

Association Records of
the Particular Baptists
of England, Wales
and Ireland to 1660

Edited by B. R. White

Part 2.

The West Country and Ireland

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PART II.

Association Records of the
Particular Baptists of the West Country to 1659

Editorial Note

The major sources for the present section are the two tracts published by Thomas Collier¹, probably in 1658, and discovered some years ago by Dr. G. F. Nuttall². Since one tract prints the associated messengers' answers to their churches' queries and the other their letters it has been decided to reprint the material in the same way rather than to link each letter immediately with the queries and their answers supplied by the same meeting.

In addition, three manuscripts have been used. First, the well known account, by John Thurloe's agents, of the meeting held at Dorchester in May 1658 of which no Baptist record appears to survive. Then, secondly, the Lyme, Dorset, Churchbook has been used both to supplement Collier's materials in certain particulars and further to supply both a letter dealing with his 'ordination' and an account of the meeting held at Wells in May 1659. Finally, the Whitchurch manuscript copy of the record of an earlier meeting at Wells, in April 1656, has provided a list of the churches whose representatives attended.

This set of records shows churches from Gloucestershire to Cornwall linked together under the general leadership of Thomas Collier. With their answers to the queries presented by the churches the messengers were continuing to provide, as the Midlands records have already indicated, a body of case-law for the guidance of their people. Through the letters to the churches, beneath the bland usages of 'the language of Canaan', there is a continued emphasis upon the need for holy living, for evangelism, for the member congregations to realise their fellowship in one body and, sounding through them all, an undertone of expectancy, of millenarian excitement, entirely typical of many sectaries in the years from which these records derive.

THE WEST COUNTRY RECORDS

Several resolutions and answers of queries, sent in from several congregations, at several general meetings of messengers from the said congregations, in the county of Somerset and the counties near adjacent.

The First was at Wels the 8th and 9th daies of the 9th moneth 1653.

Query 1. Whether that imposition of hands on all baptized believers be an ordinance of Christ under the Gospel?

Answer: 1. That there is no precept nor president in the Gospel of Christ for the imposition of hands on all baptized believers, and therefore we cannot judge it to be an ordinance of Christ, it being performed by the Apostles when it was don on believers as believers, rather in a way of present power of faith for the confirmation of the Gospel, by the visible demonstration of the gifts of the Spirit, as other miracles was, then in way of instituted ordinance, as other ordinances was, there being no word left for our practice thereof, Heb.2.3f, Acts 8.15-18, 19.6.

2. That the practice or not practice thereof is no ground of the breach of communion amongst or in the churches, and we do desire that none may submit unto it upon any such account.

3. It is concluded and desired that the churches that stand in fellowship without it be very carefull how they permit any member from any church that owens that practice to preach among them that will not hold fellowship with them in all the ordinances of Christ as they practice them.

The second general meeting was at Wells the 26th and 27th daies of the first moneth 1654.

Query 1. Whether the word addition, Acts 2.41,47, do import any solemn act of the church towards the person baptized before his receiving him to full communion?

Answer: we judge that the addition spoken of in that and other scriptures imports not any solemn act of the church towards the person baptized but is rather made use of as a word to discover the increase of the visible number added to the Church. Yet, in some case, *viz.*, if persons are baptized at a distance from the church and so commended to the church, then we judge that some solemn act of the church is to be don in receiving of them, Acts 9.26ff.

Query 2. Whether withdrawing be a particular act to be performed by a church of Christ toward a brother offending before admonition?

Answer: it is not the duty of a church of Christ to withdraw from a brother offending before admonition except in the want of opportunity.

Query 3. Whether a gross offender be to be rejected before admonition?

Answer: not before admonition, nor at all, if the evil be repented of, II Cor. 12.20f, Tit. 3.10, repentance being the end of all church dealings and censures. If the end be attained before rejection we know no rule to reject. Yet, in such cases, the church ought to have full satisfaction of the truth of such repentance, by visible fruits, before they admit such a person to full communion. Therefore we judge that he may be set apart in such a case for a time, as in the case of Miriam, Num. 12.14f., and as in the case of the leper, Lev. 14.3,8.

Query 4. Whether it be lawfull for a believer in the order of the Gospel to mary one that is not in the same order?

Answer: we judge it to be most expedient, and most sutable to the minde of God in scripture, that church members mary with such as are in the same order with them, or at least with such as may be judged godly, Gen. 6.1ff; Deut. 3.7 with I Cor. 7.39, and, in this case, it is desired that the churches should endeavour in the way of love to prevent the contrary.

Query 5. Whether any brother in the church, having a gift, though it be weak, may not in the church meeting have liberty to exercise it, though many of the world be present?

Answer: we judge that any brother that is known to have a gift may exercise it in the church, though some of the world be present: and the church is to judge of her gifts, I. Cor. 14.23f,26,31.

Query 6. Whether laying on of hands be an ordinance of Christ to be practised in his church on persons chosen to office in the church?

Answer: we judge that the ordination of ministers is an ordinance of Christ in his church now in force, Tit. 1.5, Acts 14.23, and ought to be performed with fasting and prayers and the laying on of hands, Acts 6.6 and 13.3.

Query 7. Whether a woman may speak in the church at all, and if at all, in what cases?

Answer: a woman is not permitted at all to speak in the church, neither by way of praying, prophecying nor enquiring, I Cor. 14.34f, I Tim. 2.11f, but, if any have a gift, we judge they may exercise it in private, observing the rule mentioned, I Cor. 11.5.

Query 8. Whether a member satisfied in all the essentials of worship in the church of Christ may upon any dissatisfaction touching standing or kneeling in prayer, or any such like circumstance, withdraw from that church with which he is a member?

Answer: we judge that no member may, upon any such circumstance in worship, absent himself from that church whereof he is a member, because this were to binde where God hath left free and a transgression of the command of Christ in not assembling with the church, for his own tradition, Heb. 10.25, Mat. 15.3.

The third general meeting was at Taunton the 18th, 19th and 20th dayes of the 7th moneth, 1654.

Query 1. Whether the setting apart of any to administer officially in the church of Christ is not to be done by that church of which the person set apart is a member?

Answer: 1. That it is in the power of the church to ordain and send forth a minister to the world, Acts 13.2f. Secondly, that this person sent forth to the world and gathering churches, he ought with them and they with him to ordain fit persons to officiate among them, Acts 14.23, Tit. 1.5.

Query 2. Whether any ought to baptize, and not add the party baptized to that church of which the party baptizing is a member or to commend him by epistle to some other church to walk with?

Answer: whosoever doth baptize any person ought withall to exhort the person baptized by him speedily to joyn himself to that church of which the baptizer is a member or to some other true church of Christ and, in order thereunto, is to give him a letter testimonial of his faith and baptism, Acts 2.41f, and 9.26ff.

Query 3. That inasmuch as the Apostle layeth down covetousness to be a sin, and a ground of withdrawing from a brother, how such a one may be discovered, convicted and dealt with as a covetous person?

Answer: 1. Either in getting and not by right, [I] Thess. 4.6, Jer. 17.11 or, secondly, in a[n] over eager pursuing after gain though it may be in the way of his lawfull calling, I. Tim. 6.9f., Luke 21.34, Prov. 28.20 or, thirdly, in a close keeping what he hath when the Lord calls for it upon any opportunity, Gal. 6.10, Prov. 3.27f., I Jn. 3.17.

Query 4. Whether any are to be received into the church of Christ only upon a bare confession of Christ being come in the flesh and assenting to the doctrine and order laid down by him?

Answer: they may not be admitted on such terms without a declaration of an experimental work of the Spirit upon the heart, through the word of the Gospel and suitable to it, being attended with evident tokens of conversion, to the satisfaction of the administrator and brethren or church concerned in it, Acts 8.37, Rom. 10.9f., Acts 19.18, Luke 6.44f., Mat. 3.7f.

Query 5. Whether the church of Christ is not to consider of some rule for habit and hair, inasmuch as costly habit of women and long hair of men are both forbidden in the scripture?

Answer: we judge that Christians are not to adorn themselves with gold, pearls and costly array, I. Tim. 2.9, I. Pet. 3.3, but they are to shew all soberness and modesty in the matter of apparel and in the manner of the putting of it on not fashioning themselves like unto this world, I. Pet. 1.14, Zeph. 1.8, and so much the rather because of the expediency of it, I. Cor. 10.32, Phil. 4.8f., I. Cor. 8.12f., and forasmuch as the word of God forbids the wearing of long hair, I. Cor. 11.7,14, we judge it the duty of saints so to wear it as to give none offence thereby, I. Cor. 10.32f.

Query 6. Whether a servant of the Lord may purpose what to speak to the world or to the church beforehand and search the scriptures concerning it?

Answer: we judge that he may lawfully, and it is his duty, to wait on the Lord in the reading and meditating on the scriptures, as opportunity and occasion gives him liberty, and whatsoever the Lord is pleased to give in both for matter and manner, he may communicate to others as the Spirit gives him utterance, II Tim. 2.15,3.17, Eccles. 12.9f. yet notwithstanding by this we deny not the immediate ministry of the Spirit of Christ in the churches.

Query 7. Whether a church of Christ having a member in debt above what he is worth it be their duty to free him from that debt or only to administer towards his maintenance?

Answer: we judge that it is the duty of the church not only to relieve such a brother in his necessity but likewise according to their abilities to pay his debt, provided it doth not disable them in the performance of more necessary duties, such as respect both family and church, Gal. 6.2, I. John 3.16f., I. Cor. 12.26, II Cor. 8.13f. Moreover, we advise that when persons are to be admitted into the church, whose estates are suspected, that strait enquiry be made whether they be in debt or no and, if in debt, how far and by what means. And, if evil appear in the party indebted in bringing himself into debt, then care be taken that his repentance be made manifest before his reception into the church. Likewise, we judge that the deacons or other persons intrusted by the church are to make enquiry after the courses and employments, together with the expences of those members that are justly observed to be in a declining condition in the world, and if they refuse to give an account herein, then to be dealt with as froward persons, Psalm 101.4. And it's likewise desired that tender respects be had to the reputation of such persons.

Query 8. Whether a member of a church having a family and the whole family be in want, it be the duty of the church to provide for the whole family or for the member alone?

Answer: it is the churches duty to provide for their member according to his necessity, Gal. 6.10, and it is the member's duty to provide for his family.

Query 9. Whether a member varying from the faith which at his admission he profest, as in respect of free will, general redemption, and falling from grace, the church may proceed to reject him without some other occasion?

Answer: a person holding general redemption, free will, and falling from grace, stily persisting therein, with an unquiet and disturbing spirit, notwithstanding the clear light of the scripture brought against his error to convince him, after due admonition, is to be rejected, I. Tim. 6.3,5, Tit. 3.10, Ro. 16.17. And our advice is, that ministering brethren be much in holding forth such truths as may strike against such errors. Also that, in case of need, help be called for from other churches to deal with such persons, Acts 15.2,25f.

Query 10. Whether distinct parts of one and the same church meeting in several assemblies, by reason of the distance of their habitation, having ministring brethren among them, may warrantably break bread together?

Answer: we can see no rule transgressed by such a practice; onely we desire to wait on the Lord for further light for the full clearing of it.

The fourth general meeting was as at Bridgwater the 17th, 18th, and 19th dayes of the second moneth, 1655.

Query 1. Whether a church of Christ, having no officers elected among them, may, notwithstanding, appoint members for the administration of any or all of the ordinances of Christ? And, if so, what qualifications are required for such a member so appointed?

Answer: a church of Christ having no officers settled among them may, with the assistance of those that have been instrumental in the hand of God in their gathering, set apart such brethren to the work of the ministry as are in some good measure, qualified and gifted according to the scripture upon trial in order to further establishment, I. Tim. 3.10,5.22. The qualifications we judge to be according to Acts 6.3, I. Tim. 3, Tit. 1.6f. But, to appoint a person for the administration of ordinances in the church, not being in order to office, we finde not clear in scripture, yet we conclude it not unlawfull in all cases.

Query 2. Whether singing of psalms be an ordinance of Christ. If so, then what it is, and in what manner it is to be performed, and what is meant by the words exprest, Col. 3.16, psalms, hymns and spiritual songs?

Answer: first, that singing of psalms is an ordinance of Christ, to be performed in the church of Christ by the saints, Ps. 65.1,149.1, Eph. 3.21, I. Cor. 14.15, James 5.13, Heb. 2.12.

Secondly, singing is, when the soul being possest with the apprehension of the goodness and mercy of God, doth make a joyfull noise to his praise, Ps. 42.4,95.1f.

Thirdly, this is performed in the church, first, in speaking to the Lord to his praise, and in this for one to speak and that so as that the rest may say, Amen. I. Cor. 14.15f. Secondly, in speaking of the greatness and goodness of God one to another to his praise, Col. 3.16, Eph. 5.19. Thirdly, we understand, that by psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is intended the whole matter of praise as for outward mercies, so for Christ and all spiritual good. This is that which at present we see and further we cannot speak but wait on the Lord for further light when he shall pour forth more of his Spirit.

Query 3. Whether it be the duty of a church member to joyn in prayer with his family if there be no believer in the family or present?

Answer: it is neither the duty nor liberty of a believer to joyn

in prayer with his family if there be no believer in the family but himself because, as the worship of the Lord is spiritual so are his worshippers, Jn.4.23f. Yet we judge that a master of a family, when he doth instruct and teach his family, may pray for them before them, Gen. 17.18 with John 11.41f., Acts 7.59f.

Query 4. How far we may receive the testimony of the world against a brother offending?

Answer: the testimony of such as are without may be received so far as in the wisdom of the church it appeareth to be a satisfactory testimony, I. John 5.9.

Query 5: Whether church-membership in the wife and faithfull children be qualifications absolutely necessary to such brethren as are appointed to officiate in the church?

Answer: it is required of the Lord that the wife of the elder be in subjection, I. Tim. 3.4, that the wife of the deacon be grave, sober, no slanderer, faithfull in all things, I. Tim. 3.11, which faithfulness, for ought we yet see, may be meant of faithfulness upon a civil account. And that the children be faithfull, that is, faithfully subjecting themselves to their parents, not charged with riot or unruly. For, were they not so, it might give just ground of dissatisfaction concerning his fitness to take care of the church of Christ. These things we judge the Lord hath required. But, if the wife or children of the elder be unruly and it appears that the fault is not in him, that he should therefore be judged unfit, we do not at present determine because of the word, I. Tim. 3.5.

Query 6. Whether a baptized person, walking in fellowship with unbaptized persons, may administer any ordinance in the church of Christ and, if one, why not all?

Answer: we know no rule in scripture for such a practice. And, farther, we judge the ministring brethren should walk most exactly to the rule, that they might be exemplary to others in drawing them to, and keeping them in, the truth. II Cor. 6.3, I Tim. 4.12, Phil 3.17.

Query 7. Saints being assembled together to observe a day of thanksgiving to the Lord, in what manner they are to observe it?

Answer: they are to observe it in a way of praising the Lord by speaking to him and of him, I Chron. 16.4, 7-10, Ps. 35.18, Heb 13.15. As also in a moderate refreshing of their bodies with the creatures if they are free to it, wherein they are especially to remember the poor and needy saints, Neh. 8.12, Esther 9.22.

Query 8. Whether it be a duty required of an elder in the church to anoint the sick with oyle according to James 5.14?

Answer: we being not fully satisfied of the minde of the Lord in this scripture desire to be silent in it untill we have received further light from the Lord. And, in relation to this and other things in which we want light from the Lord, we desire the churches to be earnest with the Lord for the powrings forth of his Spirit more abundantly, Luke 11.13.

Query 9. Whether it be an ordinance of Christ for disciples to wash one another's feet, according to John 13.14?

Answer: we understand that Christ in that scripture teacheth disciples humility and to serve each other in love and, if need call for it, to wash each other's feet, Heb. 13.1, I. Pet. 5.5.

Query 10. Whether it be according to the minde of the Lord for the church to send forth an elder to preach the Gospel to the world or to assist the churches?

Answer: we judge that they may so do provided that the church be so provided for in the mean time that neither God be dishonoured nor the church wronged. That they may do it our grounds are: first, from the common membership that is in all the churches all make up but one body though many, therefore, as members of that body they should assist each other, Acts 8.14, 11.22, 15.22 with I Cor. 12.25f. Secondly, from that common interest that all the churches have in the gifts of God given forth in the church it being but one in the Head. If God give plentifully in one, and but sparingly in others it may be for the tryal of the liberality of the one in the right use of it, and for the trial of the patience of the other, Eph. 4.11f., Gal. 6.10. Thirdly, we judge that if it be the duty of the churches to assist each other in temporal things, that it is their duty likewise in spiritual things. The first is clear, II Cor. 8.1-4, 14. Fourthly, if the most usefull brethren may be sent with the outward gift, Acts 11.29f., much more with the spiritual gift if the case be as is exprest before, Acts 15.22. Fifthly, it being the duty both of church and elders to improve their talents that way in which they may most glorify God, if the church at such a time can part with such an elder, then he may most honour God where there is most need. And this answers that clause of sending to the world, if God may be most honoured there, and the church not wronged, so he take care to return again to take care of the church, Gal. 6.10.

The fifth general meeting was at Chard the 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th daies of the 8th moneth, 1655.

Two daies was spent in fasting and prayer for a greater measure of gifts of the Spirit.

Query 1. Whether the power of the keys spoken of in Mat. 16.19, John 20.23, Mat. 18.18, be given to the church or to the eldership in the church?

Answer: the exercise of the power of Christ in a church having officers, in opening and shutting, in receiving in and casting out, belongs to the church with its eldership, Mat. 18.17f., I. Cor. 5.4f., III John 9f., Acts 15.4, 22.

Query 2. Whether a church of Christ in her election of elders are to invest the power of teaching and ruling in them all alike or to appoint some for teaching and some for ruling sutable to their gift?

Answer: it is the office of an elder both to teach and rule. The church, therefore, ordaining a person to that office do thereby invest him with a power both to teach and rule. Tit. 1.9f., I. Tim. 3.2,

Acts 20.17, 28, Heb. 13.7, 17, I. Peter 5.1f. Yet sutable to the gift are they to be most exercised, I. Tim. 5.17.

Query 3. A member having sinned greatly and the church sending to admonish him, whether they may appoint him a day when to tender his repentance to the church, he having not spoken anything thereof to them? Or whether the church is to leave him in respect of time to his own liberty and to God's work upon his heart?

Answer: a person having so sinned and being openly reprov'd and admonish'd in the church and if the church cannot presently determine whether he repent or not, they may appoint him a day wherein to come before them in order to their satisfaction, either to acquit him of his fault on satisfactory repentance or else to reject him, Mat. 18.13, 17, Lev. 5.10, I. Cor. 5.5, 7.

Query 4. Whether Christ Jesus our Lord dyed for all and every man or for the elect only, and if for all, then how far?

Answer: our Lord Christ dyed for all and every man, Heb. 2.9, first, to reconcile all to God so as to have their being continued by him, Col. 1.20. Secondly, and that repentance and remission of sins might be preach't in his name to all men, Luke 24.47, Mark 16.15f. Thirdly, that so he might be Lord of all, Rom. 14.9, Phil. 2.8f. Fourthly, that he might raise all from the dead in the order and times appointed by the Father, I. Cor. 15.21ff. Yet he died not intentionally alike for all, Jn. 17.12, I. Tim. 4.10, Heb. 2.10, Is. 53.11.

Query 5. Whether the creature may be used at any time for pleasure and delight or only for necessity?

Answer: believers are not limited by the Lord in the use of the creature to use them only for necessity nor may they use them only for sensual pleasure and delight, but God hath given to his people a necessary, moderate and sober use of the creatures, to receive and use them to his praise with thanksgiving, Gen. 9.3, Neh. 8.10, Zech. 7.6, Prov. 25.16, I. Tim. 4.3f., I. Cor. 10.31.

Query 6. Whether it be lawfull for baptized believers to hear a person in the exercise of his gift preaching as a parochial or national minister?

Answer: it is unlawfull, upon these grounds following: first, because there is an appearance of evil in it, in conforming to the worship of those men which we are commanded to separate from, II Cor. 6.17, II Tim. 3.5, Rev. 18.4, Prov. 19.27. Secondly, in so doing weak members are emboldened to sit down under that false ministry and thereby are in a ready way to be seduced, I. Cor. 8.9f. Thirdly, because they walk according to their own professed principles, they walk disorderly in justifying the wicked for believers and persons in covenant, by declaring it to be the priviledge of believers to have their children baptized; and then apply it to the children of such who have no mark of faith upon them and therefore are to be witness'd against as persons walking disorderly and by their practice condemn their own principles, Rom. 14.22, 16.17f. Fourthly, by such a practice they strengthen their hands in their present standing and acting in a

national way wherein they are found contrary unto and warring against the true ministry and churches of Christ, against which such ministers do bitterly inveigh and often raile. Fifthly, because that by such a practice they give a just occasion of offence to the rest of their brethren who in judgement and conscience cannot own such a practice which is contrary to I Cor. 10.32. Sixthly, it is a consenting to the evil doings of such as take the word of God into their mouthes and hate to be reformed, approving them in that which God reproveth them for, Psalm 50.16f., Jn. 10.1-15.

Query 7. Whether a member of a church may make or sell unnecessary things such as only tend to pride and vanity?

Answer: this question was not resolved, but [I] Peter 3.14 commended to the consideration of the churches.

The sixth general meeting was at Wels the 8th, 9th and 10th daies of the second moneth, 1656.

Query 1. Whether it be lawfull for a minister of the Gospel to take a set maintenance for preaching of those that are without, whether it be for preaching to the world or to the church?

Answer: we judge that a preacher of the Gospel ought not to accept of the place of a minister to a parish, or lecturer, or chaplin, or to take a set maintenance from those that are without for preaching, and that for these reasons:

First, because God hath provided another way for the maintenance of the ministers of the Gospel, viz., by the church or churches of Christ, III Jn. 7f., I Cor. 4.7-18, Phil. 4.15. And the taking of maintenance from others would be a transgression of that ordinance; and if the case be such that the church which sends them forth be not of sufficient ability, we judge that it's the duty of other churches to be assistant in such a case, that the ministers of the Gospel may not be exposed to temptation in this thing. And of this we are perswaded that, such is the ability of the churches that, if they be faithfull and forward in the work and seek not great things for themselves, they may be thus provided for without taking a set reward from the world which would be honourable to the Gospel, III Jn. 7f., and whereby they might condemn the practice of the false church and their mercenary ministry.

