

The Centenary of the Baptist Building Fund.

I. AT THE KING'S HEAD IN THE POULTRY.

THE Epicure's Almanack for 1815 informs us that "The King's Head Tavern in the Poultry" enjoys the distinction of being the oldest tavern in London, and the principal emporium of turtle in the whole metropolis. Many city companies and public bodies have grand dinners here; the establishment is calculated to entertain large and small parties in the highest style of splendor and comfort." Situated at the western extremity of the Stocks' Market, on the southern side of one of the oldest streets in the world, where the flow of busy life for fifteen centuries has never ceased, the tavern, originally known as "The Rose," was "approached through a long, narrow, covered passage, opening into a well lighted quadrangle, around which were the tavern rooms."¹ The date of its origin is unknown, but Machyn refers to it in his diary on the 5th January, 1560. After the Great Fire of London, the old wooden structure was replaced by a building of less flammable material. Later its name was altered to the "Royal Rose and King's Head," and finally to the "King's Head." In 1853, it ceased to be used as a tavern, and shops and offices now occupy its site.

Our interest in the tavern, however, lies not in its history, nor in its turtle, nor in the good wine for which, in the London Spy of 1709, Ned Ward tells us it was famous. The interesting fact for us is that for at least a century it occupied a notable place in the public life of Baptists and other Dissenters. A few examples of important meetings held within its walls may be given by way of illustration. So far back as Tuesday, 4th December, 1744, at the close of their ordinary business meeting, the Ministers and Messengers charged with the distribution of the Particular Baptist Fund "adjourned to the first Tuesday in March to dine at the King's Head in the Poultry." The dinner duly took place on the 5th March, 1745, and after thus fortifying themselves gastronomically, the Ministers and Messengers proceeded to the arduous labours of the Annual Meeting! With one

¹ Timbs' *Club Life of London*. Vol. II, 1866.

exception, when the King's Head was not available, they met at the tavern for the dinner and annual meeting on the first Tuesday in March, usually "at two o'clock precisely," for a further ninety-nine years, the last occasion being in 1844. Although the venue, the time of assembling and the liquid refreshment have changed, the Ministers and Messengers still continue the wholesome practice of dining together, this social function now being within ten years of its second century.² The Fundees also met at the tavern intermittently for other Meetings. "The Society of London Ministers of the Particular Baptist Persuasion," better known as the Baptist Board, was founded in 1724. Originally it assembled at the Gloucestershire Coffee House, but on 24th June, 1740, it transferred to Mr. Munday's at the King's Head, Swithin's Alley. Its meeting on the 1st February, 1743, was at Blackwell's Coffee House, but it is possible that this was an exceptional occasion and that the Board followed Munday to the Poultry and remained with him until the meetings were transferred to the Jamaica Coffee House about the year 1760.³ On 6th November, 1781, a meeting of London Baptists at the tavern in which we are interested resolved "That a new history of the Baptists is a work much to be desired," the outcome of the resolution being Robinson's "large heterogenous and heterodox volume," published in 1790.⁴ At a gathering of Baptists held there in May, 1785, William Fox, then a deacon of the Church in Prescott Street, first publicly proposed his plan for the universal education of the poor,⁵ the result of which was the formation of the "Society for the Establishment and Support of Sunday Schools throughout the Kingdom of Great Britain," later merged in the younger but more vigorous Sunday School Union. The King's Head was the birthplace on the 10th August, 1804, of the second London Baptist Education Society; and at a meeting of

² The first Dinner ("Feast" the Minutes of 23rd November, 1736, describe it in anticipation) was held on Tuesday, 1st March, 1737, "at Mr. Monday's, King's Head, Swithin's Alley." The site of this Alley, otherwise known as Sweeting's Alley, is now occupied by the pavement at the back of the Royal Exchange. James Munday (not Monday as in the Minute) left Swithin's Alley for the Poultry in 1744, whence the Particular Baptist Fund followed him. The dinner originated in a bequest by John Hollis of £1,100. He directed that £3 of the dividends on the odd £100 should be spent by the Fundees in a dinner every year. A Baptist Board letter of 17th December, 1793 (*Baptist Historical Transactions*, Vol. VI.), contains a reference to the writer having dined at Mr. Munday's and obtained denominational information from him. This indicates the possibility that the Mundays were Baptists.

