Two Association Meetings in Kent, 1657.

1657

Severall pticulars Debated & agreed upon by the Messengers Elders & Brethren at a quarterly meeteing at Chattam upon y 10th day of ye 1st month 1657

1 In answer to ye quirios about fighting we say yt in some casses it may be Lawfull; but as ye affaires of ye nation now standeth & is like to continue till ye appeareng of ye Lord Jesus we account it exceeding dangerous Ro: 13. 10. Tit. 3. 1. 1 pet. 2. 13. Luk 3. 12, 13, 14—Jer 25, 15 to 34. dan 11. 32, 33. Reu: 13. 10.

2 And for officers of Churches to list themselves either as private soulders or Comission officers yt it is altogether vnlawfull.

Rom 12. 7. Luk. 16. 13. 1 Tim 3. 3

3 That there be all possible care in propogateing the Gospel by Imploying ye Messengers in ye work of ye Lord Jesus sending with each of them one young disciple of good report that himselfe shall approve of and that ye Deacons of ye Respective Congregations be desiered to take speciall care not only of ye Messengers to supply them with all things neses-sary for theire Journeying but also that theire fmalies be well provided for in theire absence.

mark 16. 15. 1 Cor 9. 16 matt 24. 45 & 9. 38. acts 6. 4. Acts 16. 1, 2, 3. 1 Cor. 9. 14. 2 Tim 2. 6

4 That all diligence be used by ye Churches to Cherish young gifts & that thos that begin to speak be put forward at thos times that may be most seasonable putting them in minde yt they continue their dis-
courses no Longer than they can speak as ye oracles of God and finde assistance from ye Spirit to speak with power.

2 tim. 1. 6. 1 Cor. 14. 39.
heb. 5. 12. 1 peter. 4. 11.

5 And concerning observation of days we say that one Day in seven at least is to be set apart for ye servants to meet in ye worship of God & seeing ye servants of ye Lord in ye primitive Churches whose steps we are to follow did meet on ye first day of ye week we therfore Judge it necessary that we observe ye same day.

lickwise

heb: 10. 25 act. 2. 7.
Jo 20. 19 1 cor. 16. 1.

6 It is also agreed that we cannot have communion with any that disownes any principle of ye doctrine of Christ neither with those that practice mixt communion although themselves owne everie principle of Christ Doctrine

Ro: 6. 17 & 16. 17. 1 tim. 6. 34
2 Jo. 9. 10. heb. 6. 1, 2.

The Agreement of ye Messengers Elders & Brethren Meeting at Biddenden ye 26th & 27th of ye third month 1657 concerning those things following in answer to several questions

That ye Elders of ye Church may not go in ye time of the Churches appointed meeting to any Sister Church or ye world to preach ye Gospel with out ye assent of ye Congregation

1 cor. 16. 14 Ro. 14. 19. 1 pet 5. 5.

Yet not withstanding ye Churches & Elders ought to take such cear that both sister Churches & ye world may have ye more of ye Gospole Ministered unto them at all seasonable times so farr as in them lieth.

phi 1. 27. Rev 22. 17. 1 Thess 2. 16 & 1. 8. act 18. 26, 27.
It is also agreed that Gifted members of Churches may not without ye approbation of ye Churches they be-long unto go forth by their own appointment to preach to the world or to make it their frequent practice to preach to other Churches

Ro: 12. 3, 4. & 14. 9. acts. 11. 22. 2 Cor 14. 40.

father more it is agreed that members of Churches may not commonly leave that Congregation they are related unto & go to other Churches to hear ye word without ye assent of ye Congregation they stand engaged unto.

heb. 13. 17. & 10. 25.

It is agreed that they that are Chosen Elders of Congregations may not be countinanced in laying down of their offices they remaining stedfast in ye faith not blasted in their gifts for sin.

1 pet. 5. 2, 4, 7. Ro. 12. 7. act. 20. 28. to 32.

And further more it is agreed that Elders cannot fulfil their Ministry on ye first days of ye weke but allso must spend some other time in vissiting of ye Sickke & seeking after ye straying disiples &c in order to which it is farther agreed that ye Churches are bound in duty to assist them upon that accompt so that they & their is may live comfortabley & furthermore that some as helpes of Goverment may very much helpe the Elders their work so that they may not leave of their callings but contrarywise work with their hands at all seasonable times

1 tim 4. 13, 14. gall. 6. 6. 1 tim. 5. 17, 18

That it is Lawfull for ye ending of strifie in a soleme way to swear by the name of ye Lord & not otherwise or in such a maner as paul did

gall 1. 20. heb. 6. 16.. 2 Cor. 1. 27

That ye Churches of Christ ought not to hold communion with any ye do not believe & practis all those
principles mentioned heb 6. 1, 2. we mean touching that
of laying on of hands that we cannot own communion
wt any that do not believe & accordingly submite unto
prayer with laying on of hands for ye receiveing of the
gifes of the Spirite as a principle of the Doctrine of
Christ.
Act. 12 to ye 21. chap. 9. 7 cha 19. 5, 6, 7. 2 tim. 1. 6.
heb. 6. 1, 2. Ro. 6. 17. cha. 16. 17.. 2 thes 3. 6.. 1 tim. 6. 3, 5.
Joh Ep. 2. 9. ________________

The preceding decisions have been copied by the
Rev. Horace Warde of Richmond from page 31 of the
minute book of the church at Tunbridge Wells, now
lodged at the British Museum as Additional Manuscript
36709.

They testify, to the General Baptists of Kent
holding quarterly meetings, and show that if other
ancient Kentish books were available, we might recover
more of these minutes. Not till 1719 did James
Richardson institute an Association Minute Book.

They show that while the Calvinistic Baptists were
found in the army, and took very prominent posts there,
as other papers in this issue illustrate, the General
Baptists were strongly opposed to enlistment. Opinion
however was not unanimous even in Kent; Edward
Morecock of Chatham held a commission as captain
in the navy, and was known to preach in his scarlet
uniform.

They indicate that the local officers, Elders and
Deacons, were being sharply distinguished from the
itinerant officers, Messengers; but that the system still
needed clear definition. It is regrettable that no sig-
natures are appended, to compare with the lists of both
known in 1654 and 1660, or with the signatures to the
Minutes of Assembly in 1656, recorded in this same