Secondly, because the taking of such a stipend would put a tye and fetter upon the feet of the ministers of the Gospel to preach at certain times and places according to the will of men, whereby they are made the servants of men, I Cor. 7.23, and so will be deprived of their liberty to follow the Lord freely and fully in his work. And that liberty of ministers we judge ought to be dearer unto them than any outward enjoyment whatsoever, yea, though [*sic*] life itself, Acts 20.24. And seeing that all saints and ministers especially are to pray that the word of God may run and have free course, II Thess. 3.1, then they that are sent to preach ought not to enter into such bonds which by sad experience proves a snare unto them and it is to be noted also that

wisdom's messengers are said to be maidens or virgins, Prov. 9.3, which sheweth their freedom in the work of the Gospel.

Thirdly, it stops the mouth of a minister from bearing an open and full testimony against the practice of the parish ministers who, Balaam like, run after the reward and, seeing this is the way of the ministry of the whore of Babylon, it becometh not Christ's ministers to follow the reward whither that goeth thither to go.

Fourthly, it hath the appearance of that horrible sin of covetousness and preaching for hire and selling of the gift of God for money, which is contrary to these scriptures, I. Thess. 5.22, Mic. 3.11, Acts 8.20.

Fifthly, to these considerations we add the command of our Saviour to his disciples whom he sent forth to preach the Gospel to the world, Freely ye have received freely give, Mat. 10.7f. These things considered we judge that it is the duty of a church whose ministers take such set rewards of the world for preaching to endeavour to convince them of the said evil and, if they continue and go on in this practice, the Church ought to deal with such for the same, as that which gives occasion to the enemies of the truth to reproach and just ground of offence to the church of Christ, contrary to I. Cor. 10.32f. We conclude our answer with the proposal of these three things to the consideration of the churches and ministers concerned in this matter:

1. Whether some brethren have not, without any clear call from God, taken up a trade of preaching to get into a trade of maintenance?

2. Whether the large rewards allotted by the world for preaching the word be not a means to draw off divers ministering brethren from the service of the Lord in the churches whereby many offences come?

3. Whether a man may justly be judged, by himself or others, to be called of God to go about to preach the word as a Gospel minister that hath not faith to believe that God will be with him and provide that nothing shall be lacking to him in the work?

Query 2. Whether it be lawfull to take money upon usury in case of necessity, and, if so, how far the necessity must extend?

Answer: it seems to us unexpedient for a church-member to take money upon usury, except a clear necessity compel him thereunto.

1. Because it is of evil report.

2. Because it is an offence to brethren.

3. Because it strengthens the hands of usurers. Wherefore we judge also that the churches of Christ should dissuade their members from it and to take care to prevent them what in them lieth from coming into such wants and straits as may put them upon such a practice.

Query 3. Whether baptism be absolutely necessary to an orderly church communion?

Answer: we judge it so to be, because it's sutable to the declared will and ordinance of Jesus Christ, Mat. 28.19f., Acts 2.38,41, 10.48.

Secondly, it's the clear and trodden paths of saints that have



gon before us whose steps we judge it our duty to follow, Acts 2.41, I. Cor. 11.1, Cant. 1.8.

Thirdly, it's the duty of those that believe in Christ to put on Christ in a visible way of profession by which they are distinguished from the world which profession or putting on is entered into by one baptism and is presented by the apostle as an argument to unite in the church of Christ, Eph. 4.5, Gal. 3.27.

Fourthly, it much concerns those who profess Christ to walk according to the rule of God in scriptures in faithfulness to the Lord, Acts 3.22, II. Thess. 2.15 without which they cannot with clearness and comfort approve themselves either to God or men, Ps. 119.6, Jn. 15.10, or expect the blessing and promise of God to his people that do faithfully follow him in this his will, Acts 2.38, 5.32.

The 7th meeting at Bridgewater the 5th and 6th daies of the 9th moneth, 1656.

Query 1. Whether it be an absolute duty now lying on several churches speedily to send forth persons fitted for the great and good work of preaching the Gospel to the world?

Answer: we judge it to be a duty and at this time much to be laid to heart and performed to send forth such brethren as are fitted to the work of preaching the Gospel to poor sinners that they might be saved.

1. That it's a duty appears by the commission of Christ, Mat. 28.18f., and by the churches that first trusted in Christ according thereunto, Acts 11.22, 13.1ff., 1.15-23.

2. That it's now to be performed appears by the open door that God hath set before us, Acts 16.9f., the fields being white to harvest, Jn. 4.35, Mat. 9.37f. and the abounding also of the mystery of iniquity^s.

Query 2. Whereas it hath been judged by the churches that the wearing of gold, pearls and costly array is contrary to the rule of the Gospel and a sin, if brethren and sisters will not reform in this matter, what course may a church take in this thing?

Answer: we judge that those who wilfully refuse to reform are to be dealt withal as transgressors of the law of Christ, I. Tim. 2.9, I. Pet. 3.3f. Yet we desire that persons in this case may be proceeded with in all sweetness, tenderness and longsuffering it being not so clearly and generally understood among saints to be a sin as other sins that are more contrary to the light of nature.

Query 3. That seeing there are several churches that do still own the taking of a set maintenance from the magistrate for preaching and will not reform what may be don further in this matter?

Answer: we judge that it's the duty of the churches that are clear in this case to continue their bearing testimony against their practice as there is opportunity yet to wait with patience till we see the Lord accomplishing our desires herein. We do not yet see it our duty to proceed any further.

Query 4. Whether astrology in matters of physick be lawfull?

Answer: we cannot at present determine this question but desire to waite on the Lord for further light in it. Nevertheless we desire the brethren may be very cautious how they meddle with the practice of it and that:

1. Because if it be prosecuted to the utmost it leads unto and ends in that which is evil and that such evil which (as it is judged) the scriptures condemn.

Secondly, because that several brethren which have known and practiced the same formerly have left the practice of it upon the accounting the evil which they saw in the same.

Thirdly, because it's very hard to practice any part thereof without bringing damage to the profession of the Gospel by an evil report.

Query 5. What is the saints' most proper and special work at this day?

Answer: besides the acknowledged works of faith and holiness that becomes the house of God in all generations so much more to be heeded in these latter daies as the departure from the faith and great iniquity aboundeth and the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, we judge it doth much concern the saints:

First, to cry mightily unto the Lord and wait upon him for the Spirit to be powred forth: for the bringing down of Babylon and the building of Zion in all the truths and appointments of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly, to be found in the Lord's way, not only by prayer and by self-denying endeavours to the utmost, that the everlasting Gospel may be preached to poor sinners that they may be saved, especially to the anciently beloved people of God the seed of Abraham according to the flesh.

Thirdly, being grounded and rooted in the faith and love of the Gospel, a diligent search be made in the fear of the Lord into the prophesies that open unto us the work of the Lord and duty of his people in the latter daies wherein we desire these cautions may be observed:

First, that saints be very wary and weighty in their spirits how they receive any apprehensions that seem to lead us besides plain and positive scripture grounds of practice.

Secondly, to be very humble and self judging in all such inquiries, taking heed how they censure and despise one another in their differing apprehensions least they be wise in their own conceits and least they decline from the power of godliness through intruding into things that are not seen as yet and not keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Thirdly, we desire that when any distinct apprehensions are attained there may appear in such brethren a willingness to propose them for examination as there is opportunity to the more strong and searching brethren, who attend on the word and prayer, ere they

engage their weak brethren in such questions that are not able to judge as yet in such cases.

Query 6. What is the saints' duty towards the magistrate at this day in this nation?

Answer: we refer those concerned herein for answer to the fourty fourth article of the confession of faith of the churches in these parts¹.

Query 7. Whether a church of Christ, being in a strait for a place to meet in, may address themselves to a magistrate for such a place and, obtaining it, may return the thanks of the church to him?

Answer: the messengers of the churches in these parts, having weighed this question, cannot at present judge but that a church may send to a magistrate in the case mentioned and having obtained it may give thanks for it. This is our present light.

The 8th meeting was at Chard, the 16th, 17th and 18th daies of the second moneth, 1657.

Query 1. Whether or not that a company of people converted to the faith and baptized and living at such a distance from the church of Christ as that they cannot assemble conveniently with them, ought not to be established a church of Christ by themselves though they have no ministerial gifts among them. And, if so, then whether or no that that ministry which was by the Lord made usefull or instrumental in that work ought not to take care of them till the Lord hath raised up gifts among them and not to forbear their settlement as a church or congregation of Christ untill they be furnished with gifts among themselves, for the carying on of all the administrations of God's house?

Answer: we do judge that they being a competent number though they have not gifts at present among themselves for the carrying on the work of God in all the administrations of his house, yet they may be established a church of Christ having the assistance of others whom God hath inabled to carry on the work of God among them and to take such care for them as their necessity shall require; and that it is the duty of that church and ministry to take care that they be so provided for that was instrumental in their gathering, Acts 14.21ff., Tit. 1.5, II Tim. 2.2, Acts 11.21ff.

Query 2. Whether a believer's abstaining from the company of and eating with an impenitent person be before, or after, rejection or both?

Answer: our judgement is that religious fellowship is especially intended in that scripture, I. Cor. 5.11, and also that the saints should, as much as they may, so far as may tend to work shame and repentance, abstain from civil society with them during the time of withdrawing and after rejection too, Eph. 5.11, II Thess. 3.14, Mat. 18.17.

Query 3. That though a church of Christ is bound to relieve all her members yet whether they are bound to relieve all their

families or rather to assist them to look to the Magistrate for a supply for them according to the law of the nation and whether the profession of the Gospel will be any waies dishonoured by such a practice?

Answer: we judge that a church of Christ may address themselves to the magistrate without any just occasion of offence or reproach to the Gospel or name of Christ.

Query 4. How far it may be lawfull for a sister having a husband not in order to dispose of outward substance for the church of Christ without his knowledge or consent therein?

Answer: we judge that a sister may lawfully and that it is her duty to dispose of outward substance and that for these reasons:

first, because the law of God hath given the wife an interest in her husband's estate, being made one flesh with him, Gen. 1.17, 28f., 5.2, Acts 5.8f.

Secondly, this appears by the practice of holy women recorded in the scriptures, I. Sam. 25.18, II Kings 4.8, Luke 8.2ff.

Thirdly, believing women as well as men are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, Eph. 2.10, and it's held as a property of a good woman to be stretching forth her hand to the poor and needy, Prov. 31.11, 20, I Tim. 2.10.

Fourthly, God hath promised a blessing in the faithfull performance of this duty, which he hath nowhere excluded the women in this case from Mat. 21.34 to the end, Eccl. 11.1ff, Mat. 10.42, II Kings 4.13-6. Yet in this matter we desire that wisdom may be exercised that so the name of the Lord, the honour of truth and her own peace as much as in her lieth may be preserved, Col. 4.5, Prov. 31.11f.

Query 5. Whether a man dissatisfied with an act in the church may leave his place in the church during the time of the churches proceedings in that business?

Answer: if a member do so in heat and passion we judge it his sin of which he ought to repent. But, if in tenderness of conscience in peace, we judge it weakness and to have the appearance of evil in it and therefore should by the church be tenderly dehorted from such a practice, Col. 3.8, Phil. 2.2ff.

Query 6. Whether it be unlawfull or contrary to any rule in the New Testament for baptized believers to hear a person that hath received a gift from the Lord, which gift hath been blest by the Lord to the conversion of sinners and to the confirming of saints in the faith of Christ, being of a holy and grave conversation, and denying wholly the world's waies and which, though not yet baptized, yet so far from opposing that ordinance that he is earnestly longing and diligently waiting for further information therein to the end he may not practice the same formally but in the power of him into whose name believers ought to be baptized?

Answer: for the hearing of such a person when the church is not assembled, as we desire to be very tender and cautious in our con-

clusions in such a case, so we do earnestly desire the brethren concerned in this matter to look to their rule for such a practice.

Secondly, but for such a person to be permitted to preach in the church assembled, we judge it altogether without rule, and of dangerous concernment and that for these grounds:

first, because we are to keep close to the commands of Christ and not to do everything that is not expressly forbidden, Mat. 28.19f., Acts 3.23, Col. 2.18 to the end.

Secondly, because it is a disorderly practice, being contrary to the rule of the Gospel, II Thess. 3.6, compared with 2.15, I Cor. 14.40. For, if disorder in a person duly received into communion may hinder him from administring in the church, much more will it him that was never orderly received.

Thirdly, because that such a practice, being contrary to the rule, becomes justly offensive to the churches and saints and so is contrary to that, I Cor. 10.31, Ro. 14.14, II Cor. 8.12, Ro. 16.17.

Fourthly, because it will prove the ready way to disorder and confusion in the churches of Christ and therefore not of God, I Cor. 14.33: for God is not the author of confusion but of peace as in all the churches of the saints.

Fifthly, it may prove a means to hinder the person himself and likewise others that are waiting at Zion's gates from their obedience to the truth and also beget a low esteem thereof in the hearts of those that are already in the truth, Mat. 2.8.

Sixthly, it laieth the church who ownes such a practice liable to the unsoundness and errours of disorderly persons standing out of the truth, who ordinarily are more subject to receive principles contrary to Christ then persons standing in the truth. And this seems to us to be in part already both in the person presented and in the persons presenting this query who, as it seems to us, owns it to be a formal thing to obey the Lord in his ordinances upon the account of faith in Christ and love to him but look for a greater power, which principle we desire the Lord to deliver his people from. Wherefore, as our judgement is, that such a practice is disorderly and so contrary to the rule of Christ and dangerous to persons both within and without the church and likewise will prove dishonourable to the Lord, so it is our advice and counsel to such brethren and churches that are or may be concerned in this matter in the fear of the Lord to weigh and soberly to consider the grounds by us presented in this answer.

Query 7. Whether baptized believers in a church state may not have communion in prayer and prophesie with unbaptized?

Answer: for answer to this we refer you to some of those things said in answer to the last query.

Query 8. What forbearance a church of Christ should exercise towards an offending member after their due dealing with him he still professing conscience in the matter they differ about and still desireth to stand a member in the body?

Answer: that some forbearance towards such a person there

ought to be we grant but for the time we conceive that the church with whom he walks is in best capacity to judge, they knowing the cause and likewise his temper of spirit and behaviour in such a condition.

The 9th general meeting was at Tiverton in Devon the 15th and 16th daies of the 7th month 1657.

Query 1^o: Whether a man in any case in ruling over his wife may lawfully strike her?

Answer: he ought so to rule over his wife in wisdom as that the ordinance of God in point of ruling may be preserved and if it may be by any means without striking of her such a proceeding being without any pretext or example that we read of in the holy scripture.

Query 2. Whether a believer being head of a family now in these daies of the Gospel may keep in his or her house any instrument or instruments of musick playing on them or admitting others to play on them?

Answer: it is the duty of the saints to abstain from all appearance of evil and not make provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof, Rom. 13.14, to redeem the time, Eph. 5.15f., and to do all things to the glory of God, I Cor. 10.31, and, although we cannot conclude the use of such instruments of musick to be in all cases unlawfull, yet we desire that saints would be very cautious lest they transgress the aforesaid rules in the use thereof and do that which may not be of good report and so give offence to their tender brethren.

Query 3. There being a power given to the magistrates in some cities and towns to tax the people for the maintenance of their ministers and to distrain in case of non-payment, we desire your advice what we ought to do in this matter?

Answer: that at least they ought to bear a publick testimony against it as a soule offending and oppressing yoke and, if any have faith to expose themselves to sufferings, by refusing utterly to pay through a real scruple in tenderness of conscience only towards God, we desire them to walk according to their faith and understanding uprightly whatever they may suffer from men, with meekness committing themselves to God, as into the hands of a faithfull Creator.

Postscript.

My precious brethren in the Lord, I have occasioned some few of these to be printed only for the churches' benefit of our meeting, being likewise desired by some brethren so to do. I have, though not without some pains and care, given a true and faithfull account in this matter of all the meetings. But I trust I can say in truth it's my soul's desire to serve the Lord and his people, so it be usefull to you I have my end and remain, your poor brother uncessantly at the throne of grace for Sion's welfare.

Thomas Collier.

The Preface

My dearly beloved in the Lord, at the desire and appointment of the brethren at the general meeting at Tiverton I have, with some time and labour, endeavoured the compiling and publishing of the epistles from the messengers to the churches at the several general meetings (all except two^o which I could not attain unto). And as I trust, I may say, that the end of the brethren in their desire, so I can say it's mine in the performance thereof, viz., the spiritual advantage of the churches for whose sake it is done, and to them it is presented. My earnest desire is, that you may receive it in love and improve it to the end for which it is intended that advantage may come to your souls the more abundantly by the often meetings of your brethren, especially in these evil and backsliding times wherein it concerns us so much the more abundantly in faithfulness to God and to your souls to cry aloud unto and to warn you of the abominations and evils of the times which we cannot but with sadness see and say that professors are by nature too much inclined to. Oh my brethren, it's better to be as a beacon on the top of a hill in a faithfull following of the Lamb then to follow a multitude that think gain and the honours and pleasures of this world to be godliness. My earnest desire to you and to God for you is that you may keep yourselves unspotted of the world hating the garment that is spotted with the flesh. And if these endeavours of your brethren contribute anything to so good a work, I trust we have our end. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Thomas Collier.

The 7th day of the 9th Moneth, 1653.

From the messengers of the churches assembled at Wells to the churches of Christ etc. Grace and peace be multiplied.

Beloved brethren in the Lord, we being by common consent assembled together to wait on the Lord at Wells for satisfaction concerning the practice of laying on of hands. And being accordingly assembled on the 6th and 7th dayes of this moneth, spending part of our time in a serious, and, we trust, sincere waiting in seeking the Lord and the residue in conference to see what particular satisfaction the Lord had or would give in this matter and in conclusion we came to this result.

First, that several of the brethren are something of the minde that laying on of hands on all baptized believers is an ordinance of Christ. But yet they are not satisfied but desire to wait on the Lord for further light in this matter.

Secondly, the most part of the brethren assembled are altogether dissatisfied in the imposition of hands on all baptized believers seeing no precept nor president to warrant it but joyntly conclude that the imposition of hands with fasting and prayer (on such as are called to office in the church or sent forth to preach the Gospel to the world) is an ordinance of Christ.

Thirdly, it's likewise joyntly concluded that the practice or not practice of it upon all baptized believers is no ground to make a breach in communion, nor will any own it nor submit unto it upon any such account.

Fourthly, it is concluded not to permit any member of any church to preach in any of our congregations, that ownes that practice of laying on of hands on all etc., except he be free to have communion with that church in all the ordinances as they practice them.

Fifthly, it is concluded as a means to prevent divisions and increase communion, as also to be instrumentally helpfull each to other, that some of each church do meet again at Wells on the day commonly called Easter-Monday and the day following. And we humbly desire the churches to further it without fail, that we may wait further on the Lord and seek his mind in relation to any particular occasion that may concern any of the particular churches. Thus, our dearly beloved brethren, have we in all faithfulness, as is our duty, given you a brief account of this our present assembling together, desiring the God of grace and peace to establish you in the truth, as it is in Jesus. And that the Spirit of humility, love and peace may rest upon you and be in you and establish you in every good word and work to the praise and glory of God. That as everyone hath received so let him walk by the same rule. But if any be contentious we have no such rule and therefore we desire there may be no such practice in the churches of Christ. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all. Amen.

Subscribed by us the members of the several congregations assembled at Wells aforesaid; and by us appointed to be published by our beloved brother,

Thomas Collier.

The messengers of several churches in the county of Somerset and of other adjacent counties assembled at Wells the 26 and 27 daies of the first moneth, 1654 to the churches of Christ, etc., wish increase of grace and peace.

Holy and beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, it is our joy to consider the grounds we have to believe that the Lord hath bestowed grace upon you and that not in vain. Your willingness in sending your messengers to the general meeting to be enquiring of God concerning his will about the great affairs of his house and kingdome give us grounds so to judge. And truly brethren we can say through grace that we have obtained mercy from the Lord in this our assembling and do believe that it will be a means by which much honour will come to the name of our dear Father and much good and peace to the churches of Christ. We being at this time according to appointment assembled together spent some time in a serious waiting upon the Lord in prayer for his presence and blessing both upon us and upon you, the fruit whereof we trust we may truly say we found and have faith to believe that you shall finde it likewise. Afterward the rest of our time by providence allotted us, we spent in debate

with much tenderness, unity and love. And, we trust, we may say likewise with some clearness from scripture grounds concluded our answers to the queries sent into us from the several churches which we commend unto your serious consideration desiring that it may be usefull unto you for the well ordering of the Lord's house, whose house are ye, if ye hold fast and continue faithfull to the end. Our dear brethren, we trust we can say that your stability and growth up in the knowledge of God our Father, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the true desire and longing of our souls. And that for us to be faithfull in serving the Lord and you his people and to be poor instruments in furthering your joy will be our delight now and our joy in the day of Christ.

The earnest desire of our souls for you is that our God who hath counted you worthy of his calling and kingdome will be pleased to make you a willing people in every good word and work to the praise and glory of his own grace. And that love and duty may engage your hearts to a holy, humble and obedient walking with God all your daies and that you may be made willing to continue this our assembling together at such times and places as shall be appointed. And that our souls with you may be constantly waiting on the Lord in his appointments for his presence and blessing—which is the desires and prayers of your poor brethren and servants in and to the Lord for you. To whom we commend you and rest. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all. Amen.

Signed in the name, and by the appointment of the whole.

Thomas Collicr.

The 18 day of the second moneth 1655.

