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Paul's Alley, Barbican, 1695-1768.

(Church book lent to the editor by the Rev. Joseph Harvey, custodian of the archives of the General Assembly.)

London, May 22, 1695.

The Agreement of the Brethren appointed by, and respectively representing the two Baptized Congregations meeting at Barbican and Turners Hall, London, who agreed to unite and join together, and make one intire Church.

FIRST That Brother James Pitman & Bro. Rich^d Allen, Elders, Bro. John Plater, Br. John Milliard, and Br. Thomas Dadley, Deacons of the one Congregation; Br. James Garnsom, Br. Sam^{ll} Qu[elch?] Br Abraham Hickman, & Br. W^m Woodland, Deacons; ordained, & Br J^{no} Jerom & Br Kinch, Deacons intended, but yet unordained, shall be the Elders & Deacons of the said Church, united, And yt Br. Joseph Stennett be continued in the Ministry there-of

SECONDLY; That for the maintenance of the Ministry there be raised out of ye whole ye sum of 100^{li} p. annum at least

THIRDLY; That as Convenience serves, there be an interchanging in the Work of Preaching between Br. Allen, Br. Stennett, & Br. John Piggott, for ye procuring and improving a good Correspondence between the respective Congregations.

FOURTHLY; That the Church's Meeting-place for the prest be at Barbican; & that 24^{li} p. an. be raised & allowed for the Rent (besides charges) of ye sd Meeting-place

FIFTHLY; That the Rent & Charges of each Congregation be paid & discharged by themselves separately till Midsummer next:

SIXTHLY; That ye 16th day of June next be the day of the s^d Church meeting together; & that the Wednesday preceding be kept by solemn Prayer to God for his Blessing on ye Congregation; & that Br. Joseph Maisters & Br. Joseph Stennett be desired to preach; & Br. W^m Collins, Br. John Piggott, & Br. Joseph Taylor be desired to spend some time in Prayer, to begin abt 10 in the forenoon, & to conclude abt 3 in the afternoon

SEVENTHLY; That the publick Worship in the Congregation on the Lord's Day be thus pformed, viz. In the morning about half an hour after nine, some Brother be appointed to begin the Exercise in reading a Psalm, & then to spend some time in Prayer; & after y^t to read some other Portion of H. Scripture, till the Minister comes into the Pulpit; and after Preaching & Prayer to conclude wth singing a Psalm. The afternoon exercise to begin abt half an hour after One, & to be carried on & concluded as in the forenoon.

EIGHTHLY; That on breaking-Bread-Days, the Psalm to be omitted in the Afternoon tell the Conclusion of the Lord's Supper.

Pursuant to the aforesaid Agreement the two Churches did unite on Wednesday the 12th of June, 1695, and also met together the next Lord's Day following, &c.

The Barbican church had been gathered during the Commonwealth by John Gosnold. At the death of Elizabeth Browning in 1729, it was minuted that she had joined the church in 1654, and was aged 96 at death. Under Gosnold & his successor Thomas

Plant, the church had been Calvinistic, but had not associated with the other Particular Baptist churches. Gosnold was not ejected from any living, as Ivimey states; & though in our first volume it was conceded that he may have been ejected from the Mastership of the Charterhouse, that seems not proved; Calamy says that he had been a scholar at the Charterhouse, but was in 1660 merely an occasional preacher without any post. In 1669 he was reported as preaching "in Gun Alley in Little Morefeilds, At the Musick House." On 25 July 1672, licences were issued to Gosnold & Plant, each to be "an Anab. Teacher in the howse of Richard Horton in little Morefields, London." Gosnold died in 1678, & Plant about 1693, after which Joseph Stennett, a Calvinistic Baptist, pastor at Pinners' Hall for the church worshipping there on Saturday, was invited to minister here on the Sunday. The deacons of the congregation were not of any note; if the illegible name be completed as Quelch, for which there is warrant in later entries, we recognise a link with Stennett, whose mother was Mary Quelch.

