

Sabellian Baptists

An opening came to [Richard] Wright in connection with another Baptist flock. There were Baptists in Norwich of every variant type. From the leading Particular Baptist church in 1778, the minister, Samuel Fisher, had been dismissed for unsoundness in a non-doctrinal matter. He took with him a following, and attached himself to the cause of his friend, John Johnson, a native of Eccles, who had developed peculiar views, and had founded a distinct Baptist body. From the perusal of certain of Johnson's pamphlets one rises in some perplexity as to what precisely the good man was driving at. His Calvinism was modified, but not exactly mellowed. Adam's guilt was not a heritable property, yet Adam's brood needed as strong remedies as if it were. In handling the doctrine of the Trinity Johnson managed to confound the persons; hence the Johnsonians were known as the Sabellian Baptists. It was not, indeed, quite unusual to find Sabellians among Baptists, but Johnson insisted on making a distinctive feature of this view, and so took his place as a heresiarch...

(Addresses Biographical and Historical by Alexander Gordon, London: The Lindsay Press, 1922, 318-319; from Chapter X, Richard Wright and Missionary Enterprise)