The messengers of several churches in the county of Somerset and other adjacent counties assembled at Bridgewater, to the churches of Christ assembling in Dublin, Waxford [sic], Waterford or elsewhere in Ireland desireth increase of grace and peace through the knowledge of God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dearly beloved brethren, though you are set at a distance from us in respect of habitation and place of residence for the present time, yet standing with us to our Father in the same relation, by the same faith and in the same visible profession and worship, being baptized into one body by one and the same Spirit, and are waiting together for the grace that shall be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ, when we shall be no more at a distance, but shall ever be together with all the saints and with the Lord. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, we judge it not onely our duty to remember you but we can say, through the grace of Christ, that you are upon our hearts with much tenderness and the glory of God intrusted in your hands likewise, being very sensible by our own experiments of that weakness and aptness that is in the saints to miscarry by reason of their own corruptions and the temptations of Satan. So

that we finde that it's not onely necessary a duty and our priviledge to remember each other at the throne of grace but likewise to be remembrancers of each other to stir up and provoke each other to love and to good works. That, as God hath honoured both himself and us in shewing mercy, so we may honour him in an holy and inoffensive walking shewing forth the fruits of faith to his praise.

Now, our beloved brethren, as we have heard of the stedfastness of your faith and order, and your persevering in the way and work of the Lord to our joy so likewise we cannot but in much tenderness and faithfulness let you know that we have heard there are some things amiss among you and we partly believe it, it being so often confirmed unto us by several brethren and others that have come from thence.

The first is pride in apparel, in needless superfluities and deckings of the flesh, that which is by the Spirit of the Lord condemned and that which we cannot but judge to be a visible demonstration of the vanity of the minde. For, if we may read the abundance of the heart in the words that are spoken, Mat. 12.34, so likewise doth the same appear in our fashioning ourselves after the manner of the world. Hence it is that saints are exhorted, I Pet. 1.14, as obedient children not to fashion themselves according to their former lusts in their ignorance (which we cannot but understand that it relates to the fashions in apparel as well as in other things) that so they may be holy in all manner of conversation.

If it should be objected that we finde in the Old Testament, that the saints did wear gold and pearls and costly array, therefore it's lawfull for saints now, as in the case of Rebekah, Gen. 24.53, and of Mordecai, Est. 7.2 [Chapter 6?], we answer, if we finde it forbidden under the Gospel, it is our duty to submit. To have more wives then one was tolerated and practised under the law yet forbidden under the Gospel.

Now, in the Gospel we finde that both gold and pearles and costly array, and the manner of putting it on, that is to say, in a gaudy and vain fashion, is plainly forbidden, 1 Tim. 2.9f., I Peter 3.3. But sobriety and modesty, as becometh men and women professing the Gospel is commanded. And, indeed, we cannot but judge it exceeding necessary for saints to deny the flesh in such cases knowing that the grace of God doth not teach the saints such things. But it's rather a sad symptome of a vain minde and it's that which hath been a stumbling-block before our eyes. But God in his mercy hath begun to take away the vail and to let us see the iniquity of it, that it is indeed a sin and that which we desire to take notice of and testifie against in ourselves and others and amongst ourselves to deal with persons that do clearly offend in this matter refusing to reform. Though by sad experience we often finde that persons in profession of the truth are very ready (though very carnally) to endeavour to excuse the matter with this poor excuse, that pride doth not consist in apparel, but that a man or woman may be as proud in mean apparel as others in the

most gay and that pride is in the heart and not in apparel. This is that we often meet withall which is but a device of the devil to carry on his design in ruining souls upon this rock of fleshly deckings and gay attirings. For although it's true one may be proud in mean apparel that's no ground why others should transgress the rule in wearing of gay apparel. And such persons become judges of their brethren's hearts who keep to the rule and so transgressing the law of love towards their brethren, which is to hope all things etc., and the law of moderation in themselves giving just occasion of offence to their brethren and of reproach to the world. It's true that pride is in the heart and it usually manifesteth itself by those vanities in the outward man. And truly we cannot but judge that vanity in apparel doth minister occasion to a vain minde to be puffed up. And we are very ready from our own experience to conclude that whoso cannot witness to this doth not know their own hearts nor are they acquainted with the depths of Satan and the corruption of their own natures. Oh therefore, dearly beloved brethren and longed for in the Lord, we, in the tenderness of our Lord, beseech you to think of these things and to abstain from all appearance of evil. Let your moderation be known to all men, the Lord is at hand. Oh, then what will pride profit or the vanity of riches do for us? If it be queried what rule we ought to walk by in our reformation in this matter, we answer, if ye are not convinced of an absolute evil in this thing, then go to that rule which enjoyneth to avoid offending our brethren. If it be further questioned, what particulars of apparel are they offended at besides the things before named, we say, we with many more are offended in a very great measure with the wearing of those things which have no colour or shew of use, as points and ribands at knees, and more laces then are needfull on garments. When we have reformed in these things which we may easily do then may we expect a further light for a thorow reformation in this matter.

The second particular we have to minde you of is your dependency of the ministry on the maintenance of the magistrate which we do not see to be according to the Gospel constitution, especially when churches are of sufficient ability to maintain their ministry if they improve their outward substance faithfully and not in superfluities. It's true that it is an ordinance of the Lord that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel, I Cor. 9.14, that is, of the fruit of the vineyard planted or nourished by them, of the milk of the flock, watched, kept and fed by them, being freely brought forth to them, v.7, and it's their duty who reap spiritual things to communicate of their carnal things, v.11. And it's the duty of those who are taught in the word to communicate to him that teacheth, Gal. 6.6, but we nowhere finde it in the Gospel, that the ministers of Christ should make use of the magistrate's power for to get a coercive maintenance for them.

Dear brethren, we desire the Lord to teach you to deny yourselves in this case. And truly we have heard likewise of the great vanity

and pride in apparel of some brethren in the ministry with you. That whereas they should be patterns of humility, meekness and good conversation they are too much patterns of the contrary.

These things, dear brethren, having so often sounded in our ears (and indeed hath pierced our hearts) not onely from enemies but from friends⁷ and, indeed, we cannot but doubt that the large allowance by the state in Ireland hath drawn over many brethren to be preachers there. Not but that we rejoyce in the flourishing of the Gospel in that nation and could desire that there were more publishers of it, but it would have added to our joy, if they had come there on better principles. We desire not to mention particulars in this case but that we hope for its reformation which will be our joy in the Lord⁸. It being that which indeed hath administred matter of grief and sorrow to our souls, both brethren and others, having often declared these things unto us and, indeed, it's that for which the truth doth suffer and the way of truth is reproached and your brethren grieved. Oh, make our hearts glad by taking away the occasion of such offence! Oh, constrain not any tender hearts to separate from you for such causes as these are. Oh, grieve not tender hearts among you who sit sighing in the beholding of these things! Let, we beseech you, the tender endeavours of your poor brethren in England be accepted with you, and do you not resolve to grieve our hearts and cause us to hang down our heads for sorrow, but rather cause us to remember you at the throne of grace with joy. This we say the more by reason of an epistle written from the church at Bridgewater which was not well resented nor took but little effect as we hear. But, dear brethren, we have not written these things to shame you, but to warn you not as having dominion over your faith but as helpers of your joy knowing that we ourselves are men of like infirmities and subject to the like (if not worse) temptations. And we have dealt with you no otherwise but as we earnestly desire you in the tenderness of the Lord to deal with us. Let the righteous smite us and we trust it shall not break our heads but be a precious balm unto us because faithfull are the wounds of a friend but the kisses of an enemy are deceitfull. Thus having though in much weakness yet, we trust, in much tenderness and faithfulness written unto you, desiring and not doubting but that the Lord will give both the truth and us a being in your hearts of which we shall rejoyce to hear. So remaining yours incessantly at the throne of grace, we rest. Grace, mercy and peace be with you all. Amen.

This epistle was signed by the messengers of the churches following:

Bridgewater ⁹	} Somerset	Riden ¹⁵	Abington in Bark. ²⁰
Stoke ¹⁰		Charde ¹⁶	Sydbury in Gloucester. ²¹
Taunton ¹¹		Dalwood ¹⁷	Lime in Dorset. ²²
Wells ¹²		Bristol ¹⁸	Dartmouth ²³
Wedmore ¹³		Somerton ¹⁹	Totnes ²⁴
Hatch ¹⁴			Lupit ²⁵
			Bradley in Wilts. ²⁶

It is also desired that in the relieving of your poor, you will be carefull to lend them sufficient for their need according to the scriptures, Deut. 15.7ff., Prov. 3.27f., Mat. 5.42.

Our brethren in Ireland did never to this epistle return us any answer which was our trouble.

The Spirit from on high be powred forth upon you and all the Israel of God.

Dear brethren and fellow citizens,

The God of glory having wrought in the hearts of his poor people in several congregations far remote, a sweet willingness to send their messengers to meet together to enquire of the Lord and one another concerning the lawes of his house. After much experience of our own insufficiency for things of so great importance we have found it in our hearts to pray with fasting before the Lord for the powring forth of his Spirit which he hath promised in the last dayes and is now the one thing needfull to the carying on of Sion's buildings and the pulling down of Babylon's walls. The glorious things brought to the birth cannot be brought forth without it. Having spent two whole dayes together in this work we have had such evident testimonies of the Lord's gracious presence with us, that should we be silent we might be rebuked within ourselves with the words of the lepers who said one to another, We do not well, this day is a day of good tidings and we hold our peace. We have been admitted through grace as spies into the good land, that glorious rest, which flowes with milke and honey. Oh, brethren, the land is an exceeding good land, let us go up into it by faith and prayer, let not the highest walls of difficulty within or without discourage us. Is it not a promised land to Israel? You who are precious heirs of the promise of the Spirit, own your right by faith and sue it out by prayer in the name of Christ whilest the fleshly seed are glorying in their humane wisdoms and parts. Let the right seed and performed to Christ for them, that his Spirit and his word which was upon Christ should remain upon his people from generation to generation, Is. 59.21, Acts 2.23 [33?]. This Spirit of Christ hath remained with his during the time of the churches being in the wilderness but in a low measure sutable to the suffering state of the church. Now is not the set time come for the building of Sion's wastes, raising up the foundations of many generations, repairing breaches and restoring paths to dwell in? All which works of wonder, with many more speedily to be effected, may serve to assure us that God will not leave us destitute without a portion of his Spirit sutable to the work of the day. Oh, how much is it needed at this day to the holding forth of the glorious Gospel, the convincing gain-sayers and carrying on the administrations of God's house, so that the glory, power and beauty which spiritual souls look after, might be seen upon them.

How heavily do men drive without it in their prayings and prophesyings. Now, inasmuch as the Lord will make a short work in the earth, he will speedily give forth his quick Spirit for the effecting of it. Is it not yet a very little while? See Is. 29 from the 9th to the 18th verse. We are not without hopes to see it so with us that we shall discern as clearly a power within us in all our worship as a word of truth without us to warrant it. This promise of the Spirit is the promise of the Father as Christ calls it, Acts 1.4, and it's honoured above many other promises. The great thing Christ so much commended to his disciples before his departure, is it not the Spirit, read John 14 and 16, the waiting for it must not be grievous to us. If we see no sign of rain after the sound of rain, let us send forth our prayers, as Elijah did his servant seven times and then, if the cloud be like a man's hand, let us not despise the day of small things, yea, let us diligently improve our present measure prizing the gift of God in any degree upon this account. Though we have just cause to be humbled for our unworthy frames in this work yet we are willing to improve our small measure, that we might provoke you to lift up holy hands to God in the heavens uncessantly untill the Spirit be poured out from on high and the wilderness become a fruitfull field, Is. 32.15f. Give us leave to cry unto you, Oh, awake, awake, it is high time to seek the Lord who is ready to rain down upon you with his holy, sweet and blessed Spirit. Having tasted a little of this honey we have been made to say, Oh, how are our eyes enlightened, our hearts united, enlarged, quickened and greatly comforted. In this work we have purposed (if God prevent not) at our meeting which is to be at Wells next spring, to spend four dayes, two of them seeking the Lord for the pouring out of the Spirit and those gifts which the work of God calls for. And that we may the better know the work of the saints at this day, we humbly pray you, beloved brethren, to wait on God as Daniel did concerning his people and the holy city, Dan. 9. Go, by fasting and prayer, enquiring diligently what special word of prophesie is now fulfilling upon the saints in this present condition, looking at the welfare of God's people in general, a work gloriously rewarded, as appeareth Dan. 9. from the 20 to the 23 verse and other eminent servants of the Lord, as Ps. 122.6, David, [I] Samuel 17.46, Hezekiah, Is. 37.20. If God raise up your spirits to send some help to the work of the Lord amongst us at our next meeting we shall gladly embrace it as an answer of prayers. Let us remember our relation as fellow members of one body though in distinct congregations. It would be our grief, dear brethren, for any of you to slight these things and to fall short of the glory we pursue. Now, that neither you nor we may miscarry in travelling for this glorious birth of the Spirit, we are perswaded it concerns all vigorously and with all our might to strive to purge ourselves and the Lord's house from the abominable pollutions of pride, formality, covetousness, vain-speaking, lightness of behaviour, with other like evils. Having God's promise that he will purely purge away the dross of Zion and take away all her tyn,

Is. 1.25. Thus with our eye to the Almighty to set it upon your spirits as in the sight of God and in his fear to consider the things here humbly presented to your view, we say no more but with our hearts and hands subscribe ourselves.

Subscribed by us in the name and by the appointment of the rest of the messengers met at Charde, 7 moneth, 28 day, 1655.
The meeting to begin the eighth day in the morning, second moneth 1656.

Your affectionate brethren

and servants in the Lord,
THOMAS COLLIER,
JOHN PENDARVES.²⁷

[From Wells, April 1656]

The very God of peace be with you filling your souls with joy and peace in believing.

Precious and dearly beloved in the Lord,

Our heart's desire and prayers to God for you is that you may grow in grace, and that you may flourish in the Lord's house as plants of his own right hand's planting and that you may bring forth much fruit, and that your fruit may remain. That you may be known by your glorious garments to be the followers of precious Jesus, holiness to the Lord being written on all your conversations, that gain-sayers may be ashamed and be made to confess that God is in you of a truth and to cry out with those that followed Baal that, the Lord he is God, I Kings 18.39. Dear brethren, the Lord by a good hand of his providence to the great refreshing of our souls, hath brought us together from far, and counted us worthy (who are most unworthy of ourselves) to be employed in the great affairs of Christ to be waiting for the promise of the Father, the powrings forth of the Spirit, to fit us for the world of our day and lead us on to the building of Zion and the great things that are to be done in these latter dayes. In this our seeking to him our God hath graciously owned us by his presence in the midst of us, carrying us up to the mount, giving us some precious views of glorious Canaan, raising our faith. Oh, we are even astonished to think what God is about to do: our joy and wondering doth scarce leave room for faith to describe what we expect. We have seen the Lord exalted and his train filling the temple. We have in some measure been embracing our dear Jesus who hath even made us sick with love and overcome with longings for that day of glory when we shall appear with him and be made like him and shall for ever be with him, not onely beholding but enjoying glory. Oh, if the crums be so sweet as to make us rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory what will it be when faith and hope shall stand aside and we sit down at table to enjoy the fulness of glory?

Dearly beloved, lift up your hearts for the day of glory is at hand, be patient and hope to the end. Let worldlings take the world but let us be with Christ our lord and king. We can say that a day in his courts is more precious then the whole world. He is the chiefest among ten thousand and he is altogether lovely. His waies are waies of pleasantness and all his paths are peace. We may say the half was not told us, his glory exceeds the fame that we heard of him, II Chron. 9.6. Oh, happy are those that are but permitted to wait at his gates, Cant. 7.13, Ps. 84.10. But oh, we are yet too low to set forth his glory. Let us rather believe and wonder and so sit silent, then speak to darken the glory of our beloved.

We have not time to tell you of the many precious tokens we have received of the Lord's owning us in this work.

After two dayes spent in fasting and prayer, we came to consider what promises we might be under at this day and by a precious hand of the Lord we came to consider that word, in Ps. 102 from verse 13 to 22 and some hours was spent in considering of it. The Lord made it of much use to us for raising and strengthening our faith about Zion's building. We desire you may consider if this be not the set time and, if it be, it much concerns us all to be up and be doing, to put our hands to the work, not onely in this nation, but also to pray that it may be carried on in other parts of the world as the Lord may open a way.

It is in our hearts to wait for the call of poor dispersed Israel after the flesh which is of great concernment in this building and to pray for the fall of Babylon which things also have been with some power set upon our hearts. And we do earnestly entreat you, both in congregations, families and closets, to make it your business to cry mightily to the Lord, even night and day, to give the Lord no rest, unless he makes Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth, Is. 62.7. Oh, we would beseech you to consider it perfectly, that word of the Lord hath been of good use to us in this work. In the latter daies ye shall consider it perfectly, Jer. 23.20. Be not discouraged if you meet with great oppositions from within and without, but know the work is the Lord's and our strength is in him, Ex. 15.13. Let us go up as David against Goliath in the name of the Lord, I Sam. 17.45. Be of good courage and the Lord shall strengthen your hearts, Ps. 27.14. Time prevents our enlarging. We hope that the relation you will receive from your messengers, together with this report of the good hand of the Lord with us, will encourage you to send your messengers to the next meeting to wait upon the Lord in the further prosecution of this great business. Doth not the Lord say to Sion, in this day fear not, let not thine hands be slack, Zeph. 3.16.

We have appointed the next meeting to be at Exon, the 6th day of the 8th moneth, being the second day of the week, where we have appointed to spend four dayes, two of them in waiting on the Lord in fasting and prayer for the Spirit. We shall adde onely the tenderness of our dear love to you in the bowels of our Saviour. We commit

you to the Lord to direct and guide you to his glory and remain your endeared brethren and fellow-servants in the kingdome and patience of Jesus Christ, waiting and longing for his appearing.

Subscribed in the name and by the appointment of the messengers of the severall churches.

From our general meeting the 11th day of the 2nd moneth, 1656²⁸.

THOMAS COLLIER.
JOHN PNDARVIS.
NATHANIEL STRANGE²⁹.

The messengers of the severall churches met at Exon the 6th day of the 8th moneth, 1656, unto the churches of Christ, etc. Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied.

Dearly beloved,

The sence of that duty that we owe to you in the Lord, together with the constraints of love and endearment on us to our God for his appearances among us since we came together, hath lead us forth chearfully unto this present undertaking to you-ward, knowing that you have an unquestionable interest in these our affairs and trusting that you will (through the assistance of the same Spirit) have and maintain a sympathie with us as being in the body and members in particular, and therefore have thought it necessary to let you understand that, however, our gathering together unto the feet of Christ hath not been without some small disappointment and straits. Yet, according to the inner man and upon a substantial ground of experience, we can comfortably and unanimously say, it was good for us and an unspeakable mercy to us that we have been here. And we could wish you all had been and may be as we are except these obstructions. Nay, touching them we have found, that out of the eater came meat to us and out of the strong sweetness. Of which honey in our hands we present you a little that you may also taste and see that the Lord is good.

May you therefore know that in order to the time to be spent in fasting and prayer, we found our spirits mutually and much affected with the sence of the ensuing particulars to be spread before the Lord.

First, that through the good hand of the Lord upon us our hearts might be deeply sensible of the non-improvement of that liberty and those large appearances of God with us in the like assemblings heretofore and of our not following on in the spirit and strength of such mercies in the waies of the Lord our God.

Secondly, that the Lord would keep up the faith of all his people in a constant expectation of the blessed Spirit of promise to be powred forth abundantly upon his children and that in the participation of its anointing we may be more enlightned in and enabled unto the works he hath for us to do in the earth.

Thirdly, that through it he would cause all his people more naturally and sensibly to lay to heart and sympathize with the state and condition of the whole Zion of God by being delivered from the spirit of this world and those carnal interests of earth and men whence so many minde their own things in the neglect of Christ's and one another's.

Fourthly, that if it be his pleasure he would appear amongst his saints guiding them in the light and power of truth into that union and sameness of minde and heart as may heal those sad breaches and divisions among them especially in their apprehensions about the works and duties of their generation.

Fifthly, that the Gospel may have a free course and be glorified everywhere unto the gathering in all the elect to the faith and obedience of Christ and to that end that much of the Spirit may be given to the churches to the preparing and thrusting forth labourers into his great harvest not onely among us gentiles but also if it be his pleasure to use us among that ancient people, the house of Abraham his friend.

Sixthly, that he would strengthen, guide and comfort the hearts of all his mourners in and for Zion that are in a right spirit waiting for its redemption and searching after and hastning unto the fulfilling of all the glorious promises and prophecies that relate to the downfall of all that riseth up against the work of Christ both in themselves and in the earth.

In the prosecution of which desires although in both daies we found not (and therefore have not to glory in) those constant heightnings of enlargement and rejoycings, as sometimes we have met withall in such dayes. Yet hath there been evidently seen and owned a sweet hand and presence of the Lord more and more humbling us and laying us low in the sence and cause of whole Zion as it now lyeth over the face of the earth. Touching which as the Lord hath in some sweet measure begotten in us a little fellowship with and travel about her estate so cannot we but reach forth this exhortation to you that you also lay her interest to heart in order whereunto we referre you to the enclosed, which we desire may be read and weighed together with this among you.

And for a further encouragement we are informed that the report of the life and union and the appearances of the Lord that have been found among you in this work hath provoked very many both churches and saints in the south and north parts of this nation, to assemble together and have fellowship with you in this cry the which may turn to you for a testimony and a strengthening to your hands hanging down and the feeble knees that notwithstanding any present deaths and disappointments we seem to see on the Lord's work yet he that shall come will come and will not tarry, nay, the Lord will hasten it in his time. This further the Lord hath been learning us while we have been at his feet, that the slow proceeds to our apprehension of this great work so evident in promise and so much in expectation both among

ourselves and in the earth is not for that the Lord is slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness but is patient to us-ward. He findeth that we are not yet so delivered from our earthly mindedness, coveteousness, pride, formality, coldness to the things of Christ etc., as doth become a people that look for those things and as would render us in a fit capacity to receive such glorious things as we have begged which therefore calls aloud upon us to search, reach and press after a thorow reformation, shaking ourselves and delivering ourselves from the yokes of bondage and Babylon that have been on our neck not onely in worship but also in all manner of conversation. Whereunto we desire that you would give all diligence and in order to it, among other things, that you would not slight or neglect the several messages of this nature that have been formerly sent unto you as the warm fruit and return of the many prayers powred out to the Lord not thinking that once reading them will answer the ends for which they have been sent unto you but that you may have due regard unto those things as far as you finde them agreeable with the minde of Christ, as being some special speakings of the Lord to the churches that are to be diligently attended unto by them that would be acquainted with the voice of the Lord in his temple.