³ A poorly done summary at the commencement of the Board's second Minute Book supports this but it is not conclusive.

⁴ Ivimey, Vol. IV., pp. 48, 49.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

that Society at the same place on the 2nd January, 1810, it was decided that "an Institution be established, to be distinguished by the name of 'The Baptist Academical Institution at Stepney,' for the education of pious young men, designed for the Christian ministry."⁶ This Institution, more familiarly known to us as Regent's Park College, resorted to the tavern for most of its annual meetings prior to 1840.

Baptists were not alone in finding it a convenient place for meeting. Regularly for years the Deputies for protecting the Civil Rights of Dissenters assembled there and passed numerous resolutions bearing on "the inalienable right of all to liberty of conscience." On the 16th October, 1764, the Society consisting of the six ministers and seven gentlemen who then were the receivers of the Regium Donum for distribution among necessitous Dissenting Ministers "dined together at the King's Head Tavern, and audited part of the accounts."⁷ Is it unreasonable to suggest that the turtle and wine hindered completion of the audit? The Society for the Relief of Aged and Infirm Protestant Dissenting Ministers, was founded at the King's Head on 2nd June, 1818; and the Congregational Board and the General Body of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers also met there occasionally. It is obvious that for a long period the tavern was in general request for meetings of Dissenters. In an age when the Baptist Church House was not even a dream of the distant future, our forefathers evidently held it in such repute and convened meetings there with such regularity as almost to bestow on it the status of London headquarters. We are not surprised, therefore, to read that there was held "a numerous and respectable Meeting of Friends, of the Baptist Denomination, convened, according to previous notice, on Wednesday, 10th November,⁸ 1824, at the King's Head in the Poultry, to take into consideration the expediency of forming some new plan for the assistance of Meeting-house Cases from the country."⁹ Benjamin Shaw, Treasurer of the Baptist Missionary Society, 1821-1826, and formerly M.P. for Westbury, presided, and James Hargreaves, Minister of Little Wild Street, acted as secretary. Various carefully prepared resolutions were submitted to the Meeting and parts of them have survived the changes of a hundred years, an illustration either of the clear sight of the draughtsmen or of the conservatism of those who have followed

⁶ Regent's Park College Centenary Record.

⁷ Ivey, Vol. III., p. 176.

⁸ The 10th November is an interesting day in London Baptist history, as forty-one years later on 10th November, 1865, the London Baptist Association was founded.

⁹ *Baptist Magazine*, December, 1824.

them. The resolutions as passed,¹⁰ *nem con.* were as follows :—

i. That the present mode of collecting Money in London, and its Vicinity, for the purposes of building, repairing and enlarging Places of Worship, in our Denomination, through the Kingdom, is attended with much inconvenience, and many serious evils, both to the Applicants and the Contributors; on which account, it is highly desirable to attempt such an alteration in the plan of collecting, as may remedy the defects of the present system and ultimately render personal application altogether unnecessary.

II. That, with this view, a Society be now formed, to be called "THE LONDON BAPTIST BUILDING FUND"; and that all persons, who have been accustomed to give to Cases of this description, be invited to become Members of the Society, by transferring their contributions to this Fund, in such form, whether regular or occasional, annual, quarterly, or otherwise, as they may think best.

III. That the business of the Society be managed by a Treasurer, Sub-Treasurer, Secretary, and a Committee of twenty-four Subscribers, who shall meet for the despatch of business, on the fourth Tuesday of every month, at six o'clock in the evening. The Treasurers and Secretary to be deemed members of the Committee; seven of whom shall be a quorum.

IV. That three Gentlemen, besides the Treasurer, shall be nominated as Trustees to the Society, in whose names any Monies may be invested, that may be given or bequeathed to the Society for that purpose; and that a Solicitor be appointed to examine the Trust deeds of all Meeting-houses, for which the aid of the Society is requested.

V. That for the special business of Distribution to those Cases which may have been examined and approved by the Committee, a Quarterly Meeting of the Society be held in the months of January, April, July, and October, at which, all subscribers be entitled to vote.

VI. That the Quarterly Meeting of the Society in January, be considered the Anniversary of the Society; when a report of the proceedings for the preceding year shall be presented; Officers, Auditors, and Committee chosen, and any other business transacted.

VII. That the following regulations be adopted for the guidance of the Committee, in the admission and relief of Cases, etc.

