religious duty, washing the feet of the disciples and anointing of the sick were practised in some congregations. It was their custom in the election of officers, pastors and deacons, to cast lots. Their marriage and funeral Services were of the simplest character.

The Baptists were much divided on the subject of singing. They were not altogether a songless people. They were opposed to "human composures," and the strictness of their ideas on church membership caused a reluctance in having congregational singing. But singing slowly prevailed in the congregations. Benjamin Keach introduced singing into his church at Horselydown. Isaac Marlow was much distressed and published, in 1690, a Discourse Concerning (against) Singing. Very gravely and soberly does Kach, his picture would indicate, that he had no sense of humor, answer Marlow. He says there are various kinds of voices; "namely, (1) a shouting noise of the tongue; (2) a crying noise; (3) a preaching voice, or noise made that way; (4) a praying, or praising noise; and (5) lastly, a singing voice." "All of these are distinct from each other. Singing is not a simple heart singing, or mental singing; but a musical melodious modulation, or tuning of the voice. Singing is a duty performed always with the voice, and cannot be done without the tongue" (Keach, Breach Repaired in God's Worship; or, Singing Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, proved to be an holy ordinance of Jesus Christ). There was a long discussion on singing. But singing soon became the custom in all Baptist churches.