And to the end that our communion in this and all the works of Christ that concern us in common may be held up and prosecuted we do agree by the will of God to meet together at Chard the thirteenth day of the second moneth following at evening to spend the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth daies as formerly we have done in prayer and conference, at which time and place we trust you will be forward to send your messengers that we may together be refreshed by the mutual faith both of them and us.

Onely³⁰ whereas at this time we have found that some of you have omitted the sending messengers to us, which we are far from interpreting to arise either from any disrelishing of the work or disrespect to us in it, we have thought good to assure you of our love and longings to you-ward in the Lord. And least, peradventure, any temptation may possibly seize upon you through which you may be discouraged or faint in your mindes we are bold with you to stir up your pure mindes by way of remembrance entreating you for the Lord's sake, that you give not way unto any sinkings in such a day as this least Satan get some advantage on us, for we are not ignorant of his enterprizes.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen.

Written by the appointment of the messengers as above and signed by us,

ALEXANDER ATKINS³¹
WILLIAM FACY³²
NATHANIEL STRANGE
JOHN OWEN³³

The brethren, messengers of the churches assembled at Bridgewater, to the churches of Christ, sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be saints. Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Holy and beloved brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling and waiters with us for the hope of the resurrection and of the glory that shall be revealed at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is the blessed hope of saints. Which glorious day the saints of old were earnestly looking for and hastning to. Oh, our precious and beloved brethren, that this glorious and blessed expectation might be much upon our hearts and yours, we your poor brethren, one with you in the faith of Jesus, and the spiritual war of saints, having experience in our own souls of the manifold temptations the Lord's people are exercised withall in this our day of the spiritual warfare and therefore, dear brethren, give us leave to be your remembrancers and to stir up your pure mindes in some few things that rest with weight upon our hearts. The first is that yet it is a day of temptation and rebuke, wherein Satan, that great enemy of souls, is not onely seeking to devour particular persons but churches. Nay, the whole truth of God he turneth into a lie and so many persons are deceived with it who received not the truth in the love of it. Wherefore we earnestly desire that that word, Jude 3, may be much upon the hearts of the Lord's people at this day, that is, earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints as also by faith and prayer to set a stop to Satan's devices. For some of us have some confidence that this devil that is now so much in deceiving souls in an angel-like appearance may be cast out by faith and prayer and that the time is very near at hand. Oh, therefore, stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves like men, and be strong in the Lord.

2. Our earnest desire for ourselves and you our brethren is that a deep sence of that sluggishness and luke-warmness of spirit that is so much seizing on the churches of Christ at this day may be much on our and your hearts and on the hearts of all the saints. Oh, that the God of grace would help all the churches of Christ to see from whom they are fallen that they may be zealous to repent and do their first works. Oh, brethren, how much doth that worldly spirit seize on saints and on professing people at this day, pride, passion, coveteousness and luke warmness. Oh, how much death hath seized upon the profession of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in the day when they have been professing to be in the high expectation of the pourings forth of the gifts of the Spirit. And is it not high time for us to remember and to consider with each other where we are and whither we are travelling and to stir up and provoke one another to love and to good works. And oh, that the power and the life of godliness, even the precious life of faith in the blood of the everlasting covenant might be more pressed after and lived in by all the saints.

Thirdly, our earnest desire is, that it may be much upon our

hearts to seek peace and unity one with another and to prefer the prosperity and peace of Zion above our chief joy, praying for her and doing whatever the Lord calls for at your hands. Oh, when will the time come that the zeal of the Lord's house shall even eat up the saints? When they will not forget Zion nor hold their peace for Zion's sake but be earnestly waiting for her perfection rejoicing when the daies of assemblings are and not forsaking the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is, but willing to do for Zion's welfare, both for building up and for gathering in her stones that yet lieth abroad in the rubbish undiscovered. Remember that it is the property of the servants of the Lord to take pleasure in Zion's dust and it is that which hath (we trust we may say through the grace of our Lord) rested with some weight upon our hearts in this our meeting. And we are confident that the Lord hath led us in a way which may (through his blessing) be to the glory of his name and the furtherance of this so good a work and that is, that the churches of Christ would be free to part with some of their ablest brethren and to send them forth into the Lord's work in the world. Oh, our dear brethren, let it not seem strange that your poor brethren in such a day as this should be remembrancers to you and provokers of you to so good a work as this is to shew your compassion to the sad estate of souls that lieth in darkness and in the shadow of death. God hath given the Gospel ministration as a means to guide their feet into the waies of peace and blessed shall those souls be whose hearts are enlarged to so good a work. Oh, do you not say within yourselves that ye cannot part with your gifted brethren. We know the weakness of the churches, and the great need of more gifts in Zion's building, yet why should not the churches deny themselves and spare a little of that which they have a clear interest in to the poor blinde world? And to encourage you in this work know,

First, that it is the churches' duty and it lieth upon them as their work in which they ought to be faithfull and of which they must give an account.

Secondly, the fields are white to harvest and the Lord calls for workmen in this our day to gather in the fruits into his garner.

Thirdly, be ye assured that if your hearts be enlarged in faithfulness to the Lord in the performance of this work you shall not suffer loss: the Lord will both preserve you and give forth encrease of gifts among you. Yea, doubtless, you may expect that the Lord will double his Spirit upon you. Your improvement of what God has given you will be the true way for the attaining of more and for the obtaining of that which the lord hath set your hearts so much waiting for, even the powrings forth of the blessed Spirit of promise³⁴. Oh, that the Lord would enlarge the hearts of the churches to exercise faith and so set their hearts and hands to it willingly and see if the Lord powre not down a blessing from heaven upon them a double portion of his Spirit. Dear brethren, we have waited together on the Lord in his our meeting the second, third and fourth daies of this week and we

can say through grace that the Lord hath not left us without a witness of his presence in carrying us through in peace in the debating such things as we presented before us—an account whereof you have with this epistle. Our desire is that the Lord may make it usefull to you and that both your and our hearts may be much with the Lord in the exaltation of his great and good name. Who hath been pleased to account such poor, weak, foolish and nothing creatures worthy (in his dear Son and our dear Lord in whom he hath made us accepted) to bear up his name in the world and to be exercised in his work. Let us be faithfull to him, therefore, and zealous for him that we may finish our course with joy and at the end of the race obtain that prize.

Thus we your poor brethren and your remembrancers do commend you to the Lord and to the word of his grace which is able to make you wise to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Desiring that you may finish your course with joy and obtain the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls, which that you may so run and so obtain the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen³⁵.

Written from Bridgewater the 6th day of the 9th moneth 1656 and signed by the appointment of the brethren there assembled by us.

THOMAS COLLIER.
NATHANIEL STRANGE.

The messengers from the assembly at Chard the 18th day of the second moneth 1657 to the severall churches sendeth greeting.

Precious brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, the earnest breathing of our souls are for your growth in grace and establishment in the truth as it is in Jesus in these shaking daies. Oh, this is the time of Jacob's trouble, Satan rageth, the world rejoiceth, and poor Zion's children, some are weeping and making bitter lamentation, others turning aside from the faith which was once delivered unto them, giving heed unto seducing spirits and doctrine of divels; others almost asleep in a worldly spirit, contenting themselves in the form without the power, professing they know God but in works deny him, zeal for God and love to him, his waies and people waxing cold, gray hairs are upon us here and there and, alas, few consider it. The Lord calls are upon us here and there and, behold, signs of joy and triumph. For these and such like things the Lord hath laid us much in the dust before him in this our meeting. Some of us, if not all, can cry with the prophet, Oh, that our heads were water and our eies a fountain of tears that we might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of our people. Oh, that we had in the wilderness a lodgingplace of wayfaringmen, that we may go and weep our fills for all the abominations we have found in Zion. And, oh, that we had not cause to put ourselves in the first rank in these things. Oh, the joy of our hearts is much ceased, the crown is fallen from our heads and woe unto us that we have sinned. And that which doth much aggravate the sin is the many favours and mercies the Lord hath bestowed upon his people,

and we as foolish and unwise people, have thus requited the Lord for his goodness; and, as we have been crying before the Lord, we are engaged to cry upon you to joyn with us in our lamentation of weeping and fasting and oh, let everyone lay it to heart, and begin at home, washing, making clean and putting away our abominations and cast out the stains. Let us cast off our pride and coveteousness and formality and that self-seeking and that lukewarm spirit and hypocrisy, yea, all our darling lusts, envy, strife and vanity of words, foolish jesting, backbitings, whispering and wasting of our precious time in vain about other men's matters, lightness of gesture and the like. Oh, let us put on the Lord Jesus Christ, walking humbly, righteously and godly in this present world with our conversation in heaven, let us return to our first love and do our first work.

As we desire in these things to begin at home that we may be good examples unto you so we beg your constant and faithfull prayers to the Lord that he would help us herein, and we shall pray and beseech you as you tender the honour of God, the peace and welfare of Zion and the good of your own souls, that you would lay these things to heart and reform. And also to make it your business to walk with God in your retired work between the Lord and your own souls. Be daily in self-examination, heartsearching, heavenly meditation, reading of the scripture, studying much the principles of godliness, of the being of God and his attributes, and of Christ the Son of God, of his divinity and humanity, of the worth and efficacie of his blood and of the Spirit, and the authority of the scripture, the grounds of our separation from the world, the resurrection of the body and the last judgement. Oh, look to yourselves, for many shall come in sheep's cloathing which shal privily bring in damnable heresies denying the Lord that bought them. Give yourselves much to prayer: in everything let your requests be made known to God. Remember that Isaac went out into the field to pray, Daniel upon his knees three times a day, our Lord went out into a mountain apart to pray and continued all night in prayer, Peter went up upon the house to pray with other the like instances. Take heed, let not worldly business thrust out heavenly duties but perform them in the first place. Be faithfull and diligent in your families towards children and servants and others committed to your charge as those that must give an account at the day of Christ. Teach and instruct them in the fear and admonition of the Lord with prayer and supplication for them and be you as good examples to them. Be diligent in your church relations and see that you love one another with a pure heart unfeignedly and let all things be done in love watching one over another, bearing one another's burthens. Let there be an esteeming of one another better than ourselves, keep to your assemblies and be punctual to your appointed hour, lest you rob God of what you vow unto him. And in your speakings, either in prayer or prophecy, take heed of vain repetition but study brevity and to compose your matter in few words and be forward as God doth bless you to communicate to the poor saints. Press much after spiritu-

ality and faith in the worship of God. Take heed of entertaining hard thoughts upon reports of each other or of telling the faults of each other behind their backs but keep close to that rule, Mat. 18.15f. Walk uprightly towards them that are without lest you lay a stumbling-block before them and so bring dishonour to the profession of the Gospel. Do good to all, and as you would that men should do to you so do to them. Let your lights so shine before men that they, seeing your good works, may glorifie God your Father. And now, let us not be weary of well-doing, for in due time we shall reap if we faint not, for it is your Father's good will to give you the kingdom. Oh, let the love of Christ constrain you and the riches of glory engage you in the following of these instructions. Look much unto the Lord for strength to perform them. Take heed you do not onely give us the bare reading and hearing of these things but so minde them as those that must give an account to the Lord at his appearing and, if you know these things, happy are ye if you do them. And bear with our plainness herein for we must be faithfull unto the Lord and to you lest we become guilty of the blood of your souls, and if you will not hear, our souls shall weep in secret for you where we shall go and power forth our complaints to the Father. The Lord set these things with power upon your hearts. Now, as to our present meeting, we have much to tell you of the Lord's following of us with many revivings in this time of sorrow. We did agree to spend the first two daies in waiting upon the Lord in prayer with fasting and did farther agree upon these following particulars which we beg may be of weight and power upon your hearts and that you may be often waiting on the Lord in solemn assemblies for the performance of them.

1. That the Lord would put his fear in our hearts and bless this our present meeting, raising our faith and keeping us spiritual in the work.
2. That he would perform his great promise in the powring forth of his Spirit upon his people to inlighten them in and fit them for his work in this our day, uniting and carrying them on with comfort and courage in his work.
3. To be made deeply sensible of the state of all the churches of that worldly spirit and of those divisions that are amongst them and of their proneness to turn aside from the truth as it is in Jesus Christ and to pray that the Lord would purge and build whole Zion.
4. That the Lord would call in his ancient people the seed of Abraham his friend.
5. That the Lord would thrust forth more labourers into his harvest and stand by those that are already engaged in the work, that they may be in power what they appear to be in word.
6. That the Lord would call and pluck forth his people out of Babylon and that he would raise Babylon according to his word and that he would maintain the liberty of his people and bring to nought the plots and devices of the enemies that are against it.

7. That the Lord would be pleased to help us rightly to improve these mercies we have already received.

The Lord hath given unto many of us faith in these things and we desire that you and we may be looking up and daily waiting in a constant expectation of the returns of those many petitions which are before the Lord in the hands of Christ. And surely, whilst we have been praying, the Lord hath been answering of us. And we hope you will receive a more full and particular account of your respective messengers of the precious hand of the Lord with us. We have been encouraged by the forwardness of the churches in sending their messengers and we hope you will be encouraged to continue your forwardness herein. We have appointed our next general meeting to be at Tiverton in Devonshire upon the fourteenth day of the moneth to which place and at which time we do earnestly intreat your sending messengers. We intend to stay the 15, 16, 17, and 18 daies and desire your cries at the Throne of Grace for us that the Lord would be pleased to be with us and bless our meeting. We shall leave these things to your serious consideration and commit you all to the Lord and the word of his grace desiring that you may be filled with the Spirit to the glory of God. We remain your brethren and servants in the kingdome and patience of our Lord Jesus Christ, waiting for his coming from heaven. Farewell.

Signed in the name and by the appointment of the messengers assembled, by us,

THOMAS COLLIER.
NATHANIEL STRANGE.

Thomas Collier to the churches of Christ in the county of Somerset and the counties near adjacent. Grace and peace be multiplied.

Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, your poor brother and unworthy servant and labourer in the Lord's vineyard, sendeth greeting. This being a day of temptation and of reproach and trouble, the enemy of saints and Zion's peace being more then ordinarily working to undermine the name, truth and people of God from the face of the earth were it possible. In the sight and sence of which I have found my heart somewhat enlarged in that care God and his people have laid upon me and reposed in me, though unfit for such a work as this is. Oh, who is sufficient for these things, none but the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Yet, in the sight and sence of Zion's sadness and that on many accounts as one whom the Lord hath intrusted in his great work, I cannot, I dare not, be silent. And that little sight that God hath given me in the behalf of Zion something the more enlarges my heart towards you, in which I shall endeavour to spread before you (as the Lord shall enable me) some few heart considerations very necessary for the Zion of God (by Zion I mean the Church).

First, what hath been the churches' mercies in this our day and

truly it hath been very great. Oh, the manifold mercies of God to his people, heart-affecting and heart-engaging mercies, such as the saints before us in many generations have not known. The breaking forth of the glorious light of the Gospel in opening the fountain of free grace and justification through faith in the blood of Jesus, a mystery in great measure hid from many generations past, but God hath now revealed it by his Spirit through the scriptures to the glory of his own name and joy of saints. Oh, prize this precious grace. Here is the way, the door of entering into the enjoyment of justification, peace and reconciliation with God by which souls may have free access to God as their Father. Oh, what manner of love is this!

Secondly, this is not all, likewise our Prophet hath taken away the veil from off his people's faces in giving the knowledge of his will in the practical part of the Gospel, in his ordinances and matters of worship. By vertue of which, through the working of his holy Spirit he hath called very many precious souls out of Babylon's wayes and worships and hath placed them together in families like a flock. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderfull works to the sons of men.

Thirdly, he hath added unto this a time of peace and liberty for the tryal of his people's love how they will improve all to his praise. For, indeed, to whomsoever much is given much will be required and that upon the account of duty as well as priviledge. But, oh, how hath the Lord's people requited God for his kindness? Hath he not cause to say, as sometimes he did to Israel, Is. 5.4, what could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done? And hath he not cause to complain likewise of us as sometime he did of them: do you thus requite the Lord? O, foolish people and unwise, Deut. 32.6, else what means the general coldness and lukewarmness of spirit that seems to come in like an armed man upon the poor churches of Christ, sinking down under a worldly spirit and even dying away from the life and power of godliness. Else what means the little delight in and meditating and speaking of the precious things of Jesus Christ. The little profiting by the ministry and means God hath set in his churches for their building and increasing. The coldness in coming unto the assemblies of the saints and little respect to the retaining and improving the word of life. The many divisions and contentions about small things which argueth that we are carnal and walk as men, yea, as worldly, as carnal men. That liberty that is given unto the lusts of the flesh, pride, passion, earthly-mindedness and the like. Oh, the little witnessing to that truth, Gal. 5.24, they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof, reckoning themselves indeed to be dead unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And withall what cause have you to be sensible of the manifold wiles of the great enemy, the prince of darkness who is so much transforming himself into an angel of light. Oh, the many ways that he is at work to bring about his design to overturn the poor churches of Jesus Christ not onely in working in these forementioned

evils amongst them but also to bring in damnable heresies even denying the onely Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. And, under pretence of holiness and light within, to undermining the whole truth of the Gospel, many following their pernicious waies in stirring up to despise dominion and to speak evil of dignities and government. Whereas Michael the archangel durst not bring a railing accusation against the worst government in the world but said, The Lord rebuke thee, Jude 8.9. Oh, how easily doth the enemy of saints prevail to turn them aside from the plain rules of the Gospel. Oh, what cause have we to take up a lamentation for these things and say, how doth the city sit solitary that was full of people? How is shee become a widow? The waies of Zion do mourn: all her beauty is departed. What cause have we to fear that the Lord is departing from Israel? For the joy of our heart is ceased and our song is turned in mourning and the glory of our head is fallen! Woe to us that we have sinned, how have we given occasion to the enemy to blaspheme and justly to take occasion to hate us? How justly have we provoked God to give us into the enemies' hands and wills, that the haters of God should rule over us and none layeth these things to heart. Oh, that Zion could weep sore for these things and because her friends have dealt treacherously with her and are become her enemies. But is the case desperate? Is there no hope in Israel? Yea, there is yet hope in Israel, there may be yet a remedy, if the decree be not gone forth. Oh, that the saints, that Zion would set about the work in good earnest. Who can tell but that the Lord may yet be gracious and he may yet have a blessing in store to poor down upon his poor Israel? Oh, then let this be your work, mourn, oh mourn, for Zion's abominations. Oh, proclaim a fast and weep, yea weep bitterly, and say, Lord, spare thy people, the remnant of thy heritage. And that you may do so, endeavour to get your hearts deeply affected with Zion's condition and everyone with his own sins. Who can say, I am clean? Give over looking after others and quarrelling with and speaking against those that are without. Will not God judge them? Have we not been looking so much after the miscarriages of others till the enemy is come up among us as a flood? Oh, that we could yet prevail with the Lord that his Spirit might lift up his standard against him.

Secondly, let it be everyone's care in this matter, not onely to make diligent search after his own iniquity, that everyone may lie low in a true sight and sence of his own sin but also to turn from all iniquity and to turn to the Lord our God. Oh, Israel, turn to the Lord thy God for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity, take with thee words and turn to the Lord your God, and say unto him, Take away all our iniquity and receive us graciously. Oh, put away your iniquity from between your breasts. Say unto them, get you hence. Say to your pride and vanity, to your passion and peevishness of spirit, say to your worldyness and covetousness, say to your lukewarmness and want of love to God and zeal for him, and say to your love to this world, envy, malice and evill speaking, get you hence, what have we to do any more

with these idols? Acknowledge your iniquities and put away your abominations and turn, O backsliding children, and the Lord will be gracious. For who is a God like unto our God that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his people? He retaineth not his anger for ever because he delighteth in mercy.

Thirdly, be much in the exercise of faith, in the improvement of former and present mercies. And that it may be so, call to remembrance former lovingkindness, remembering the lovingkindness of the Lord, the right hand mercies of the most high, so that you may get your hearts much affected with love to God, one towards another and towards all men. That so, your hearts being seasoned with grace, you may appear for God and his cause in an evill time. Oh, remember that it is usual for the Lord's people to be bettered by evill times. Daies of apostacy and turning from the faith have proved advantages to the truly faithfull, Ps. 119.126ff. When others made void the law, David loved it so much the more and hated every false way. Mal. 3.16, when others thought and said it is in vain to serve the Lord, then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard. Oh, my dear and precious ones, my joy, my crown of rejoycing, if you stand fast, let it be your special care with purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord and not unto the world. Contend earnestly, in the meek spirit of Jesus, for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. Building up yourselves and one another in the most holy faith, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. Let it be your care, yea, great care, to endeavour to get your hearts affected with these things and seasoned with grace from on high, living by faith in the unchangeable covenant of grace, seasoned with the fear of the Lord and the dread of his glorious name with love to him above all and zeal for him. Oh, it is good alwaies to be zealously affected in a good thing! If these things be in you and abound, they make you that you should not be barren or unfruitfull in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I trust that I may say truly that God did set some of these things with weight upon the hearts of the brethren at Chard, of which I have some faith to believe, that the churches of Christ shall reap some advantage and that not onely of the many requests put up to God on their behalf but I hope that the same fire of love to God and zeal for him, the same sence of the present state of the churches doth abide upon the hearts of the brethren, and will be as a fire within them, breaking forth to the begetting and enlarging light and life in your souls to the Lord. My expectation of this so desirable a mercy hath drawn from me these lines at present being willing to help forward so good a work for God in your souls. Oh, take it in good part as a might [mite] flowing from a heart in love towards you and bleeding in the sence of Zion's sorrowes. Or, at least, that which might cause her to mourn and an arm stretched out after and willing to recover her out of her sinking and dying estate. Oh, that the Lord would sanctifie these lines to you and sweeten your souls to himself

by it, that the end for which they were written to you may powerfully be accomplished in you which shall be the prayers of your poor brother who is waiting for the consolation of Israel and much needs and begs your daily prayers for him at the throne of grace. Amongst the rest of Zion's sons, I can say, I trust through grace that you are in my heart to live and die with you and, if you stand fast, I live. I have written these things unto you, not as one that hath dominion over your faith but as a poor helper of your joy, that if by any means I might fulfil my ministry and give account with joy in faithfulness to the Lord and your souls have I written this. Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father through our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Written from the general assembly at Charde the 18th day of the 2nd moneth 1657.