¹⁰ Angus Library Pamphlets. There are slight verbal differences in the rules published in the first Annual Report, but the pamphlet is an official document apparently published immediately after the inaugural meeting, and is confirmed by the Baptist Magazine. The Minute Book is missing.

1. That the Cases to be relieved from this Fund, be Cases of the Particular, or Calvinistic Baptist Denomination, from any parts of the United Kingdom: information being first obtained respecting doctrinal sentiments, etc. from friends resident in the district.

2. That, in the examination of Cases, regard be had to the following points:—

That the erection, repair, or enlargement, was necessary.

That the parties concerned sought the advice, and obtained the sanction of respectable individuals belonging to the neighbouring Churches, before they began to build.

That nothing has been expended in superfluities, or wasted by mismanagement.

That the people themselves have contributed according to their ability.

That there is a reasonable prospect of the place being adequately supplied with the ministry of the Word.

3. That, in order to ascertain that the Building has been duly vested in trust, the Deeds, or attested copies thereof, be sent up for the inspection of the Committee.

4. That, when an application is made by writing, or otherwise, to the Secretary a printed letter be immediately sent, containing a series of inquiries, corresponding with the above particulars, to be returned, with the answers annexed; and that the signatures of two neighbouring Ministers be requested to such return.

5. That the Committee do not limit themselves to any given number of Cases to be assisted in the year; but that this be regulated by the amount of their Fund, etc.

6. That, except when peculiar circumstances shall, in the unanimous judgment of the Committee, render a deviation desirable, Cases be assisted in the order of their application.

7. That of the Cases requiring aid at the Institution of this Society, those which have not been collected on in London will have a decided preference; but that Cases for which personal application shall have been made, subsequently to the public adoption and announcement of this Plan, will be considered as forfeiting all claim to assistance.

8. That an engagement be entered into on the part of accepted Cases, that they be not collected for in London afterwards, and also that the Church receiving aid from this Society, exert themselves for the liquidation of their remaining debt, by making an Annual Collection, or instituting a Penny-a-week Society, for that express purpose.

9. That a Quarterly Statement of the Cases assisted,

and the Sum voted to each, be inserted in a succeeding Number of the *Baptist Magazine*.

10. That a fortnight previous to each Quarterly Meeting, a printed List of the Cases, which the Committee have examined, approved and intend to propose for assistance, be forwarded to each Subscriber.

11. That the Subscribers to this Society, be requested to pay their respective contributions, *in advance*, to the Sub-Treasurer, at the Quarterly Meetings; and that a Collector be appointed to wait on those persons whose Subscriptions may not have been so paid.

VIII. That JOHN BROADLEY WILSON, Esq., be the Treasurer of this Society; Mr. STEPHEN MARSHALL, Sub-Treasurer; Rev. JAMES HARGREAVES, Secretary; and the following gentlemen constitute the Committee:—

Mr. W. Beddome.	Mr. J. Hobson.	Mr. I. Robson.
C. Barber.	J. Luntley.	J. Russell.
W. P. Bartlett.	J. Marshall.	S. Salter.
W. Cozens.	P. Millard.	W. L. Smith.
W. Davis.	W. Napier.	J. Walkden.
J. Dawson.	R. Nichols.	J. Warmington.
W. B. Gurney.	J. Penny.	S. Watson.
J. Hanson.	T. Pewtress.	E. Wilkinson.
J. Hepburn.	S. Ridley.	

Together with all Ministers contributing to the Society.

IX. That BENJAMIN SHAW, Esq., W. B. GURNEY, Esq., and SAMUEL SALTER, Esq., be requested to act as Trustees, and Mr. SAMUEL GALE, as Solicitor to the Society.

X. That the Ministers of our Denomination in London, and its Vicinity, be requested to inform their friends of the nature and objects of this Society, and recommend it to their support.

XI. That the cordial thanks of this Meeting are due, and be hereby presented to Benjamin Shaw, Esq., for his kindness in taking the Chair on this occasion, and for the able manner in which he has conducted the business of the Meeting.

II.—THE BAPTIST BOARD AND COUNTRY CASES.