The other congregation had an equally long history, which has been generally overlooked or misunderstood. It appears first as petitioning the Committee for Propagating the Gospel, against tithes and a national Church. After the expulsion of the Rump in 1653, it proposed to Cromwell that an assembly be called by lot out of a nomination list three times the size intended. The letter, printed by Nickolls, page 121, shows that the church met then at the Chequer without Aldgate, and the members who signed were John Mason, Thomas Dafferne, Michael Coles, John Chewell, James Pittman, William Hicckman, Edward Chillenden, J. Danvers, John Pym, Thomas Keene, Robert Jesses, Samuel Otes, Francis Hickman, and James Brown. The names of Chillen-

den and Otes assure us that this was a General Baptist church. In October it was sharing the brief Baptist prosperity, and had the use of the Stone Chapel at Paul's Cathedral. Next month Oates wrote to Robert Jeffes that Chillenden was excommunicated for immorality. He himself went to be chaplain in Pride's regiment, so that we may probably identify the John Mason here with the lieutenant-colonel of that regiment, who gave the final blow to Cromwell's wish for the crown. But such changes make it hard to follow the fortunes of the church. Oates is known to have been closely associated with Thomas Lamb's church, both before and after this time; in the earlier period this met at Bell Alley, in the later at White's Alley: it is conceivable then that our present church was one of that sisterhood of six, so curiously knit together, if not the chief and original, dating from 1612 in Spitalfields. In 1669 it escaped notice, unless it be veiled under the obscure notice "White's Alley in Morefields." In 1672 we may note that Colonel Blood on 18 April gave in an application for the house of John Martin in White's Alley, to be licensed, and that this was refused. Whether or no these memoranda deal with our church, we are sure that in 1688 it was reinforced by a secession from White's Alley General Baptist church, of those who declined to consider Laying on of Hands a necessary preliminary to membership: these were headed by Richard Allen, a young minister known as early as 1681. The church now apparently hired Turners' Hall in Philpot Lane. But as the Barbican congregation had a long lease of the Music House in Paul's Alley, and had no pastor, a second fusion seemed advisable. The proceeding is typical of the shrinkage at this time, due to the want of system in training up ministers.

The premises and the situation deserve attention. Between Cripplegate and Aldersgate, the London Wall

turns abruptly to the south; outside it there was once a Barbican, which at this date seems to have vanished, and to have bequeathed its name to a street running east and west from Red Cross Street towards the Charterhouse and Smithfield. Parallel with it, a narrow path called Paul's Alley started from Red Cross Street. It would seem that the building fronted on the Barbican and had a back exit on the Alley, as it is known by both names. The premises were evidently large, as might be expected when designed as a Music House, and were capable of providing library, baptistery, and alms houses. But they were only secured on lease, and no attempt was ever made to secure the freehold. After evacuation in 1784, they were used for other purposes, and to-day the pilgrim finds only a yawning cutting of the Metropolitan Railway.

The financial side of the ministry has hardly been adequately studied. The pages of Calamy show stipends to London clergy of £180, £200, £100, £700, £350, £130, etc. The Commonwealth paid £400 to a lecturer at Pauls, but discontinued the office. The Westminster Divines were pilloried by Milton as greedily grasping livings and lectureships. But no accounts of Baptist churches show any larger sums than were subscribed at this church. The minimum of £100 among three ministers was far exceeded; and £200 for each of two is mentioned later. It is very doubtful if any other church dreamed of such sums; and it is certain that this church educated and profited by such ministers as Foster and Gale, one the finest preacher in London, the other crossing swords with William Wall, the historian of infant baptism.

The isolation of the church in 1695 is to be noted. At this time the General Baptists in London were holding Association meetings, and the Particular Baptists were leagued in another. But three churches were at home in neither group, and therefore decided

to correspond together. The new Pitman-Allen-Gosnold church was on the whole Calvinist, though trouble soon arose on this score; Stennett's was Calvinist and Seventh-day; Piggott was Elder of a church founded by the G.B. Association, which had quitted it because Laying on of Hands seemed unnecessary; within a few years Piggott was to resign and become a Calvinist. So the attempted correspondence came to little. Joseph Maisters and William Collins were Calvinists, Joseph Taylor had been ordained Elder of White's Alley General Baptist church in 1694.

The order of service is a welcome glimpse, enabling us to rectify one widespread misconception. It is often said that Baptists did not sing at worship, but this statement is far too sweeping. There were four well marked types of Baptist: the Generals, originated by John Smyth; the Strict and Particular, of whom Kiffin is a good specimen; the Open-Communion Calvinists, represented by Broadmead, Jessey and Bunyan; some of the Fifth-Monarchy men, such as Powell. The Fifth-Monarchy Baptists sang hymns, as shown at page 150 of last volume. But a Fifth-Monarchy congregation, apparently comprising both Baptists and Independents, was noted for not singing psalms, as shown at page 237 of last issue. Bunyan wrote hymns, as shown in pages 95-111 of last volume. The Broadmead church, which after 1654 contained many Baptists, sang psalms in 1671, and in 1675 made a great point of psalm-singing being not illegal—see Stovell's edition of Terrill, pages 159-340, especially 238 and 242. The statement is true only of the old General Baptists. Benjamin Keach, himself of that stock, was a prominent supporter of singing, and was so vehement in his advocacy that the matter was raised at an Assembly of the Particular Baptists, who agreed that each church should please itself. This

church sang a Psalm, evidently in a metrical version; Stennett soon went further and wrote hymns, publishing a small collection. It is also to be observed that conduct of the worship was not limited to the ministers, but that some other brother was to read and pray.