To all the churches of Jesus Christ, called to be saints through the immortal seed which dwelleth in you and shall be with you for ever. Grace be with you, and peace from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dearly beloved brethren,

We hope it is on our hearts to live and die with you as those that are joynd to the Lord and each to other by the will of God, members of that one body, built up through that one everlasting Spirit, a holy tabernacle for the living God. Neither is it the least part of our joy to be serviceable unto you who are our joy and the delight of our dear Jesus. Surely we have been made in much sense to say to the Lord, our goodness extends not unto thee, but if as a few poor worms, we may be usefull to thy excellent ones to help them on to the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls, it shall be enough unto us. And for this we would labour night and day, warning everyone of you, striving with you and together with you with God for you, that every one of you may be presented perfect in Christ Jesus. This design and honest desire of our souls hath brought us together from far to sit before the Lord in this place where we have been taking upon us to speak to God though dust and ashes. Yea, we have been encouraged to spread before your Father and our Father the several weights that lie upon you and us. Wherein we have not been without hope the Father hath not taken advantage through our confessions to condemn us in his presence, or to upbraid us but hath smiled upon us notwithstanding. And though we have been ready to cry out, we are cut off from before thine eyes, yet hath he heard the voice of our supplication. And it is no small addition to our comfort, while we think of it, that while we carried the yokes and burdens of whole Sion, and have been as the souls under the altar, crying, How long Lord, holy and true, why doth this chariot wheel make so long tarrying? The Lord hath lightned us while we have thus looked unto him. Neither shall we be ashamed to say to you, Rejoyce, oh daughter of Sion, behold your king, he

cometh in righteousness and in peace, to give an expected end. We have told our Father and your Father that we could not be satisfied with life for ourselves, peace for ourselves, white robes for ourselves, unless Sion also might be made partaker of the salvation of God. And in this we have had some faith and some revivings have attended our souls in the hope of his mercy. And now, as we have been faithfull for you to God, so we would be faithfull for God to you. We have been arraigning the abominations of Sion before the bar of the Most High. We have been crying for justice from the throne upon every sin, for strength and light to purge out every persisting impenitent sinner, as enemies and traytors to the crown and dignity of our Lord Jesus. More particularly, we have been spreading out our hands before the Most High and have made confession of those reigning abominations in our own souls and in the churches, that light spirit, living short of the true sight and sence of God's majesty in his churches and among his saints from whence proceeds that vanity and carelessness which doth so much attend them. We have bewailed that wretched worldly spirit that plucks down the saints from their excellency and leaves such blackness upon them which renders them so uncomely in the eyes of men. We have bewailed that coldness and deadness that is upon ourselves and upon the churches. That formality in holy duties, that indifferency, that Laodicean spirit that is fallen upon us, while we have been crying, Let him make speed and hasten his work that we may see it, let the counsel of the Lord come, that we may know it. And all this while [we] have been drawing iniquity with the cords of vanity, having been in a great measure as without the sence of the work, so without the true travail of soul which this work should put us into. For these things our souls have been bowed down. And some have been made to cry out, Oh, that our heads were a fountain and our eyes were as rivers of tears that we might weep for the iniquity of the daughters of Sion. Behold, for this our souls have been in distress, our bowels have been troubled, our hearts have been turned within us. We have taken off our ornaments, we have been breaking and bleeding and have been crying out for more sighs, because the crown is fallen from Sion's head by reason of her iniquity. We have been bewailing personal iniquity, congregational iniquity, national iniquity, family iniquity, closet iniquity. We have by search found poor Sion as it were without soundness from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot full of bruises and putrified sores. And now we call upon you that tremble at the word of God to come unto us. Take heed, oh take heed, of being unsensible of poor Jacob's trouble. Take heed of stretching yourselves on your beds of ivory, of drinking your wine in bowls, in chanting at the sound of the viol, anointing yourselves with the chief spices and forget that Joseph is in affliction; your poor nation, your poor families, your poor churches, your own poor souls are in distress. Heaven and earth seems to frown, trouble within and terrour without. These things are come upon thee and who shall comfort thee? Oh come down, sit in the dust, call your solemn assemb-

lies, proclaim fasts, and weep bitterly before the Lord for all your abominations. You have but, as it were, played with God. You have not trembled in his presence. You have been wanton before him, having been without the terrour of his majesty, therefore you have confessed and have delighted to word it out with the Lord. But, alas, you have no sooner gone away but you have forgot what manner of men and women you were and thought no more on your prayers. Oh, how often have you mocked God but, oh, be not deceived, God will not be mocked. It appears already how God takes it at your hands, and now once more you have sent us hither and once more our Father hath smiled upon us for we have begged him to save us yet this once more and truly we tremble. If it should be as at other times what will the Lord do in the end thereof? The hope that is in Israel concerning this thing lies in your putting from you that accursed thing. Oh now, if you would pursue this pride, this worldliness, this coldness and slothfulness, your personal neglects, your family neglects, the Lord might yet be intreated to return and have mercy upon us that we might be healed. Oh, that now these things might be laid to heart! How doth the world as a canker eat out your affections to the Lord Jesus, eat out your time, your strength, your zeal. While you have been asleep in the lap of this Dalilah, your locks have been cut off and you are but as other men that whoever beholds you may say, what singular thing do ye? Now, then, lay to heart these crying abominations of Sion: the general complaint in almost all the epistles, the world is too beautifull. Satan hath shewed them the kingdomes of the earth and this hath bewitched them and their mindes are much, oh too much, alienated from the Lord. Oh, brethren, the lot is fallen upon this as a troubler of Israel. And that for which you have fallen before your enemies, bring it out now, and stone it before the Lord. Yea, raise up such a heap upon it as it may never appear more, that God may make this valley of Achor a door of hope. This iniquity hath been apparently written upon your foreheads, witness your remissness in meetings, your neglect of the poor saints and of the ministers of Christ whose daily complaints and addresses are living monuments of this reigning abomination; your cruelty to servants, children, exacting all their labours but take no time to counsel them, instruct them, to shew them that are without Christ that miserable estate wherein they are, that their souls may be the better for you and they bound to bless God on your behalf. And to commune in the Lord with them that are in Christ, that their souls might be comforted, edified, and encouraged to walk with God in their places.

This hath made professors' families so dry, useless, and unprofitable, saints' communion so little tending to edification. This sin eats out all that divine sweetness of regenerating and sanctifying grace. We have mourned in that we have had so great a hand in this trespass in not bearing so faithfull a testimony against it in our ministry. But slavish fear of being accounted selfish or the like hath stopt our mouth untill the mouth of this iniquity hath almost devoured the poor

churches of Christ. Oh, we would not consult with this flesh any longer but in our places and desire by these to provoke all the ministring brethren everywhere also to be faithfull to the Lord and their poor churches, to bear a faithfull testimony against every evil way that is hated and abhored of God, what censure soever they may meet withall from men. That of slothfulness, carelessness, another reigning evil, from these two as the root, springs many other dangerous hurtfull practices, the great hindrances of our work in our families, the churches and our own souls. And because they are evils rooted deeply in the heart it is hard to get them out. And we have by experience found how well they are able to bear with testimony against them, with reproofs and counsels and yet lie close. They are sermon-proof and epistle-proof. So strong that they have wrested all weapons out of the hands of saints and ministers that have been formed against them. Now we desire we may no longer rest in a testimony of words but proceed to take some effectual course that sin or sinners may be purged out of the house of God. In order to this we desire the churches that they would set some day or dayes apart wherein they may bewail these iniquities and pollutions of Sion before the Lord and to bring their souls into a through [*sic*] sence of them also. That the ministring brethren would, without respect of persons, bear their constant testimony in their ministry and from house to house night and day, warning everyone to flee from those abominations. That at least they may deliver themselves from the blood of souls having declared to them the whole counsel of God. And if still it be persisted in and plain proofs of it in the waies and works of the professors of Christ, we leave it as the churches' special duty to pursue it by dealing with it untill sin or sinner be purged away. We shall leave it to the Lord and those whom the Lord hath intrusted with his oracles to be further opening and alledging those things whose words we desire may be heeded.

Another evil we had thought to have spread before you for want of opportunity we shall now omit yet desire you may lay it to heart. Look over again our former epistles and that from Chard. We have laboured in vain: that which hath been brought forth hath been to so little purpose. And now, brethren, our hope is in your obedience in those things and we hope we shall rejoyce in you. Nay, we do rejoyce in our hope of you. In this hope we commit you to the Lord and to the word of his grace who is able to build you up and to give you an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified. We remain.

We have appointed our next meeting at Dorchester and desire the churches to send their messengers to be there the 2d day (at night) of the 2d week of the 3d month (*vul.*) May 1658.

From the meeting of the messengers of the churches in Tiverton, this 18th day of the 7th moneth 1657. Signed by us, in their names, and by their appointment,

Yours dearly to love in and ready to serve you for Christ Jesus,
THOMAS COLLIER,³⁶ NATHANIEL STRANGE, THOMAS GLASSE.³⁷

An account of the meeting at Dorchester, May 1658³⁸

John Cooke etc., to Sir John Copleston.

Honorable,

In pursuance of your instructions we speeded to Dorchester where we came on Monday night about eight at night delaying the time until then, because we would avoid observation in our coming and in order to the concealment of ourselves left our swords at Barport. Suddenly after our coming to Dorchester we delivered your honour's letter to Mr Bushrode, who thereupon readily engaged his best assistance then acquainting us that some of the Annabaptists had been with the mayor, himself and major Strange³⁹ being present and desired to have one of the churches to meete in which, after some consideration and debate, hee refused to grante them. One Tuesday morning the Annabaptists mett in a place of their owne where we had a trusty and fitt agent attendinge them, thereby to gett knowledge of the number and quality of the persons assembled, as also what they did, who acquainted us that the wholl forenoone was spent in receivinge and readinge certaine letters, (by them styled epistles) which were sent by the respective churches whose messengers there mett. Whereof there were many. The inscription of all which epistles was this, viz. An epistle from the church of Christ in to the messengers of the severall churches of Christ who are now assembled att a generall meetinge in Dorchester. The subject matter of most of them (besides salutations) was to inquire the estate of the other churches and to give an accounte of their owne, the motive to both beinge the consideration of the season, which they assert to be a time of apostasy and persecution, wherein the sufferings of Syon were. There subscription was under such terms: subscribed by your fellow-members and sufferers in the body of Christ. The regilator of this affair was one Collier a Clarke, all the while attendinge and recordinge the said epistles. The afternoon was spent in prayer and such kinde of preachinge as they customarily use wherein there were eight employed that little time. In there prayer all of them much complained of the bonds and sufferings of the saints some callinge it the time of Syon's affliction wherein those that have been glorious lights on the right hand and left hand are shutt up in bonds, vehemently praying that, in order to their deliverance, God would put a hooke into the nostrills of and destroy him who is enemy of God and his people. In both these meetings there were about three hundred persons. The same afternoone came captain Kiffin,⁴⁰ capitaine Deane,⁴¹ one of the treasurers at warr, Mr Warren,⁴² Mr Harrison⁴³ and six more from London to attend this meetinge.

Wednesday in the forenoone the like or a greater number mett in the same place againe and after prayer, performed by capitaine Kiffin, many epistles (so called) were presented and read under the same inscription and of like substance with those of the day before. The

remainder of the time then as also the afternoone, was spent in answering certain questions, viz,

1. Whither one of these church-members, beinge poore, might lawfully seeke after and receive reliefe from the world?
2. Whither a church-member might lawfully marry with an unbeliever?
3. Whither a teacher might preache and presse such truthes (not being fundamental) on his hearers as appearinge soe to him are yet not generally received for such by the churches in generall?
4. What is to be understood by anointinge with oyle, mentioned in the epistle of James etc., whither it were materiall oyle they anointed with and whither such unction be now in use?
5. Whither laying on of hands bee now requissitt to be used?

The debate about these questions was very greate and the answers at last resolved soe empty as not worth recitinge. All that was donn besides was the perusal of a little manuscript they had got printed, intituled Certaine queries and answers proposed and answered att fower generall meetings, two whereof were to bee sent to each church who sent there messengers thither, the contents whereof I could not understand. That afternoone one John Cary,⁴⁴ capitaine Vernon and adjutant Allen⁴⁵ came to towne. Att night there was a private meetinge in the George, where many of the principple ones were and amongst other things there debated, a great contest arise aboute there joyninge with the fifth monarchy men, but for that time not concluded by reason of capitaine Kiffin's opposinge itt.

Thursday morninge a little after eight of the clocke, there mett att the George Inn all the grandees with the pastors and teachers only where (the doore beinge close shutt and all resort of others denied) untill two in the afternoone, they sate close in debate but whither about the fifth monarchy business, (broke off the night before) or what else, could not learne. All the day their publike meetinge in the accustomed place was carried on and managed in prayinge and speakinge as before, butt att eveninge another close meetinge was held; to what purpose also unknowne.

Friday morninge they mett againe in the accustomed place, the forenoone in prayer. In the close of there meeting it was published that the messengers of the churches were desired to meete att the same chamber they mett in the night before, to receive an accounte of the result of the generall meetinge to communicate to the severall churches from whome they came and to receive information of the day and place appointed for the next generall meetinge but what their conclusions were on the day and place assigned for the next meetinge wee could not learne.

This donne the company dispersed to there respective homes.
We are your Honour's and the commonwealth's
faithfull and most humble servants,

JOHN COOKE
DANIEL CARY
GEORGE FORDE.

15 May 1658.

The principall persons at this meetinge were these under:

Mr John Cary
 Adjutant Allen
 Captaine Vernon
 Captaine Deane, one of the treasurers at warr. London
 Captaine Kiffin
 Mr Warren
 Mr Harrison
 Mr Collier of Wells
 Mr Strange of Barnestaple
 Mr Sheires of Plymouth⁴⁶
 Mr Mercer of Bridgewater
 Mr Glasse of Bovey Tracy⁴⁷
 Mr Hitch of Lime⁴⁸.

The names of any other we could not get.

*The General Meeting at Wells, May 1659.*⁴⁹

The messengers to the severall churches to whome they belong sendeth greeting in the Lord, let us not be wary of well doing for in due season wee shall reape if wee fainte not.

Precious and deerly beloved in the Lord,

Our heart's desire and prayer to God is that both you, your churches and wee your messengers may bee awakened, strengthened, established, enlightened and preserved faythfull to the death and then wee shall receive the crowne of life. Notwithstanding the many epistles you have received from former meetings and the little successe they have been attended with which, to our grieve, wee have cause to mention. Yet wee judge ourselves bound in duty both toward the name of the Lord and your poore soules to adde this one epistle more—and the Lord grant that it may not only bee acceptable to you but also successfull among you. Though wee finde much cause of filling our luynes with complaints yet wee would not forget the kindnesse of the Lord both to you and us. And, first, that hee should make choyce of such unworthy ones and give his Sonne to dye for us and send forth his Spirrite in the Gospell of peace to call us from darknesse. Yea, when wee were running to the pit of missery to bring us backe and put us among his children, setting us together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, giving us the everlasting hope of everlasting glory. Yea, such things that eye hath not seene nor eare heard nor entered into the heart of man so wee may cry out with David, Oh, how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that feare thee. May not our hearts leape for joye in the thoughts of this glory and bee much to the admiring the distinguishing grace of God that wee shaould be chosen, others left. We have also cause to take notice of the love of God and his power in keeping us to beare his name and owne his truth where so many are lost in the dark above and many turned from the precious wayes of God.

And yet, notwithstanding the enemyes endeavours to cast fire in the sanctuary, yet the Lord hath preserved the churches in a good measure in peace and unity and, though our gifts are few and weake, our opposers many and strong who, with all their skill, might have endeavoured to blocke up our way, casting aspersions upon it, and also very much rages opposing, yet the Lord hath given us and doth continue to us many open dores in severall parts for the teaching of the Gospell to the world which hath been attended, through the blessing of the Lord, with good suckcesses in that great worke of conversion and, further, in taking notice of our mercys wee should not forget this, that, although by meanes of darknesse there is found much difference amongst us in our apprehensions about those things which relate to the worke and those of the lat[t]er day the knowledge of which causing [sic] our adversaries to watch for our ruine, yet the Lord's pleasure in such mercy [is] to performe love and tendernesse amongst us so that wee are still engaged judging it our duty [to keep] our communion together in the church where the Lord hath set us. Only some few members of one church (which to our grieve wee heare) have separated upon that account. These things are matters of joye and prayse unto the Lord in the churches which wee desire may bee accomplished. And nowe wee would acquaint you with our matters of complaint. And, first, the little returnes that are made to the Lord under all these favours that wee are made partakers of but which [by] Hessekiah wee may bee reproved. Wee meane, both messengers and churches, that wee have not rendered againe according to the benefits done unto us, living too little under the sense of those great favours that wee have beene and still are made partakers of.

(2) Wee have cause moreover [to lament] the little suckcesse that all our endeavours have had, both prayers, epistles and other meanes. But still the opening of the state of the churches presents us with most or all the same things that wee have endeavoured reformation of: that worldly spirite of deadnesse and coldnesse, those church and family neglects are still found amongst us so that we have grounds to feare that there is to[o] much a seting downe in beare complainings, a confessing without forsakeing and what to say further then what hath beene said in our former epistles wee knowe not. Only with the prophit Jeremiah, if you will not heare our soules shall weepe in secret for you. Wee entreat you, take a view of the epistle from Tiverton and, if you expect mercy by the Lord's returning, up and bee doing in the worke of reformation, both in your own soules and in the churches and in your families, not only a casting away but, with Ephraim, to say, What have I to do any more with idols? And this wee say and with the apostles testify in the Lord that henceforth yee walke not as the gentiles walked in the vanity of their wishes but that wee put off the old man which is corrupt and that wee put on the new man which after God is created in righteousnesse and true holinesse.

(3) Wee have cause to complaine of those neglects that wee found in many churches about the seting of officers according to the prima-



tive paterne though now, it appeares not to bee for want of gifts amongst several of them. Through this neglect the affaires of the house of God are much neglected and dores opened for the enemy to scofe at us and make breaches upon us and the hands of our gifted brethren much weakned in the Lord's worke: severall of them being laid open to an indifferent and careles frame of spirite. The last thing we shall present as mater of complaints is the great neglect that is found in many of such a searching into and pressing after the knowledge of the minde of the Lord in the scriptures about the concernment of the church in the later dayes, by reason of which neglect darknes is much upon us. These matters of complaint wee desire may bee fervently weighed and laid to heart amongst the churches and oh that they may not only bee complained of but utterly forsaken by those that are guilty of them. And, further, wee desire in love and tendernes to advise and exhort that ye may bee much found waiting upon God in faith for his Spirite to bee powred downe upon yourselves see [*sic*] upon whole Syon and that you presse after love and unity among yourselves. Oh, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently striveinge much to bee peacemakers for they are blessed, remembering that the wisdom that is from above is not only pure but peaceable, take heed of pressing rash judgment one upon another because you have not all the same measure of light.

Consider that wee all know but in parte and if that parte bee more to one in some trueths it may bee more to another in other trueths. Therefore as everyone hath received so let him walke as a faythfull steward of that grace. Let us not fall out by the way because wee are brethren but let all our things bee done with, and all our differences bee mannaged in, a spirit of love simply enquireing of the glory of God and the good of each other's soules. And let us take heed least in oposing the things wee knowe not wee are found noe lesse then fighters against God. Let us also take heed that wee do not abuse any light that God hath given us indeavouring to unchurch, if not unsaint, those that have not received the same measure of light which is by our separation from them. As also that wee do not take up nor impose darknes instead of light to the dishonour of God and the breach of the churches. Also wee desire that you as churches may as much as in you lyeth, presse after and walke up to the primative patterne not only in matter but also in manner of government and discipline with respect to the settlement of elders and deacons which, through the blessing of the Lord, may bee much to his glory and the churches' good. Wee further desire that the concernment of poore friendes lying in their blood (among whome you were in tymes past) may bee much upon your hearts before the Lord and that, both at home and abroad, you may much endeavour their conversion. And it may bee a very acceptable service to the Lord if you may bee sendinge forth the joyfull sound into darke partes remote from you. Wee also desire that both in your families and abroad in the world you may walke soberly, faythfully, dealing justly to the prayse

of him who hath called you to his kingdome and glory. Though wee might present much more unto you wee shall desire to present it to the Lord for you, praying that our labours may not only bee accepted by you but also may bee very usefull amongst you to the Lord's glory and your good. Wee commit you to the Lord and the word of his grace and remaine,

Signed in the name and by the appoyntment of the messengers assembled at Wells, the 13th day of the 3rd month 1659.

your brethren and servants in the Lord that truly desire both your present and eterna'll welfare.

THOMAS COLLIER.
NATHANIEL STRANGE.

The next meeting is appoynted to bee at Bridgwater the 11th of the 8th month 1659.

Severall queryes and answers at the generall meeting at Wells, 13th day of the 3rd month 1659.

Query 1. Whether it bee lawfull for any member or members to forbare the practice of any ordinance of Christ when the church is waiting upon the Lord therein if they bee in a capacity for the practisinge thereof.

Answer: the word, capacity, in the question being understood of ability of body or not being lawfully called from home or not under dealing by the church, wee answer that it is the duty of every member to keepe his place in the church in the performance of all the ordinances of Christ. Heb. 10.25, Acts 2.42, Mat. 26.27,28.20, I. Cor. 11.2,14.37. If so then—

Query 2. Whether there bee any further duty lying upon the church toward such a member then to admonish them to their duty.

Answer: the question depending upon the former and being understood as explained in the answer. Wee judge the church ought to deal with such a person according to the rules of Christ, as the nature of the sinne shall bee found, in all faythfulnesse and tendernes.

Query 3. Whether or noe it bee a duty at all tymes to seeke the face of God by prayer in the church before the word preached?