Attention is at once arrested by the references to an existing plan. What "mode of collecting money in London and its vicinity" was in vogue in 1824? The question introduces us to a phase of Church life that happily passed away shortly after the establishment of the Building Fund with which we are concerned. For the springs out of which it arose, it is necessary

to refer back to the late years of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth. Following the political revolution of 1689, the prevailing conditions for Baptists, as for other Dissenters, became less severe. Evangelists were able to go forth with freedom and the gathering of both "General" and "Particular" Churches proceeded. For the most part, however, the members were content to meet in barns and private houses; they were slow to realise that churches to survive must be provided with regular meeting-houses. A few buildings were erected through the sacrifice and generosity of local sympathisers, an early General Baptist illustration being at Spalding, where the local friends commenced their contributions towards a new building in February, 1689, and made the final payment in less than two years. The building cost eighty-nine pounds.¹¹ But cases such as the one mentioned were the exception; the majority found it needful to make a widespread appeal. Norwich, for example, in June 1698, appealed to the General Baptist Assembly at Glasshouse Yard in Goswell Street, which agreed "That what can or shall be Collected for them be paid unto Bror Gale for their Use."¹² The same Church, with praiseworthy persistence, appealed in the same year to the General Association at White's Alley, and the minutes record:

"The Church at Norwich being Indebted about £40 for ye building of their meeting place wch they are not able to Pay, the wch is like to be very prejudicial to ye Interest of Christ there and they herevpon requesting our assistance It is Agreed that the representatives of every Church do lay this mater before their respective Congregations Very speedily and intreat their assistance in it and send vp the mony yt shall be colected to Bro. James Morris in Cheap side to be sent downe to them."¹³

In 1734, the General Baptist Assembly recommended "all the Churches belonging to it to make annual Collection and the Money so raised" was to be used for, *inter alia*, "the building of Meetinghouses according as every Congregation shall order their Money to be disposed of."¹⁴ On another occasion, it recommended "Great Yarmouth, Wendover, and Haringworth, . . . (and all our Friends in the like Circumstances) that they either by Messengers appointed for that Purpose or by Letters apply to such Persons and Churches within their reach, to desire their assistance in so good a Work, . . ."¹⁵ In 1737 the Assembly asked

¹¹ Taylor, Vol. I., p. 317.

¹² Minutes, Vol. I., p. 54.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

¹⁴ Vol. II., p. 25.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Churches to send collections for Peterborough "to Mr. Morris at the British Coffee House in Finch Lane London, . . ." ¹⁶ and in 1741, for Castle Headingham, "Mr. Randall, in Well Close Square, London" is mentioned. ¹⁷ The financial statements of Mr. Morris and Mr. Randall are not available, so we do not know the extent to which the Churches responded, but we gain an impression of the fellowship that existed when we read that the little church at Turner's Hill on the Sussex Weald made a collection of 16s. 6d. for Great Yarmouth and "a like amount in 1744 for Castle Headingham." ¹⁸ Fairly frequent references to other building appeals recur throughout the minutes. Having, however, drawn attention to the practice of appealing to other Churches by Messengers and the connection of London with the receipt of monies, there is no need at present to follow the General Baptist stream further along its course.

Turning to the Particular Baptists, we find their indifference to Association life reflected in the absence of building appeals to their convention. In the closing years of the seventeenth century, buildings were erected or acquired in a few places, such as Bacup and Hill Cliff. More followed in the opening decade of the eighteenth century, notably in Lancashire, Wiltshire, and Worcestershire, but mainly these were the result of the generosity of friends in the various localities and immediately surrounding districts. In those early days, the local friends largely shouldered their own burdens; it was left to the next generation of Particulars to make a wider appeal.

Out of this need for the erection of new buildings, and the repair or enlargement of existing buildings, experienced alike by Generals and Particulars, arose the custom of sending the minister or occasionally a messenger, on a begging campaign, particularly to London. For appealing to the Metropolis, the Particulars were more favourably situated than the Generals, as the Baptist Board "sanctioned and recommended cases of building and repairing meeting-houses in the country to be collected for in London." The recognised procedure was for the minister or other representative of the country church to attend a meeting of the Board and present a statement of the need. This included particulars of the strength and prospects of the cause, the amount expended or proposed to be expended, the sum subscribed or promised locally, and the doctrinal conditions on which the property was held. If personal attendance could not be arranged the statement was sent to one of the ministers (J. Gill, J. Stennett, and J. Brine were the usual choices) who brought it before the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¹⁸ Hooper: *A Surrey and Sussex Border Church.*

Board at its meeting, and if the assembled ministers approved the case, an approximate date for the minister to visit the city was indicated. When the statement had been signed or endorsed by as many of the Board members as were disposed, the minister was in possession of an "approved Board Case." In addition to visiting the homes or business premises of known and hoped-for sympathisers, the minister usually found it possible to occupy the London pulpits, either on a Sunday or at a specially arranged week-day service.