The subsequent history can be traced in the church book till its dissolution after 73 years. Diminution continued, and in 1705 Allen joined the Particular Baptist Association. The building was adapted so as to house several poor members, and to provide a library. Henceforth the place is known as Paul's Alley, Barbican, as if the frontage for the meeting-house were now on the alley, and the more valuable frontage had been surrendered.

Shrinkage was stemmed by the accession of John Gale as minister to aid Allen, the clever young Leyden student who criticised Wall's History of Infant Baptism. Then in 1712 the Particular Baptist Church in Virginia street, which had lost its pastor, Isaac Lamb, handed over its premises to a General Baptist church, and amalgamated here. Four years later, the premises were further remodelled, and a baptistery was formed, apparently the only one north of the Thames. In 1717 Allen died, and was followed by Joseph Burroughs, one of the Virginia street immigrants, who was ordained by Stinton and Hodges, Particular; Foxwell and Mulliner, General.

An elaborate church roll was drawn up, and was annotated and augmented till 1744. At the beginning there were 81 men and 132 women. A study of the transfers from and to other churches is interesting. They received nine members from General Baptist churches in the country, and five from Particular; a man was transferred to Plymouth, but when he wished a letter back after four years, the Plymouth people declined to give it because of some doubt as to the Calvinism at Barbican. Within London they inter-

changed with all the General Baptist churches; but only once with Cripplegate, once with Wapping; seven cases with Artillery Lane, and seven with Wild Street are due to personal links with the pastors there. Four times members removed themselves to Pedobaptist churches, and were thereupon "discharged" without transfer. While the sentiments were strongly Baptist, there was evidently a drift from Calvinism.

This was as early as 1718, when intercourse sprang up with the General Baptist churches in Buckingham and Warwick, and a very vigorous change of members with Samuel Acton of Nantwich. Six years later, a great force was added in the person of James Foster, a young Independent minister from Trowbridge, baptized and associated by Burroughs. He soon was known as the finest preacher in London, and became the champion of the Christians against the Deists, his book running into several editions. But he was evidently influenced by their teaching, and about 1730 a list of the Baptist ministers classes him and his colleague as Socinian. When the church roll closed in 1744 owing to the book being full, it showed only 44 men and 68 women, about half the number 27 years earlier.

Foster left about that time for the mixed communion church where the Hollis family had been members, and Burroughs held only a morning service. Another colleague was found in 1757, who continued as sole pastor after 1761 for five years, when he left for Poole. A singular expedient was now adopted, and Daniel Noble, the Seventh-Day Baptist of Mill Yard, was called to be pastor; it is hardly unfair to say that he was reported to be Socinian.

His appearance introduced the church to new financial possibilities. Mill Yard was profiting from endowments, and in 1757 Burroughs and Noble had joined in ordaining an Elder at the Glass-house Yard

Church, Goswell Street, which had another group of endowments. This Elder had died in 1766, leaving a mere handful of people; nine men and four women in 1763. They had disused their own building and were renting premises for one service on Sunday in London, while another group held services at Brentford. Noble now hit on a brilliant idea of consolidation which was successfully carried through. He resigned the pastorate of Barbican, and accepted the pastorate of "Goswell Street." The deserted church disbanded, and offered the premises and liabilities to "Goswell Street" with its nine men and eight women. Possession was taken, then nine men and eighteen women from the disbanded church joined the incoming church. Practically, therefore, the Barbican Church absorbed a smaller one and acquired a title to endowments; so that Daniel Noble must have been freed from pecuniary anxiety, with one charity, as pastor of Mill Yard Seventh-day, and another as pastor of "Goswell Street" First-day. But legally, Barbican Church committed suicide, and this was carefully insisted on; the incoming church used its old book continuously in the new premises, and continued to deal with the lease of its old premises, and to draw its dividends and rents.

It inherited, however, not only the Barbican lease, but the fine crusted tradition of amalgamation. There were three other churches with endowments and small congregations; in 1781 they all clubbed together and built a new meeting-house on freehold ground at Worship Street. It was the crown of Noble's achievements; he died two years later, the minister of another of the four churches died from attending his funeral, and that church disappeared as a separate corporate body. The subsequent history, however interesting, need not be pursued; it apparently suggested to Gilbert the immortal lay of the Mate of the Nancy Brig.