Answer: wee judge that prayer is a duty to bee performed in the church in the caring on of the ordinance of Christ, Eph. 6.18, Prov. 3.6, Acts 2.47. Wee also judge it necessary at all tymes to bee sollemly performed before entering upon either preaching or prophesying in the church, Acts 6.4, Phil. 4.6, I Tim. 2.1. Wee would not be understood by this to obstruct a word of preparation.

Query 4. Whether a member leaving his place in the church in the ordinance of breaking bread upon the account of his not seing of interest in Christ and, after a 12 month waiting, being then withdrawnc

from by the church for that neglect the church may receive him againe without repentance?

Answer: Wee judge that though a member were under the want of sight of interest in Christ yet it was sin in that member to omit the ordinance which Christ hath appoynted in his church and wee judge hee ought to be sensible of his neglect of duty yet wee desire the church may use much tendernes toward such a member in his reception. Heb. 10.23, Is. 50.10, Gal. 6.12.

Query 5. What is the power that a church doth invest him with whom they call to the office of an elder?

Answer: the resolution of this question is referred to a former answer given to a question much of like nature proposed at the fifth generall meeting at Charde.

Query 6. Whether the answers of the brethren at the fift generall meeting concerning the sending forth of the Gospell ministry to the world were a hasty conclusion or whether it bee the churches' neglect in not sending?

Answer: it was then the sense of the assembly and still is that according to the capacity that the churches are in they ought to send there ministers to preach the Gospell to the world.

Question 7. Whether that life of which the saints have in them by faith is God's nature in respect of offence of whether it bee [the] dwelling of his influence that by fayth is seene to bee in them.

Answer: that the Spirite of Christ is in his people is without doubt according to the scriptures. But, to bee curious inquiring after the manner how it is, wee judge it not to bee the worke of Christians, it being a height and depth (as wee apprehend) unsearchably. What it's in parte we apprehend to bee in the gifts, operation and fruits of the Spirite, Ps. 68.18, Gal. 5.22. But what further wee must leave, therefore wee desire the brethren concerned in this query to bee moderate and not overwise in their owne understandings to impose their apprehensions upon each other but to keepe to the scriptures' language even the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Question 8. Whether it bee lawfull for a church of Christ to hold communion with soldiers as they stand servants to the present power of this nation?

Answer: if they be only soldiers under the power in being and the protector and the church having nothing more to charge them with then meerly standing in the army wee judge it not lawfull for the church to deny them communion. Luke 3.14, Acts 10.12,33 with the whole chapter. This was assented unto by all except one who was contrary minded and 7 or 8 that doubted. If so then—

Question 9. Whether it bee sinfull for members to separate from churches that have bene or at present are in such a practice?

Answer: wee answer that it is sinfull for members to separate from churches that have bene, or at present are, in such a practice. 5 brethren doubted as to this answer.

Question 10. How farre it's warrantable for ministring brethren

or other members to have fellowship guilty of such separation and under the admonition of the church.

Answer: in noe other way but in admonishing them or some other lawfull meanes tending to the reclayming of them.

From the messengers of the severall churches assembled at Bridgwater on the 16, 17 dayes of the 3rd month to the church of Christ assembled in Lyme.⁵⁰

Deerly beloved in our king, priest and prophitt Jesus Christ, grace, mercy and peace bee multiplyed unto you in his name through his eternall Spirit from the invissible God the Father of the faythfull.

Deere brethren, wee fulfil a parte of our duty to you-wards to give you a breefe account of the effect of our meeting: which is, being all assembled, there did appeare a great measure of the Spirit of supplication presented to the throne of grace with much fayth and fervency in the expectation of the gracious presence of the Lord to bee made manifest amongst us to guide us in respect of what did or might lye before us. And, after some tyme had been spent in way of wayting on the Lord, wee were then exercised in a way of debate concerning the cheife end of our meeting, namely, the more orderly ordaining⁵¹ of brother Thomas Collyer for the performance of that worke that hee hath bene a long tyme exercised in, namely, in gathering and confirming the church. And, first, in our debate there was a generall conclusion that an orderly ordination of ministry in the Church of Christ is an ordinance of Christ now in force. But, in the manner of ordination by the laying on of hands, much debate was spent in differences; and herein there was not a full consent. These messengers differed: from Abington, brother Pendarvis with another brother from that church; from Lyme, brother Goodman; from Killmenton, brother Hitt and brother Parsons; in Bridgwater, brother Crabbe and brother Elliot; from Hach, brother Parsons; in Broote,⁵² brother Wells; from Bristol, brother Heynam. These, though scrupling, yet not opposed the rest of the brethren. They having fayth to act in it who were unanimously caried on this enquireing not only how their judgments but affections also were drawne forth to the thing. They briefly and fully, one by one, with much fayth concluded it there duty to procede in a further and more orderly ordaining and appoyntinge our deerly beloved brother Thomas Collicer in the name of our Lord Jesus and of his churches who were one in it, to the worke of the ministrey to the worlde and in the churches which was performed by two brethren of Luppitt who were formerly ordained and now called thereunto as their duty being desired by the rest of their brethren which caused joye on [to?] us at present who are confident that particular churches will reape the frute thereof in due tyme to the prayse of God.

Wherefore, deere brethren, wee desire that our service may bee accepted of you his saints for whose sake wee have devoted ourselves

hereunto, wee desiring your growth in the grace of and conformity to the Lord Jesus, wee rest subscribing ourselves your servants in the Lord and in the ways of his holinesse.

It is desired by this assembly:

1. That brethren be sent from the respective churches to Taunton the 18, 19, 20 dayes of the 7th month next.
2. To bring with them a breefe narrative of the fayth and order of every church to whome they belong.
3. Such questions as are of weight.
4. Their bounty to a poore brother of Bridgwater whose great necessity was layd open before us.
5. That the brethren to order their occasions beforehand as not to bee straytned in tyme when meete.
6. 2 things were presented by brother Collier to be remembered:
 1. By way of request that wee remember him to the Lord in the churches. Eph. 6.18f., Ro. 15.30f.
 2. By way of exhortation: that wee walke worthy of our high calling. Eph. 4.1ff.

Signed with the consent of the assembly,

By ROBERT ADDRIDGE,⁵³ TOBY WELLS.⁵⁴

FOOTNOTES.

¹ For Collier see 'Thomas Collier and Gangraena Edwards', *B.Q.*, XXIV, 107 n.l.

² G. F. Nuttall, 'The Baptist Western Association 1653-1658', *J.E.H.*, XI, 1960.

³ At this point the Lyme Churchbook, 26, adds: 'in order to the practice of which duty, upon enquiry what churches have brethren fitted to be parted withall for this worke, wee offer our understanding that these may bee this supply: from the church of Bradley 1; from Bridgwater and Taunton 1; Riden and Parret 1; Luppit 1; Tiverton 1; Plymouth 1. And the course most conveniently to be taken for the accomplishment of this worke in the churches is by an epistle now to be sent to the respective churches to informe them and encourage them herein. And that our brother Collyer and brother Strange bee desired to visite the churches for the accomplishment of this worke'.

⁴ E. B. Underhill, *Confessions of faith*, London 1854, 104f., gives the 44th article of the 1656 *Confession*: 'That the ministry of civil justice (being for the praise of them that do well and punishment of evildoers) is an ordinance of God, and that it is the duty of the saints to be subject thereunto, not only for fear but for conscience sake... And that for such, prayers and supplications are to be made by the saints'. The texts cited were Ro. 13.1-5, I. Pet. 2.13f., and I. Tim. 2.1f.

The signatories were (ibid., 73):

Of the church of Christ meeting at Bridgwater, Alexander Atkins and Tobias Wells.

Of the church meeting at Taunton, Thomas Mercer.

Of the church meeting at Ryden, Robert Adridge.

Of the church meeting at Hatch, George Parsons.

Of the church meeting at Chard, Robert Channon and John Sprake.

Of the church meeting at Somerton, William Scriven and William Anger.

Of the church meeting at Wells, David Barret and Thomas Savery.

Of the church meeting at Wedmore, Thomas Urch and Richard Coals.

Of the church meeting at Stoak, William Hare.

Of the church meeting at Wincanton, Blaze Allen and Ambrose Brook.

Of the church meeting at Munticue, Thomas Bud.

Of the church meeting at North Bradley, William Crab and Nicholas Elliot.

Of the church meeting at Luppit, Edmund Burford and Samuel Ham.

Of the church meeting at Sedbury, James Nobs.

Of the church meeting at Bristol, Henry Hineham.

Of the church meeting in and near Lime, Abraham Podger.

⁵ Lyme Churchbook, 28f. notes that the first query came from the church at Stoke, the second from Luppit and the third from Exeter.

⁶ These were, presumably, the letters from the meetings at Taunton in September 1654 and at Bridgwater in April 1655.

⁷ Lyme Churchbook, 22f., inserts: 'as one brother Ames in Waterford who, with others, is separated from the church there, did leave it with our beloved Collier under his hand in writing that the reason of their separating from the church in Waterford was their pride and covetousnes and that in the particullers before mentioned.' See W. C. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings*

of Quakerism (Ed. 1955), 218.

⁸ Ibid., 23, inserts: 'One Captaine Grime bapitized (as hee said) in Scotland, our brother Collier reproving him for his pride in apparell in the presence of some brethren said, Do you finde fault with me? You would say something if you were in Ireland. Oh, the most abominable pride that ever was amongst professing people!—mentioning particular persons which at present are forborne'.

⁹ Bridgwater was represented at the meeting which ordained Collier in May 1654 by Tobias Wells; it was represented at the April 1655 meeting, at Wells in April 1656 and Alexander Atkins and Tobias Wells signed the 1656 *Confession*. It was also represented at Exeter in October 1656 and at the meeting at Bridgwater in November that year. At this meeting Bridgwater, linked with Taunton, was asked to surrender one member for evangelism. 'Mr Mercer' (Thomas Mercer who signed the 1656 *Confession* as representative of Taunton?) was described as 'of Bridgwater' by the government agents in Dorchester in 1658. Tobias Wells and William Cole-

man represented Bridgwater at the 1689 Assembly in London.

¹⁰ Stoke was probably Stoke St Mary (Nuttall, op. cit., 215, note 5). The church was represented at Bridgwater in April 1655, at Wells in April 1656 and William Hare signed the *Confession* of 1656. The church was also represented at Exeter in October 1656 and put up a query at Tiverton in September 1657.

¹¹ Thomas Collier wrote to a church at Taunton as early as 1646. (See 'Thomas Collier and Gangraena Edwards', op. cit., 108). The church was represented at Bridgwater in April 1655, at Wells in April 1656 and Thomas Mercer signed the 1656 *Confession*. At the November 1656 meeting at Bridgwater the church was asked, with Bridgwater church, to send out an evangelist. Thomas Winnell represented Taunton at the 1689 Assembly in London.

¹² Wells was represented at the Bridgwater meeting in April 1655, at Wells in April 1656 and the 1656 *Confession* was signed by David Barret and Thomas Savery. See D. P. Underdown, *Pride's Purge*, Oxford 1971, 37,322

- for references to Barret and the suggestion that the congregation had been formed by the spring of 1653. In the report by Cromwell's agents on the Dorchester meeting in May 1658 Thomas Collier is mentioned as 'of Wells'. The church sent Timothy Brooke to London to the Assembly of 1689. Presumably, also, it was represented at the two meetings held in the town in 1653, 1654.
- ¹³ Wedmore was represented at Bridgwater in April 1655 and at Wells in 1656. The 1656 *Confession* was signed by Thomas Urch and Richard Coals. The church sent George Stant to the 1689 Assembly in London.
- ¹⁴ Hatch Beauchamp is the next village to Stoke q.v. The church was represented by George Parsons at Bridgwater in May 1654 when Collier was ordained. It was also represented at Bridgwater in April 1655 and at Wells in April 1656. Parsons also signed the 1656 *Confession*. The church sent Jeremiah Day to the London Assembly of 1689.
- ¹⁵ Riden is Ryden in the parish of Williton (G. F. Nuttall, op. cit.). The church was represented at Bridgwater in April 1655, at Wells in April 1656 and Robert Adridge signed the *Confession* of 1656. At the Bridgwater meeting held in November 1656, 'Riden' with 'Parrot' was asked to send out a single evangelist.
- ¹⁶ The church at Chard is supposed to have been founded before 1653 by 'Captain Wallington' (B.Q., IV.30). The church was represented at Bridgwater in April 1655, presumably at the two meetings held at Chard, in October 1655 and April 1657, at Wells in April 1656 and at Exeter in October 1656. The *Confession* of 1656 was signed by Robert Channon and John Sprake. The church was represented at the 1689 London Assembly by William Wilkins.
- ¹⁷ Dalwood was represented at Bridgwater in May 1654 for the ordination of Thomas Collier by brothers Hitt and Parsons; on this occasion the church was listed as 'Killmenton'. Dalwood was represented at Bridgwater in April 1655 and at Exeter in October 1656. It sent James Hitt and Thomas Payne to the London Assembly in 1689. Cf. W. T. Whitley, 'Loughwood and Honiton, 1650-1800', *T.B.H.S.*, IV, 129-144.
- ¹⁸ Pithay Baptist Church, Bristol had received Thomas Munday and James Teague into membership in 1653 (*T.B.H.S.*, II.240). According to Ivimey (II.541) Henry Hynam, d. 1679, was believed to be their first pastor. 'Heynam' was at Bridgwater in May 1654 for Collier's ordination. He also signed the *Confession* of 1656. The church was represented at Wells in April 1656 and at Exeter in October 1656. It sent Andrew Gifford to the London Assembly in 1689.
- ¹⁹ Somerton was represented at Bridgwater in April 1655 and at Wells in April 1656. William Scriven and William Anger signed the 1656 *Confession* until his death in September 1656. John Pendarves was its minister become known as the Berkshire Association. For further details see E. A. Payne, *The Baptists of Berkshire*, 1951. Pendarves, with another, unnamed, church was present for the ordination of Collier in May 1654 at Bridgwater. The church was represented at Bridgwater in April 1655. Pendarves was at Chard in September 1655 and at Wells in April 1656.
- ²⁰ Sydbury, Gloucestershire, is listed as Sudbury in 1689 but without the name of its representative at the London Assembly. G. F. Nuttall (op. cit.) identified it as Chipping Sodbury. The church was represented at the meeting at Bridgwater in April 1655 and at Wells in April 1656. James Nobs signed the *Confession* of 1689.
- ²¹ Lyme was represented at Collier's ordination at Bridgwater in May 1654 by one 'brother Goodman'. The church was represented at Bridgwater in April 1655, at Wells in April 1656, at Exeter in October 1656 and, possibly, by 'Mr Hitch' at Dorchester in 1658—though, if this were James Hitt, he may have been representing Dalwood. Abraham Podger signed the 1656 *Confession*. The church sent Simon Orchard in 1689 to the London

- Assembly. See W. T. Whitley, 'The Baptist Church at Lyme Regis', *B.Q.*, VIII, 1936-7, 44-8.
- ²² Dartmouth may have been founded by the close of 1646 with links with Paul Hobson, *Ivimey* II.133f. At this period the church was led by Robert Steed. It was represented at Bridgwater in April 1655 and at Exeter in October 1656.
- ²³ Totnes had Henry Forty as its pastor in 1656. He was imprisoned in Exeter gaol in 1660. The church was represented at Bridgwater in April 1655, at Wells in April 1656 and at Exeter in October 1656.
- ²⁴ Luppitt was founded in 1652 and later met at Upottery (*Ivimey*, II.139ff.). The church was represented at Bridgwater in April 1655 and at Wells in April 1656. Edmund Burford and Samuel Ham signed the 1656 *Confession*. The church put forward a query at Tiverton in September 1657. Thomas Halwell was sent to the 1689 London Assembly.
- ²⁵ North Bradley sent William Crabbe and Nicholas Elliot to the ordination of Thomas Collier at Bridgwater in May 1654. The church was represented again at Bridgwater in April 1655 and at Wells in April 1656. Crabbe and Elliot signed the *Confession* of 1656. In June 1655 the Porton congregation organised itself as an independent group although before it had stood related to North Bradley, W. Doel, *Twenty golden candlesticks*, London 1890, 8, 11. In 1672 Thomas Collier was licensed to preach at North Bradley, *T.B.H.S.*, I.122.
- ²⁶ 'Southweek' sent Joseph Halton and John Laves to the 1689 London Assembly.
- ²⁷ For John Pendarves see *D.N.B.* and E. A. Payne, *The Baptists of Berkshire*, 1651. Also note 20 above and my forthcoming article on his life and work in the *B.Q.*
- ²⁸ Among the Whitchurch MSS preserved in the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford, there is a copy of this letter which includes a list of the churches whose messengers attended the meeting. The Devon churches listed were: Exeter, Totnes, Plymouth, Tiverton, Luppitt, Barnstaple and Bovey Tracey. The Wiltshire churches were: Bradley, Amesbury, 'Cleppen Netten' and Andover. 'Amesbury' is likely to have been the church now known as Porton, since Amesbury was one of the villages from which it drew members. 'Cleppen Netten' is still unidentified. Andover (Hants) is an unexpected inclusion—but that town was the original centre for the church now known as Whitchurch. The Somerset churches were: Bristol, Ryden, Wells, Somerton, Bridgwater, Chard, 'Euell', Stoke, Wedmore, Taunton, Wincanton, Minehead, Hatch and 'South Pearot', 'Euell' was Yeovil; but Ryden 'with Parret' was asked to send out an evangelist in November 1656—see both the letter and the queries from this meeting. 'Yeovel and Perriot' sent Thomas Miller to London in 1689. The Dorset churches were Lyme and Osmington—the latter is also mentioned in the Kilmington Church book in August 1656. The remainder were Abingdon, 'Sodbury' (Chipping Sodbury?) in Gloucestershire and Looe in Cornwall, Looe, which was also represented at Exeter in October 1656, was linked with the Cornish Baptist leader Robert Bennet for whom see Mary Coate, *Cornwall in the Great Civil War*, 1933 and D. P. Underdown, op. cit.
- Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, op. cit., 216, suggests that the 1656 *Confession* was issued from this meeting but, as a comparison of the two sets of churches represented indicates (see note 4 above), it is clear that the *Confession* was issued by another, later, meeting.
- ²⁹ Nathaniel Strange appears, as a signatory of the letter from Wells, for the first time and, it should be noted, Barnstaple is represented that Strange was while Cromwell's agents at Dorchester in 1658 reported that Strange was from there. He signed all the remaining letters, from Exeter in October 1656, from Bridgwater in November, from Chard in April 1657, from Tiverton in September, and from Wells in May 1659. Some of his career can be traced from Whitley's bibliography after 1660. He had been an officer in Robert Lilburn's regiment in 1647. (See Whitley, 56-647.)

²⁰ Instead of the final paragraph, 'Onely whereas . . . enterprizes', the Lyme Churchbook, 39, has: 'And as for the queries you have sent unto us, although some straights of time and other wayes have disabled us at the present from answering your expectations, yet the sense of our duty is strong upon us and we have referred it to another time and opportunity wherein the advantage of the light of some other honoured brethren that are not now with us wilbe obtained, wee trust, to your more ample satisfaction which wee hope shortly to give you an account of. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.'

Since the transcript in the Lyme Churchbook also lists the churches who had sent messengers, among them Lyme itself, the paragraph of rebuke printed by Collier was not in order and hence, in all probability, the alternative ending.

The churches which sent messengers were: Bristol, Dalwood, Looe, Stoke, Lyme, Dartmouth, Tiverton, Bridgwater, Exeter, Plymouth, 'Bouhey', Totnes and Chard. 'Bouhey' may be a mis-transcribing of Bovey Tracey.

²¹ Alexander Atkins had also signed the 1656 *Confession* as one of the two representatives of the Bridgwater church.

²² William Facy, in spite of *Ivimey*, II.68, was imprisoned at Exeter after the restoration. A manuscript version of his shorthand survives in the Exeter Record Office and he represented the Reading church at the 1689 Assembly. Facy was pastor at Tiverton and got into trouble there: see Whitley 25-657 and 39-658.

²³ This John Owen, who was a member at Dalwood-Kilmington, does not appear elsewhere in these records but may be the author of Whitley, 4-682.

²⁴ Lyme Churchbook, 25, inserts: 'the churches wee judge that may be actually exercised in this worke are Bradley one, Bridgwater and Taunton one, Rydon and Parret one, Luppit one, Tiverton one, Plymouth one.'

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 26, inserts: 'It is, moreover, desired in the feare of the Lord, that the other churches that are not particularly named in this epistell may reckon themselves on these considerations so farre concerned in this blessed worke as to endeavour to the utmost as to enlarge their borders by sending their ministering brethren as much as may bee into the countryes neere about them and withall to assist in the other more publicke ministrations by a mutuall helpe not only in prayer and fayth for them but, as there shall bee any other occasion of helping them onward in their way after a godly sort wherein you will do well. Farewell.'

²⁶ This association letter from Tiverton involved Collier in a pamphlet dispute with the Quakers. See Geoffrey F. Nuttall, *op. cit.*, 217.

²⁷ Thomas Glasse of Bovey Tracy was also at the Dorchester meeting in May 1658. He shared in the production of Whitley 36-656, had a warrant issued for his arrest in 1664 (Whitley, 4-664) and died in 1666 (Whitley, 8-666).

²⁸ This heading is provided by the editor. The account is taken from John Thurloe, *State Papers* (1742), ed. T. Birch, vii.138ff., collated with the original manuscript in Bodley's Library, Rawlinson MS A 1xix.75. Birch's version has only been altered when words have been either misread or omitted.

²⁹ Major Strange was, presumably, Nathaniel Strange.

³⁰ For William Kiffin see *D.N.B.* and my 'William Kiffin—Baptist Pioneer and Citizen of London', *Baptist History and Heritage*, II.2. July 1967. Nashville, Tenn.

³¹ Captain Richard Deane's early career can be traced in the *Clarke Papers*. He became a not inconsiderable member of the Cromwellian establishment and, in consequence, found himself in trouble after the Restoration. For his career see the entries under his name in Whitley's *Bibliography*.

³² 'Mr Warren' has not been identified.

³³ 'Mr Harrison' was probably Edward Harrison, one of the London leaders of the Particular Baptists. See W. T. Whitley, 'Edward Harrison of Petty France', *B.Q.*, VII, 214-20.