The Board Minutes¹⁹ contain many references, which afford interesting glimpses of these cases and the Church activities out of which they arose. An early reference is in the record of the Meeting on 16th November, 1724 :

"Some brethren Comming from Woodbridge abt building a Meetinghouse were advisd to be more Modest in their Demands and were promisd all the assistance the Brethren cou'd give Personaly tho' they cou'd not Make Collections in their Churches."

Again on the 23rd September, 1728 :

"Some friends Came from Waltham Abby to ask the Advice of the Ministers abt setling a Baptiz'd Church & Building a Meeting place there, It was Agreed that it was expedient they shou'd first give up themselves to one another in the Lord in a Church State, and then Promise to give them all assistance they Can towards building a Place."

In course of time, the visits of country ministers on these begging expeditions tended to become more frequent and the Board found it necessary to prevent over-lapping. In October, 1733, in answer to one applicant, it directed that a letter be sent :

"to acquaint him that Whereas Certain Brethren have lately been in town to obtain Mony for Building a Meeting It is the opinion of this Board that it wou'd be more Adviseable for Him to Come up about a Month after Christmass."

Within twelve months, in considering a request from the Church at Northampton for assistance to build a meeting-house, the ministers agreed *nem. con.*, "That in conformity to several Resolotions formerly made we do not as a board of Ministers receive any Such Case." (The several resolutions are not recorded.) There is no mention of the rescindment of this resolution, but it was soon ignored or forgotten, for on 9th August, 1737 :

"Mr. Simson of Floor, presented a Case, Desiring Assistance as to a Meeting place, Upon Reading & Considering it,

¹⁹ *Baptist Historical Society Transactions*, Vols. V., VI., and VII.

Agreed He be advis'd to withdraw it, for the present, So many of the Like being recommended this Year already And it is farther agreed, if the Case appear in the same light to us, next Spring, to Give it the precedence of any other, & Incourage it as far as we Can." (The recommendations made earlier in the year are not recorded.)

Applications continued to reach the Board with regularity. Warrington in the north, Rye in the south, Yarmouth in the east, and Plymouth in the west, illustrating the wide area from which they came. In December, 1747, the case of Ashford (Kent) was considered; in February, 1748, that of Chalford (Glos.); in July, 1748, that of Reading. In the course of seven months, from July, 1750, to January, 1751, cases were presented from Rushall (Norfolk), Leicester, Bromsgrove, Warwick, and Stratton (Wilts.), and sanction was given for the five to be collected in their turn. In the ensuing nine years, applications were received from Churches in the following counties: Surrey, Cheshire, Worcester, Yorkshire, Northumberland, Cumberland, Middlesex, Wiltshire, Sussex, Norfolk, and Nottingham. The Board Minutes in other connections reveal that the ministers very much disliked being hurried, and it is fairly clear that the pace set by the country churches was too strenuous for them. As a result, on 6th February, 1760, "It was unanimously agreed that no more cases relating to the building or repairing of meeting-houses be receiv'd and recommended by this Board." In his *Byepaths of Baptist History*, Goadby tells us that the Board passed this resolution "owing to the increasing number of good cases brought before them," but he does not give his authority for the statement. Dr. Whitley's suggestion²⁰ that the resolution was due to laziness appears more probable. Fortunately for the country churches, the resolution did not long survive, and at a meeting on the 3rd March, 1767, cases were recommended from Bewdley, Sevenoaks, King's Stanley, Sutton-in-Ashfield, Nottingham, Oakham, Ingham (Norfolk, Irthlingborough, Upottery, Cloughfold, Spalding, Northampton, Wrexham, Horsley, Yeovil, and Harlow. Amid the records of further cases sanctioned and one refused by the Board is an interesting resolution of 30th January, 1776, to the effect "that if any persons apply for contributions in London out of the order in which their cases have been agreed to be consider'd by this Board, their cases be not recommended by this Board." In 1777, the writing of Minutes was discontinued for five years, and the last cases of which there is a record are those of Wivelsfield and Tenterden, passed on the 5th August in that year, but there is little doubt that the Board functioned until early in 1784.