³⁴ It is possible that 'John Cary' was the regicide John Carew (*Ivimey*,

II.123-7) who provided the Exeter Baptists with a meetingplace and whose opposition to Cromwell was similar to that of Vernon and Allen.

³⁵ For John Vernon and William Allen see P. N. Hardacre, 'William Allen, Cromwellian Agitator and "Fanatic"', *B.Q.* XIX, 1961-62.

³⁶ 'Mr Sheires' of Plymouth was, probably, Abraham Cheare. For whom see *T.B.H.S.* III.95. He shared in the production of Whitley 36-656, 39-658 (in defence of William Facy) and, posthumously, to 24-668 and 6-673.

³⁷ If this were Thomas Mercer he had signed the 1656 *Confession* as the representative of Taunton.

³⁸ Similarly, if 'Mr Hitch of Lime' were James Hitt he was a member of Kilmington (or Dalwood). See the letter from Bridgwater in 1654.

³⁹ Both the letter and the queries concerned with this General Meeting are taken from the unnumbered pages which follow page 39 in the Lyme Churchbook.

⁴⁰ Lyme Churchbook, 18f., collated with *Ivimey*, IV, 292f. *Ivimey* omitted the six items introduced by 'It is desired by this assembly . . .' and, hence, the reference to the next meeting at Taunton in September 1654 which indicates that this letter, whose heading dated it 'the 16, 17 dayes of the 3rd month', was written in May 1654.

⁴¹ *Ivimey*, *ibid.*, 292, interpreted this passage as follows: 'The office to which Mr Thomas Collier . . . had been ordained, was that of a messenger of the churches, exercising a kind of general superintendency over all the associated churches'. In 1843, J. G. Fuller, in *A brief history of the Western Association*, 9, described the event of the ordination of Collier to the office of "General Superintendent and Messenger to all the Associated Churches". The implication that this was a quotation from some earlier document rather than Fuller's own improvement of *Ivimey's* account of the event led W. T. Whitley, *A history of British Baptists*, (1932 Edition), 72, and even Dr E. A. Payne in *The Baptist Union, a short history* (1959), 33, to quote him verbatim. Such has been the power of a set of inverted commas!

Once the *Ivimey-Fuller* interpretation has been set aside it is possible to see the 'further and more orderly ordaining and appoyntinge our deerey beloved brother Thomas Collier, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and of his churches who were one in it, to the worke of the ministrey to the worlde and in the churches' in a Seventeenth century light. It seems that, though Collier may have been engaged in his missionary work for a decade, he had never been formally set apart for the work and it was this omission that the meeting at Bridgwater set out to repair. On the other hand, the work he had been, and still was, engaged upon had been described by Benjamin Cox in 1646 (E. B. Underhill, *op. cit.*, 58f.) and no new element was apparently added to his responsibility or his functions. The new element was the concern for order manifested by the churches for whose planting, in many cases, he had been responsible. If the letter be read to imply that Collier had been formally ordained among the Baptists, and this is a plausible interpretation, he could have been ordained a pastor earlier.

⁴² 'Broote' here evidently indicates North Bradley for these two men signed the 1656 *Confession* from there. See note 4.

⁴³ Robert Addrige was also to sign the *Confession* of 1656 on behalf of Ryden.

⁴⁴ Tobias Wells was to sign the *Confession* of 1656 on behalf of Bridgwater.

The Irish Correspondence of 1653

Editorial Note

The 'received text' of the documents printed below and dated from June and July 1653, was published by Joseph Ivimey in 1811¹ and was, apparently, derived from the work of John Rippon.² The present text, however, is the result of the collation of a transcript made from the Ilston Churchbook³ with the version preserved in the Llanwenarth Churchbook.⁴ This is substantially different from Ivimey's. First, in the actual letter from Dublin as given here a longer text is preserved than that known to Ivimey and Rippon which reflects in rather more detail the political attitudes of the writers in the early summer of 1653. Secondly, some of the names of the Particular Baptists in Ireland are given more accurately and, thirdly, some additional fragments of information help to clarify a little further what was happening among them at the time.

The history in detail of the manuscript tradition of these documents can only be guessed but certain aspects of it seem quite clear. It seems probable, for example, that, when the London Baptists had read the letter and supporting documents which John Vernon⁵ had brought them, they had a large number of copies made which they had sent out, with their own covering letter, to a number of churches in England, Scotland and Wales. They, in their turn, it was evidently hoped, would make and pass on further copies to nearby congregations.

This correspondence has had its significance somewhat misunderstood by at least two students of the history of Baptist association in the present century and may finally prove to be of greater importance as reflecting political attitudes and eschatological hopes among the Calvinistic Baptists in Ireland in the months before the failure of the Barebones Parliament and the inauguration of Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector.

THE IRISH CORRESPONDENCE

1. *The covering letter from London.*

From the Church of Christ at Glasshouse, London.

Dearly beloved brethren,

Whilest wee were slumbering and sleeping with those wise virgins mentioned by our Saviour, Mat. 25, regardlesse of the obligations and ingagements to the Lord which, by soe eminent and signall discoveries of love and works of wonder wrought for us in these last dayes, he hath layd upon us it hath pleased the Watchman of Israell, who neyther slumbers nor sleepes, to rayse up a quickning spirit in the hearts of our brethren of Ireland, provoking them to call upon us to awake to righteousness, to remember our first love, to rend our hearts and not our garments and to turne to the Lord with our whole hearts that, doing our first woorks, wee might receive answers of peace from the God of peace and healings of all our woundes from him, whose propertie is to heale backslidings and to love freely and that the weak amongst us might bee as David and David as an angel of God.

Wee have sent you inclosed a coppie of what wee received from them, which wee pray the Lord to sanctifie to you as in some measure he hath done to us, that it may serve, through the co-operation of the Spirit, as Nathan's parable to David and as the cock-crowing to Peter, to bring to our remembrance all the deadnes, wantonness, unfruitfullnes, want of love and unsuitableness of spirit which have to[o] much prevailed in you and upon you, to the grieving of the Spirit of God, the provoking of the eyes of his jelouzie, the hardening of such as know not the Lord and the wounding of each other's hearts in these times of Gospell peace and libertie. Wee desire you to communicate the same to all our beloved brethren neere you and, with all convenient speed, to certifie us not only what effect the subject therein contayned hath wrought upon your hearts but alsoe a particular account of theirs and your estates and conditions with relation to your communion each with other, as grounded upon your fellowship with the Father and the Sonne, in the faith and obedience of the Gospell of Christ. In order wherunto wee intreat your care and paines in visiting the severall weake and scattered brethren in your parts, that from a thorough knowledg of, and acquaintance with, their present standing, wee may receive information from you and our brethren in Ireland, according to their desires, from us: what churches and societies wee may groundedly communicate with, according to a rule of Christ, and what not. Wee shall not offer arguments to persuade you to compliance with our brethren's desires and ours, they carrying soe much evidence and demonstration of truth, necessity and suitableness to the Gospell rule, in the very first view of them. Wee have already kept a day of holy fasting and prayer, upon the grounds therein expressed and, wee trust, shall never lay downe those spirituall weapons till Satan, the world, and the lusts of our flesh, bee made

our footstool. Which the Lord hasten, for his Christ's sake. To whose fatherly care and tuition we commend you and subscribe ourselves,

Your affectionate brethren in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel,

William Kiffin⁷
Edward Harrison⁸
Thomas White⁹
Joseph Sansom¹⁰
Thomas Cowper¹¹
Henry Hills¹²
John Perry¹³
Richard Tredwell¹⁴
Robert Bowes¹⁵
Peter Scutt¹⁶

Our great designe in this letter is to obtaine a full knowledg of all the churches in England, Scotland and Wales and, therfore, wee desire you not to forgett to informe us not only concerning the estates of any churches that are in your country or neere adjacent that soe, if it may be possible, wee might have the full knowledg of all the churches or saints that are one with us in the sound principles of truth. And [to] yourselves, or any other church of Christ, we shall be ready to give the like accompt, if desired therunto, of ourselves or the churches neere us.

From the severall churches of Christ in London, the 24th day of the 5th month 1653.

2. *The letter of exhortation from Ireland.*¹⁷

For the Churches of Christ in London when assembled.

Dear frindes,

Wee cannot without much sence and shame speake of our long silence to you nor, without much greif of heart, think of yours to us, which wee earnestly desire may bee mutually laid to heart by us all for to prevent the like occasion of complaining for the future. Surely it is a needfull, wholesome word of exhortation, Heb. 3. [13], to exhort one another dayly. Had it byn more in our hearts it would have byn more in our mouthes in those severall opportunityes wee have had of conversing together by our private pennings uppon more common and less profitable affaires. Oh, how many packetts have passed filled with worldly matters since wee have heard one word from you, or you from us, of the condition, increase, growth and decrease of the commonwealth of Israell for whose sakes wee have heard with our cares and seene with our eyes that our God hath greatly reproved yeeres but casting contempt uppon princes and taking away the reproach of his people who were some yeeres since brought low

through oppressions, afflictions and sorrow. His hand hath byn still stretched forth to sett his poore despised ones on high from the kings of the earth, even therby increasing the family of those that feare his name like a flock. Yea, God hath done great things for us, wherof wee have made mention, for which wee ought greatly to rejoyce; but, how litle have wee wisely considered of his doings for us. For which wee have meete cause to mourne or, having seene great things of our God for our good, but not observed, neyther feelingly layd them to heart, how many have byn broken that have byn gathered together against Syon and fallen for their sakes. And, surely, were wee not hardened through the deceitfullnes of sinn, our hearts would be more awakened, and all that is within us, to bless his holy name, who hath so blasted the wisdom and power of men when it hath byn opposite to the worke which our God is carrying onn in the earth, which, as wee have cleerly seene, wee have soone forgott through our carnallitys which have suffered too much to reigne in our mortall bodyes.

Preciouse frinds, let us in this our day search and examine our hearts by the light of the Woord and Spirit of our God, and, surely, wee shall find that the posture of those poore virgins, Mat. 25, hath byn too much ours. For, whilst our Bridgroom tarrieth, doe wee not all slumber and sleepe soe that litle difference is discerned betwene the foolish and the wise? Alas, alas, what meanes the dull, estranged frame of heart wee beare each to other as is before mentioned? And, is it not the like to our God? Doth it not appeare by our litle zeale for him and lesse delight in his wayes, with constant complaynings, with litle sense of our victory over our leane, our drynese and barrenese. Are not these instead of the songs of Syon¹⁸ and [that] in the houre of temptation wherin the Lord, as a man of warr ridinge on victoriously, conquering, yea, and to conquer and subdue all those that will not that Christ shall reigne over them¹⁹ And doth not his voyse cry loud to every subject in Syon, Prepare yee, awake to meete thy God, oh Israell. Yea, doth he not pronounce woes to them that are at ease in Syon? Doubtles expecting, whilst these turnings, overturnings and changes are working in the earth, wee should stand uppon our watch, enter into our chamber, be a holy, praying, yea with all supplications in the Spirit, humble, praying people. For, doubtless now, if ever, wee are especially called uppon to put on the whole armour of God that wee may be able to stand in this day, and, having done all, to stand.

Wee therefore desire to revive your memory and our owne, with these knowne and approved exhortations, Eph. 6.10-17. Beloved brethren and sisters, wee, even with teares, beg for you and our selves, that all and each of us may in truth of heart bee retiredly exercised in recounting and calling to mind what the Lord hath done for our soules and for our bodyes, for his people in generall, and what he is doinge and with what great and preciouse promises he tells us are in his heart, as his resolved intendments, speedily to accomplish.

Wherin and in expectation wherof he calls upon us, Is. 65.18, but bee yee glad, rejoyce for ever, in that which I create. For, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoycing place and her people a joy. Wee recommend unto you the foregoing and following verses,** earnestly begging that every one of us may give all diligence to keepe alive, yea rather to begett oyle in our lampes least they goe out and wee sit downe in silence, yea, even departe in sorrow. Wee, therefore, [are] to recount the speciall and signall wayes the Lord tooke with our forefathers, Israel of ould, with the returnes they made and the frames of their hearts and therefore in very faithfullness [what] the Lord gave them; all which are left upon record for our instruction.**

Deerly beloved brethren, the Lord engaged our hearts with the rest of the churches of Christ in the faith and order of the Gospel in this nation joyntly as one person to waite upon him by fasting and humiliation and cry to him by prayer and supplications in the sence of our great shortnes of and unsutableness unto what is in the within-closed particulars expressed; the which wee alsoe tenderly offer and, as our resolutions direct, recommend unto you, our fellow members, followers of the Lamb, our Lord Jesus Christ, being hopefully assured this wilbe our recovery from a slippery and slothfull condition, the which hath made in us all too much the seat of Satan, the sadd fruits of which temper are manifest, Prov. 24, latter end. Yea, precious frinds, the Lord hath given us comfortable hopes that, in the prosecution heerof,** the Lord will roare out of Syon to the consumption and utter destruction of Antichrist, the man of sin**, and will, through his mighty working of his blessed Spirit, fitt and prepare us for every condition. Yea, if he shall bring upon us such a tryall as hath not yet beene seene in our dayes or this the dawneing of his blessed day, soe much promised yet too litle hoped for! However, he will hasten it in his time, Is. 60.22.

Wee, for our conveniency, have agreed to keepe the first Wensday¹⁸ in every month, from 6 to 6, the which, with others the breathing of our hearts, wee have committed to the care and trust of our beloved and faithfull brother, John Vernon, the bearer heerof who, through the blessing of the Lord, will suddenly be with you and will alsoe acquainte you with our state and condition. He is in full communion with us, his conversation hath beene in zeale and faithfullnes. The Lord haveing put it into the hearts of all his congregations in this Iland to keepe a more revived correspondency with each other by letters and loveing epistles.** The which wee acquainte you with haveing** in the practise heerof found great advantage not only weakning Satan's suggestions and jealousyes but it hath begott a closer union and knitting upp of heart and, which is not inferior to each other's wants and conditions before our God in the sence therof. And that wee might bee therby the better enabled to answere our duty towards you and you towards us and beare each other's burdens and soe fullfilling the righteous law of Christ in our great and neere

relation, wee heerby earnestly request and begg the same brotherly correspondency with you and from you desiring the same things by your meanes with all the rest of the churches of Christ in England, Scotland and Wales whom we trust you will provoke to the same feelings and which wee hope, once in 3 months, may be mutually obtained. You may remember, sometimes since, our earnest request, which request was to you once and againe, to have a perfect account from you of all the churches of Christ owned in comunion with you in the places before mentioned, which desire, had it beene answered, might have prevented our long sad sylence and the dangers of receavings or refusings such as ought, or ought not, to be communicated with. And with this wee offer one request more unto you, if it hath not byn lately practised: which is that you would send two or more faithfull brethren, well acquainted with the discipline and order of the Lord's house and that may bee able to speake seasonable woords suiting with the needes of his people, to visit, comfort and confirme all the flock of our Lord Jesus that are, or have given upp their names to bee, under his rule and government in England, Scotland and Wales. And for the smale handfull owned by the Lord in this nation, wee trust it shalbe our care more naturally to looke after and watch over then heertofore the rather because wee have observed Satan, our subtile enimie, by his depthes and wiles, whose time wee believe is short, taking the opportunity of the peace and rest lent to us by our God, ready to slay us by casting us into carnall security even lulling our hearts asleepe and that in this houre wherin as before exprest wee are especially called upp on to be a praying, watchfull people. For surely the Lord is now at hand! Therefore, let us leave off the beggerly pursute of the things of this world and let our moderation be knowne unto all men, being carefull for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication and thanksgiving making knowne our request unto God for Syon, for each soule therin, for all the particulars heerin mentioned, for the peace and tranquility of the nation wherin wee live, Jer. 29.7, and for the rulers and magistrates the Lord hath sett over us and particularly for those with you,** in whose prosperity the honour of God, the quiet and rest of his people and the cause of the poore and needy, the wydows and the fatherlesse are soe much concerned and whose miscariage (if the Lord shall suffer) wee may expect will bring in as floudes sorrowes and miseryes, yea, what not!

Deere frinds, ought not wee to bee earnest with the Lord to know our woорke and duties in these latter dayes wherin our God is working terrible things in righteousness and making his owne pleasure to prosper, in putting downe the proud and mighty from their seates and exalting the base and meane things of this world. Yet such as he hath put his Spirit in and name upp on, even such as he hath made a refuge from the stormes of the violent, even hiding places and nursing fathers to his people. And now, frinds, wee are called upp on to walke by faith and not by sense, is it not our strength to sitt still

and see the salvation of the Lord who worketh all things according to the counsell of his owne good will and who will certainly bring his great promises and determinations to pass. Only belive, be strong in the power of his might, beleve in the Lord your God, soe shall you bee established. Beleve his prophetts, soe shall you prosper: not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hoostes shall these things be brought to pass. And, though the enemyes come in like a flood and all tounge rage, yet that good Spirit shall lift upp a standard against them and every tounge he will condemne, yea, the rage of man shall prayse the Lord and the remainder he will restraine. Let our eyes and hearts be fixed upon that God who changeth not, whose gloriouse name is our strong tower. In him though the earth be removed and the inhabitants be dissolved have wee ground to rejoyce for evermore and humbly to bless all the day long. Yea, though in ourselves and in the sence of the very vilenes of our natures which lusteth to envie and is treacherously bent hellwards, there is contynued occasions of the great woork now desired and endeavoured after even soul abaseing and low prostrating ourselves at the footstole of his Majesty with a deepe fasting, with a pressing the Lord by all manner of prayer and supplication to be gratiouse to us in not bringing uppon us the fruits of our doings even which is recorded in Deut. 28.47f. Alsoe that he would be gratiouse to us in knowing the sad condition of hearts searchings, the heart breakings because of the sore and uncomfortable divisions amongst the redeemed ones which have their lamentable effects to the joy and puffing up of the uncircumcised which cry, "Ha, ha, soe would wee have it, did wee not say this it would come to?" And, "Tarry a little, you shall see these divisions come amongst them all." Alsoe that the Lord would be gratiouse to us in acquainting us with what he speakes to us** in his sore snatching and removeing from us not only usefull members in Syon but even our eyes, our hands and our hearts, never to be forgotten young Drapes,¹⁹ deare Conssett,²⁰ pretious Peck,²¹ usefull Saffry²² and that in the midst of their dayes and begining of wonderous woorks. Ah, deere frinds, were they to[o] holy, to[o] heavenly for our society? Or did wee abuse the mercy, some doteing upon them whilest others sleighted them, yea, hardly tooke notice there was prophetts amongst them. Or may wee not all conclude that the indifferency and worldymindednes and hippocrisie of hearts are soe great and have soe highly provoked** the jelousie of** our God** who hath left noe meanes unattempted that wee might have been a people of and to his prayse** that he is cominge forth against us in his indignation and displeasure with some visitation and scourges and therefore hath called home his choyce ones that they might not see the evill that is coming uppon us neyther stand in the gapp** to appease his fury and turne away his wrath from us. And, lastly, frinds, mightily cry unto our God, even the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, give him noe rest untill he be entreated by us in

the things within mentioned and particularly for those poore insufficient instruments whom he hath signally signified out and whose standings are soe slipery, whose temptations are soe many and whose woork is soe great and mighty, on whom our eyes are fixed and from whom these three nations expect soe great things as returns and fruits of all the abundance of bloud, of travells, of hazards, of long wayting, large promises and vast expenses. Precious frinds, though wee are called to looke higher then instruments, yea, the blessed Spirit directs us to looke to our God through Jesus Christ who is the author and from whom all our mercyes flow by whom what we expect must be brought about, to him they belong, being for his honour and praise intended. Yet, seeing hee conveys and woorkes by and through instruments and they are such with whom he hath much appeared and in whome wee have cause to belive he hath placed his feare and who have by testimony of his good Spirit obtayned like pretious faith with us and by whom his name is called uppon and through whose sutable or unsuteable walking and actings eyther much glory and honour or shame and reproach will accrue to his great name, to our joy and consolation or to our sorrow and reproach, wee therefore once more beseech you earnestly to beg of the Lord that he would not leave them to their owne wisdome nor to bee discouraged under their many streights but that he would be wisdome and strength to them and keepe their hearts in a holy depending uppon him voyd of pride and ostentation; that they may be the repayrers of our many breaches and restorers of pathes to dwell in; that they may bee nurseing fathers, the officers under them peace and exactors [of] righteousnes; that they may be a terrour to evildoers and for prayse to them that doe well; that under them wee may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlines and honesty.**

And now, deere brethren, beloved of the Lord, let not this sad subject of long sylence be any more amongst us but rather let us bee constant provokers of each other to every good word and woork by our epistles, by our holy, humble, persevering Christian conversation, suiting ourselves to that pretious and ever to be remembered example, our Lord Jesus Christ. And scing that nothing can seperate, neyther our Lord Jesus Christ. And scing that nothing can seperate, neyther height, nor depth, betweene us and that everlasting love of our heavenly Father in his deere Sonn, and those inestimable mansions of love, prepared for us by him where wee, even wee, shall behould the gloriouse face of our God, and joyntly sing the everlasting song of Moses and the Lambe! Oh, then, let neyther sea nor land, things present nor things to come, seperate us from a Christian correspondency each with other, wherby wee may be enabled knowingly to mourne with those that mourne and to rejoyce with those that rejoyce, and that wee may sympathizingly in faith, offer supplications and prayses answerable to the dealing of our God to any of his members.** And now the very God of peace helpe you and us to beare one another's burdens and soe fulfill the law of Christ and, in truth of heart, soe to pray for each other, that wee keepe the comfortable fruits of neere

relations.** Finally, brethren, farewell, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one minde,** live in peace: Let us follow the things which make for peace and things wherwith one may edifice another** and the God of peace shall be with you and us.

Your poore weake brethren yet fellow heires, expectors of the consolation ready to be revealed at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ who will now come, without sin, to our salvation.

From the Church of Christ in Waterford, being now assembled upon the ground within mentioned 1 day 4 Month 1653.