²⁰ *Baptist Historical Society Transactions*, Vol. VI., p. 116.

For sixty years, therefore, throughout a period when, as Silvester Horne tells us,²¹ "the slumber of the Church was profound," and "Christianity in England had almost ceased to count," the ministers rendered this valuable service. Their perfunctory Minutes mention about seventy applications, but the entries indicate that many cases went unrecorded. Among these unrecorded cases is that of Kent Street, Portsmouth, for which in 1729 the sum of £29 2s. 6d. was collected.²² Later collections were larger, that for Plymouth in 1751, when the minister, Philip Gibbs, visited the Metropolis, amounting to "upwards of £100 . . . Dr. Gill, Mr. Anderson, Mr. B. Wallin, and others having recommended the case."²³ It had been presented by Mr. Jocelyn, a member of the Church, in 1749, so that a period of two years elapsed before the minister was called to town. The response in this case may have been particularly generous, owing to the influence behind the appeal; but it is safe to assume that as a general rule, not less than the sum of fifty pounds was obtained from the London friends. Such an amount appears small to us to-day, and it would not go far in the erection of a twentieth-century building; but in the eighteenth century it was a substantial help towards the cost of the "neat and appropriate meeting-house" that was so characteristic of the period. Some of the Churches for which appeals were made are now among the most widely known in the country—College Street, Northampton, and George Street, Plymouth, being examples; others, whilst not achieving such fame, nevertheless maintained, and still maintain, a faithful witness. There is not one of the churches, however small, but had its part in the moulding of that sturdy Nonconformist character which is the heritage of the Free Churchman of to-day. Like Thomas Carlyle, who wrote of one of the chapels of the Secession Church in which he was brought up, there were many men who could say of these obscure meeting houses: "That poor temple of my childhood is more sacred to me than the biggest Cathedral then extant could have been; rude, rustic, bare, no temple in the world was more so: but there were sacred lambencies, tongues of authentic flame which kindled what was best in one, what has not yet gone out." The service of the London ministers and the generosity of the London laymen merit our appreciation, but the men worthy of most recognition are the little-known country ministers and messengers who paid visits to London. These faithful souls went forth imbued with the one desire to collect the funds for the erection of the bethel in which they and their congregations

²¹ *Popular History of the Free Churches.*

²² Ridoutt: *Early Baptist History of Portsmouth.*

²³ Rippon's *Register*, Vol. III., p. 381.

could worship God in a manner that would not offend their consciences. By what means they reached the Metropolis we can only surmise. Probably some of them emulated the horsemanship of John Wesley; others may have walked considerable distances and obtained an occasional lift on one of the stage waggons, sitting among the goods it was the first business of those waggons to carry; the more fortunate possibly rode in the stage coaches which, however, did not reach their golden age until the early years of the next century. The roads, infested with highwaymen, were in such a condition that in an advertisement in 1737 of "Carter's Gee-ho Stage Waggon, drawn by eight horses," it was needful to add there were "two others in reserve to pull it out of sloughs." In 1754, the "Flying Coach," which journeyed from Manchester to London, was advertised as follows: "However incredible it may appear, this coach will actually (barring accidents) arrive in London in four and a half days after leaving Manchester."²⁴ A symposium by these country ministers of their experiences in travelling and collecting would have proved of interest.

This supervision of cases by the Baptist Board served a valuable purpose, and doubtless it was the best that could be devised at the time, but an improved method was long overdue. The laymen who found the money were restless. They considered the cases needed fuller inquiry, and that the title deeds should be examined with greater care, as many of the country buildings were subject to unsatisfactory trusts. They also complained, apparently with some justice, of the unbusinesslike methods of the ministers, who allowed months to go by without dealing with a case, and then recommended several at express speed, with the result that there was hopeless confusion in the collecting. Early in 1784, therefore, a representative committee was called together "to consider the best mode of regulating the present disorderly practice of several country ministers being in town at the same time soliciting assistance." The outcome of the deliberations of this committee was the formation later in 1784 of the "Baptist Case Committee." This will form the subject of the next article.

SEYMOUR J. PRICE.

²⁴ Harper: *Stage Coach and Mail in Days of Yore*.