The names of the brethren that subscribed this be viz.,

<i>Att Waterford</i>	<i>Att Killkeny</i>	<i>Att Dublin</i>
Robert Kingdon ²³	Anthony Harrison ³⁵	James Hardish ⁴³
Thomas Skelson ²⁴	John Pratte ³⁶	Henry Jones ⁴⁴
Edward Marshall ²⁵	Humphrey Prichard ³⁷	James Montely ⁴⁵
Peter Rowe ²⁶	Thomas Willsoppe ³⁸	William Sands ⁴⁶
Thomas Boulton ²⁷	John Courte ³⁹	William Salt ⁴⁷
Thomas Sparking ²⁸	Arnold Thomas ⁴⁰	Edward Roberts ⁴⁸
George Cawdron ²⁹	Christopher Blackwood ⁴¹	Philip Carteret ⁴⁹
John Rowe ³⁰	Richard Wood ⁴²	Thomas Patience ⁵⁰
William Leigh ³¹		Nicholas Scots ⁵¹
Richard Sutton ³²		Adrian Strong ⁵²
Robert Murry ³³		
Thomas ——— ³⁴		

3. *Two documents accompanying the letter of exhortation from Ireland.*

i. *The agreement concerning matters requiring prayer by the churches.*

The churches of Christ in Ireland, walking in the faith and order of the Gospell, doe agree together, through the Lord's assistance, to sett apart one day in every month, solemnly to seeke the face of our God and, by fasting and praying, humbly to mourne before him for the things following which is alsoe recommended to our deere frinds the churches of Christ in England and scattered brethren in severall places, who have obtayned like pretiouse faith with us.

First. Our litle knowledge of and less trusting in the name of our God in Christ, so as to sett him for ever before our eyes, that wee may glorifie him both in our bodies and soules, which are his, I. Cor. 6.20; Heb. 5.12.

2. Our litle sincere love to the Lord and his people and our litle knowledge of the office and proper place of each member as God hath sett him in the body of Christ, to the end that every particular member

might be now effectually improved for the mutuall edification of the whole, I. Cor. 12.21, Eph. 4.16.

3. Our litle serieuse searching into the word of God and not substantially acquainting ourselves with the foundation truthes revealed therein, 2. Tim. 3.15; 2. Pet. 2.2; Rom. 1.16f.

4. Our litle faith in the great and pretiouse promises of the Lord, which are to be fulfilled in the latter days, Lk. 18.8; 2. Pet. 1.4.

5. Our litle pressing after the mark of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ and our inordinate affections after earthly things, Luke 10.40f; Phil. 3.9 [?14]; Col. 3.2.

6. Our litle praying and prayseing frames of hearts in particular for faithfull labourers in the Lord's vyneyard and for all whom he hath sett in authority over us, under whom wee have much oppertunity to practise the truth wee profess. Mat. 9.37f; I. Cor. 2.4; Is. 9.7; I. Tim. 2.2; I. Pet. 2.14; Jn. 15.4; Ps. 22.4.

7. Our litle sence of saintts' sufferings, Lk. 18.7; Rev. 17.6.

8. Our great aptnes to forgett the great things God hath done for us. And the abuse of the many pretiouse mercyes he hath multiplied upon us, Ps. 7.8; 10.6, 13.

9. Our want of spirituall wisdome to reprove sin plainly in all without respect of persons and to exhort faithfully soe as to stop the mouthes of gainesaiers and to give no just offence to any, Prov. 19.15; 9.8f; 2. Tim. 4.4; I. Cor. 10.28.

10. Our litle laying to heart the great breaches the Lord hath made amongst us by removing many righteous ones from us and from the evill to come, Is. 57.1f; 2.22.

11. Our litle mourning for sin both in ourselves and others, Ezek. 9.4; Hos. 4.1f.

12. Our great ignorance of the deceitfullnes of our owne hearts, Jer. 17.9.

These things amongst others ought to be sufficient grounds of our being low before the Lord that his voyce [may] lift us up in due time, James 4.9f, and supply all our wants according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus, Phil. 4.19.

ii. *Details of the Particular Baptist churches in Ireland.*

The churches of Christ in Ireland walking together in the faith and order of the Gospell and [sic] are resident in severall places as followeth, viz.,

In Dublin. With whom are brother Patience, brother Lamb,⁵³ brother Vernon, brother Roberts, brother Smyth⁵⁴ with severall others through grace who walk comfortably together but most of the brethren besides brother Patient have relation to the army and therefore are subject to be called away, as occasion requires, to performe their duty in their places.

In Waterford. With whom are brother Wade,⁵⁵ brother Row,

brother Boulton, brother Caudron,⁵⁶ brother Kingdon with severall others walking together comfortably, most of them being resident there who, wee trust, are in a thriving condition in ther spirituall state.

In Clommell.⁵⁷ With whom are brother Charles,⁵⁸ brother Drapes⁵⁹ and sometimes brother Hutchinson⁶⁰ and Bullock⁶¹ to assist them, who are commonly abroad improving their guifts in severall garrisons. Some other brethren, scattered, are in severall places in those parts who are recomended to the care of our frinds at Clommell who are neerest unto them.

In Killkenny. With whom are brother Blackwood, brother Card,⁶² brother Axtell,⁶³ brother Gough⁶⁴ with severall others whom we hope alsoe are in a growing condition and doe walk orderly. Wee know not any particular frinds scattered abroad in the country but [if there be any they] are committed to the care of some frinds neere them who, we hope, as they are able will discharge their duty towards them.

In Corke. With whom are brother Lamb,⁶⁵ brother Coleman⁶⁶ with severall others who walk orderly together though in a place of much opposition to them by such as slight the way of the Lord, with whom alsoe are in comunion some frinds at Brand Kingsaile⁶⁷ and other parts of the country.

In Lymrick. With whom are brother Knight,⁶⁸ brother Uzell.⁶⁹ brother Skinner⁷⁰ with some others whom, wee feare, may bee in a decaying condition for want of able brethren to strengthen them. Brother Knight haveing byn weake and not able to be with them.

In Galloway. With whom are brother Clark,⁷¹ brother Davies⁷² with severall others who, wee understand, doe walk orderly but have few able amongst them to edifie the body.

In Wexford. Are a people lately gathered by brother Blackwood with whom are brother Tomlins,⁷³ brother Hussy,⁷⁴ brother Neale,⁷⁵ brother Biggs⁷⁶ with severall others who have not much helpe amongst themselves but are sometimes visited by our frinds at Waterford.

In Kerry. Alsoe are some frinds received lately by brother Dix⁷⁷ and brother Nelson,⁷⁸ brother Browne⁷⁹ and his wife: with whom is brother Chambers⁸⁰ that doe speak to them. Of these wee have not much experience but have lately heard from brother Chambers that they walke orderly.

In the north neere Carrick Fergus are severall lately received by brother Reade⁸¹ who were baptized heere by brother Patient whom wee understand are pretiouse but want some able brethren to establish them.

Frinds deceased of the severall places and churches before mentioned as followeth: Sister Watson, sister Mary Rowe att Waterford.

Sister Deane att Killkeny.

Brother Brookes att Clommell.

Brother Brookes,⁸² brother Cooper, brother Rush, att or neere Lymrick.

Severall cast out for sin, viz.,

Brother Dixon, brother Clayton, brother Price, brother Thornhill, brother Francis at Clommell.

Brother Fogg at Killkeny.

One at Galloway and some at Lymrick a particular account of whom wee have not at present.

Sister Sarah Barret at Dublin, sometime servant to brother Patient, who is now coming for England. Brother Vernon can more particularly informe you of her.⁸³

FOOTNOTES

¹ Ivimey, I. 240-252. On 252, at the close of his transcription, Ivimey appears to credit Joshua Thompson's 'Hist. of Welch Association' as his source. Yet his material appears to be taken directly from Rippon.

² Rippon, J. *The Baptist annual register*, 1790-93, 13-20. A footnote to 18 by Rippon as editor says, 'Some of these names are not very plain in the written copy from which this correspondence is taken' and may indicate that he had seen and prepared the transcript of this material from a 17th century MS. Cf. W. T. Whitley in *B.Q.*, 1, 279, 'Allen and Vernon took to Lough-Tiverton, then reprinted by Ivimey.'

³ The Ilston Churchbook MS, National Library of Wales MSS 9108/9 is a facsimile of the original possessed by Brown University, Rhode Island, U.S.A.

⁴ The Llanwenarth Churchbook MS, is National Library of Wales deposit MS, 409.

⁵ See footnote 45 to the Western Association Records.

⁶ See W. T. Whitley, *A history of British Baptists*, 2 edn. 1932, 90f, followed by R. G. Torbet, *A history of the Baptists*, 2 edn. 1963, 44. And in criticism of their views, B. R. White, 'The doctrine of the church in the Particular Baptist Confession of 1644', *J.T.S. (N.S.)* XIX, 1968, especially 584-90.

⁷ Kiffin, William. See *D.N.B.*, and B. R. White, 'William Kiffin, Baptist pioneer and citizen of London', *Baptist history and heritage*, July 1967.

⁸ Harrison, Edward. See W. T. Whitley, 'Edward Harrison of Petty France', *B.Q.*, VII, 214-220.

⁹ White, Thomas, is only known at present from this correspondence.

¹⁰ Sansom, Joseph. He signed *Heartbleedings* (1650), the 1651 edition of the 1644 *Confession*, the letter of 1654 with Kiffin and Spilsbury to Ireland urging acceptance of the Protectorate and the letter of April 1657, urging Cromwell against acceptance of the English throne.

¹¹ Cowper (or Cooper), Thomas. Apparently a member with Kiffin, one who worked to calm Irish Baptist feelings towards the Cromwellian establishment (*Thurloe*, IV, 243, 408, 422, 433, 451), with Jerome Sankey and who signed *The humble apology*, 1660.

¹² Hills, Henry. See W. T. Whitley, 'Henry Hills, official printer', *B.Q.*, VI, 215-7.

¹³ Perry, John. A leader, with Hanserd Knollys, of the church in Swan Alley, Coleman Street, London. (*Hexham records*, 310, 313, 321, 340.)

¹⁴ Tredwell, Richard. This may have been the same man who, with his wife Katherine, joined the Separatist group from Jacob-Lathrop church sometime after 12.9.1633 with Samuel Eaton and others.

¹⁵ Bowes, Robert. A member at the Glaziers' Hall who signed several letters from there to the churches founded by John Miles in 1650/51.

¹⁶ Scutt, Peter. According to *T.B.H.S.*, V, 74, a draper. He also was a



member at Glaziers' Hall and signed several of the letters to Wales mentioned in Note 15.

¹⁷ The material *not* available in the Ivimey/Rippon version of this letter is marked by two stars at the beginning and at the end of each 'new' section.

¹⁸ See p. 16 of these records, Note 48, for an indication that this suggestion was widely adopted.

¹⁹ Drapes, Edward. Wrongly as 'Draper' in the Ivimey/Rippon version. He had signed *Heartbleedings* (1650) and written pamphlets himself before his death in 1653.

²⁰ Consett, William. He had been a member of the Glaziers' Hall congregation, had signed *Heartbleedings*, also letters to Wales 1650/51, *A declaration of congregational societies* (1651 edn.) and the 1651 edn. of the 1644 *Confession*.

²¹ Peck, Pocke in Ivimey/Rippon version. Links with Abingdon family (*B.Q.*, III, 44) thus early are unlikely. So are they with the G. B. Robert Peck (*T.B.H.S.*, II, 244).

²² Saffery, Solomon. Signed *Heartbleedings* in 1650.

²³ Kingdom, Robert. Robert Ringston in Ivimey/Rippon.

²⁴ Skelson, Thomas. Thomas Shelson in Ivimey/Rippon. Paid from the civil list at Belfast 1654 and at Newry in 1656 (*Seymour*, 221). See note 26 below.

²⁵ Marshall, Edward. Signed the letter from Waterford to Dublin against open communion, 14 Jan., 1652.

²⁶ Row, Peter. A member, in 1648, of the Hubbard-How-More church (B. Stinton, 'A repository . . .', 111). *B.Q.*, I, 223, suggests he may have been the Row who served as an emissary of Thomas Collier according to Gangraena Edwards in 1646. See B. R. White, 'Thomas Collier and Gangraena Edwards', *B.Q.*, XXIV, 3. Row was paid on the civil list in Ireland from, apparently, 1654-1657. (St. John D. Seymour, *The Puritans in Ireland 1647-1661*, Oxford 1912 and 1969, 219—referred to hereinafter as *Seymour*.) Row seems to have been active and known to the authorities for a time after the Restoration.

²⁷ Boulton, Thomas. In 1645 Thomas Boulton was a major at Newport Pagnell (*B.Q.*, III, 367).

²⁸ Sparking, Thomas. Thomas Sparkling according to Ivimey/Rippon. Sparkling in the Llanwenarth Churchbook.

²⁹ Cawdron, George. Ivimey gives his Christian name as Thomas, Rippon does not give him one at all. Llanwenarth omits him completely. He signed the Waterford letter, 14 Jan., 1652, to Dublin opposing open membership.

³⁰ Rowe, John. A John Row signed, with John Tomlinson, a letter to Cromwell from Derby (*T.B.H.S.*, II, 238).

³¹ Leigh, William. A colonel in Ireland (*B.Q.*, I, 276). He signed the Waterford letter to Dublin against open communion, 14 Jan., 1652.

³² Sutton, Richard. Appears as Richard — in Rippon, as Richard Leigh in Ivimey. Ilston/Llanwenarth agree on Richard Sutton. He signed the Waterford letter to Dublin opposing open communion, 14 Jan., 1652.

³³ Murry, Robert. Robert Merry according to Ivimey/Rippon. Llanwenarth gives Murry. A Robert Marrey signed the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657 (*Confessions of Faith*, 1854, 339-42).

³⁴ No surname appears here in any version of the letter.

³⁵ Harrison, Anthony. He seems not to appear in other documents of the period from London and Ireland.

³⁶ Pratte, John. Perhaps he was in London in 1689 (*B.Q.*, I, 114). A T. Pratt signed the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657.

³⁷ Prichard, Humphrey. He only appears here.

³⁸ Willsop, Thomas. Ivimey/Rippon give his surname as 'Alsop'. But both Ilston and Llanwenarth appear to have read their original as Willsop or

³⁹ Courte, John. Only known here: unlikely to be the G.B. of the 1690's (*B.Q.*, VII, 174).

⁴⁰ Thomas, Arnold. Signed letter to Wales from Dublin, 12 June, 1656 (*Ivimey*, I, 253ff).

⁴¹ Blackwood, Christopher. Known to Thomas Edwards (*Gangraena*, III, 98). He was stationed at Kilkenny in Jan. 1653 and paid £150 per annum from the civil list (*Seymour*, 60). He signed the letter from Dublin to Wales in 1656 (*Ivimey*, I, 253ff), the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657 and the *Humble Apology* of 1660 (*Confessions of Faith*, 343-52) in London.

⁴² Wood, Richard. Only known here.

⁴³ Hardish, James. His name appears thus in both Ivimey/Rippon and Ilston/Llanwenarth. Nevertheless it is almost certainly James Standish—the Receiver General in Ireland (*Seymour*, 32). Presumably the error in transcription was made in London. James Standish signed the Waterford to Dublin letter opposing open communion in January 1652 and also signed the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657.

⁴⁴ Jones, Henry. He was the Cromwellian Scoutmaster General in Ireland (*B.Q.*, I, 276), and may earlier have been involved in the debates about Baptism in Jessey's church in 1643 and after (*T.B.H.S.*, I, 244f). He signed the letter to Wales from Dublin in 1656 (*Ivimey*, I, 253ff).

⁴⁵ Montely, James. Ivimey/Rippon gives James Marely. Llanwenarth gives James Mottley.

⁴⁶ Sands, William. Signed the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657.

⁴⁷ Salt, William. Sault according to Ivimey/Rippon. Llanwenarth: Saull.

⁴⁸ Roberts, Edward. Signed letters from Glaziers' Hall to South Wales 1650/51, the 1651 edition of the 1644 *Confession*, the letter from Waterford to Dublin opposing open communion in January 1652, the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657. He was auditor general in Ireland (*B.Q.*, I, 276) and was listed as a dangerous person recently returned from Ireland in 1660 (*T.B.H.S.*, III, 251, 254). He also signed the *Humble Apology* of 1660 and (*T.B.H.S.*, III, 251, 254). He may also have signed the *Declaration* of 1659 (Whitley: 64-659). He may have been the man listed as Edmund Roberts who signed the letter to Wales from Dublin in 1656 (*Ivimey*, I, 253ff). He may have returned to preach in Ireland in 1676 (*B.Q.*, I, 287f).

⁴⁹ Carteret, Philip. His surname was given by Ivimey/Rippon as Carcherol. He was advocate-general in Ireland (*B.Q.*, I, 276).

⁵⁰ Patience (or Patient), Thomas. See B. R. White, 'Thomas Patient in England and Ireland', *Irish Baptist Historical Society Journal*, II, 1969/70.

⁵¹ Scots, Nicolas. Ivimey/Rippon give surname as 'Scott'. A Richard Scott signed the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657.

⁵² Strong, Adrian. Signed the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657.

⁵³ Lamb, Richard (?). Ivimey/Rippon give surname as 'Law' and Llanwenarth as 'Loe'. A Richard Lawem signed the letter from Dublin to Wales in 1656 (*Ivimey*, I, 253ff).

⁵⁴ Smyth, Brother. Only known here.

⁵⁵ Wade, Brother. According to Whitley (*B.Q.*, I, 276) a captain in Ireland. Brother and sister Wade had shared in the debates about baptism which led to their baptism with Hanserd Knollys in 1645. Later, after Jessey's baptism, they rejoined his church (*T.B.H.S.*, I, 244f). S. Wade signed as minister at the founding of the Midland Association from Alcester in 1655 (see these records, 20, 40, note 11.) John Wade was keeping a conventicle at Stafford in 1669 (*B.Q.*, III, 192).

⁵⁶ Caudron, Brother. Presumably George Cawdron—see Note 29 above.

⁵⁷ This is, of course, Clonmell.

⁵⁸ Charles, Brother. Only known here.

⁵⁹ Drapes, Brother. See Note 19. John Draper signed the letter to the Protector from Dublin in 1657. According to *Seymour*, 211, John Draper was based at Clonmell in 1655 and paid from the civil list. He was later appointed preacher to the garrison in Tipperary, 1656, and was suspended

later. It seems as if the Ilston/Llanwenarth scribes (or the copy/ies from which they worked) made the reverse mistake to that made over Edward Drapes by Ivimey/Rippon later.

⁶⁰ Hutchinson, Edward. He signed the latter from Waterford opposing open communion at Dublin in January 1652. According to *Seymour*, 215, he was chaplain to Colonel Abbott's regiment in 1653. An Edward Hutchinson was in controversy with Richard Baxter in 1676/77.

⁶¹ Bullock, Brother. Only known here.

⁶² Card, Edward. Ivimey/Rippon gave his surname as Caxe and led Whitley to speculate on the possible presence of Benjamin Coxe in Ireland. Edward Card signed the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657.

⁶³ Axtell, Daniel. See *D.N.B.*, article 'Axtel, Daniel'. He was governor of Kilkenny but resigned his commission under Henry Cromwell. Executed in 1660 as regicide.

⁶⁴ Gough, Christopher. Signed the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657.

⁶⁵ Lamb, Brother. Only known here and not, presumably, to be confused with Richard Lamb at Dublin—see Note 53.

⁶⁶ Coleman, John. *Seymour*, 209 (and elsewhere) suggests he was paid from 1654-58 as a minister in Cork. Could he be identified with John Coleman of Barnstaple? Cf. B. R. White, 'Baptists in Barnstaple, Devon, 1650-1652', *B.Q.*, XXIV, 385-88.

⁶⁷ Or, better, Bandon and Kinsale.

⁶⁸ Knight, James. Signed the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657. He was paid from the civil list at Limerick in 1654 (*Seymour*, 215). Joined Harrison, Tull, Cox and Blackwood in London, 1661, in repudiating Venner. (*T.B.H.S.*, V.110).

⁶⁹ Uzell, Brother. Only known here unless identified with John Uzzall who obtained a license in 1672 (*T.B.H.S.*, I.169).

⁷⁰ Skinner, ? William. Will. Skinner signed the Glaziers' Hall letter to Carmarthen in the Ilston Churchbook, 2 March, 1650. W. Skinner signed the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657.

⁷¹ Clark, Robert. Signed the Dublin address to the Protector 1657. May have been in Burton on Trent in 1652 (*T.B.H.S.*, II.252). A Baptist commissioner for revenue in Ireland, paid for preaching in Connaught 1652, in Galway until end of 1657. Offerlane, Queen's County, 1658. (*Seymour*, 56, 209, etc.).

⁷² Davies, Thomas. Major in Ireland (*B.Q.*, I.276). Signed Dublin address to Protector 1657.

⁷³ Tomlins, Edward. Signed Dublin address to the Protector 1657.

⁷⁴ Hussy, Bartholomew. Signed Dublin address to the Protector 1657.

⁷⁵ Neale, Richard. Signed the Dublin address to the Protector 1657.

⁷⁶ Biggs, Brother. Only known here.

⁷⁷ Dix, William. Carlow, 1653. Belfast c.1655. Derryaghy, on civil list, 1656. (*Seymour*, 210.)

⁷⁸ Nelson, Brother. Ivimey/Rippon, Velson. Llanwenarth, Welson. A man named Nelson was doing some itinerant preaching in the Dublin neighbourhood in 1654. (*Seymour*, 217.)

⁷⁹ Browne, ? James. James Browne signed the Dublin address to the Protector in 1657.

⁸⁰ Chambers, John. Ivimey/Rippon, Chawbers. He was considered inadequate for the ministry by presbyterians in Ireland in 1658 and had been paid from the civil list in Co. Kerry, 1654. (*Seymour*, 155, 209.)

⁸¹ Reade, John. He seems to have been at Belturbet in 1654 but his appointment and, presumably, his salary, were suspended the following year.

⁸² Another brother Brookes had also died at Clonmell by June 1653. Both Ivimey/Rippon and Ilston/Llanwenarth list two Brookes, one below the other. This may be a coincidence or it may be a slip by an early scribe.

⁸³ The position of this note in the Ilston MS suggests that Sarah Barret was among those 'cast out for sin'.