

The Particular Baptist Outreach into the Midlands

We are not able to tell exactly when the London Particular Baptists reached out into the Midlands, but we are able to show they made efforts in the early 1640s. How long before this we do not know. That would take us into the terrible times of Laud and his hellhounds. Benjamin Cox and Daniel King were the main movers in the gathering of those old Midland churches. In fact, at least four men who signed the *First London Confession of Faith* played import roles in establishing the Midlands churches.

Introduction to the Midlands Particular Baptist Association

For this part, I have gone back as much as possible to the original writings of the 1600s. They have come from two main sources.

First, I have taken most of this material from B. W. White's *The Particular Baptist Records 1650 to 1660*. I would call special attention to his footnotes at the conclusion of the section. In these he documents many important items. He deals with two very important men living in that era and location, Daniel King and John Tombs. We need to pay special attention to these two very different men.

Secondly, I have borrowed many interesting remarks from Robert Baillie, Presbyterian. I have already introduced Thomas (Gangarea) Edwards. In *The Irish Connection*, he testified about the Particular Baptists of the 1640s, and their church sendings. Baillie is another very important Pedobaptist contributor.

In the early 1640s, the Presbyterian Kirk of Scotland sent Mr. Robert Baillie, Minister at Glasgow, into England. The English Presbyterians called out to Scotland for help against the Anabaptists, to repress them. Mr. Baillie issued his *Anabaptism, The True Foundation of Independency, Brownism, Antinomy, and Familism, and the most of the other Errors, which for the time do trouble the Church of England, Unsealed. Also, The Questions of Pedobaptism and Dipping handled from Scripture. In A Second Part of The Dissuasive from the Errors of the time*. London, Samuel Gellibrand; 1647.

Mr. Baillie set forth this thesis in his work: **The English Anabaptists of the 1600s are one with the older Anabaptists in Germany and other places, from the 1500s**. He covers the older Anabaptists of the 1500s and makes sure he can place before his readers as many evil reports and slanders as he can dig up. However, in spite of all this, he gives a very good overview of those times and their different groups of Anabaptists.

One of the constants in his work is the place of John Spilsbury and his leadership among the London Particular Baptists. Baillie shows that John Spilsbury wrote most of the *First London Confession of Faith*. Because of Baillie's efforts, and others like him, persecution drove Spilsbury from London into the Bromsgrove area where he suffered several setbacks and finally closed his life in the 1690s.

Baillie shows that the older Anabaptists were rigid Anabaptist dipper separatists. They were not only separatists, but *rigid dipper separatists*. He explains by showing that they withdrew from all others who were not of their dipped way. He then shows that the English Anabaptists were just like them in this same regard of dipped separation.

Baillie claims one of the main problems with the *Anabaptists of the 1500s was their desire to have a church made up only of true believers dipped. This is what led them away from all other groups. He then shows the same is true of the Anabaptists in England during his time, the 1640s.*

In his efforts to make the Anabaptists look like an unorganized mob of dipped madmen with many, many different opinions, he singles out *John Tombs* for closer consideration. Baillie introduces us to John Tombs, the first English writer in favor of open communion. It seems that Tombs promoted open communion Baptist concepts a few years before he became baptized and joined up with some of the Anabaptists, if he ever did.

Baillie settles this question for us, did Spilsbury and the others walking with him in their church constitutions, practice open communion and mixed membership? *He lists them as part of the rigid separatists Anabaptists like those of the 1500s. They were not open communion or open church membership like Tombs and later Jessey, and still later, John Bunyan. Baillie shows us that the conclusions of Gould and Whitsitt, centuries later, were unfounded, misleading and false.*

John Tombs is placed almost alone and the Rigid Anabaptists are centered around John Spilsbury where they should be. Baillie shows us that the English Rigid Anabaptists held to the ordinance of hearing, that is, they would not even hear the Pedobaptist ministers. He shows us that they inherited this practice from the older Anabaptists of the 1500s. Remember that John Spilsbury was the main mover and writer among the Rigid English Anabaptists. In Baillie's work, Spilsbury is targeted as the main writer of the *First London Confession* and the leader among the Rigid Anabaptist Dippers. He succeeded in causing John Spilsbury later to move into the country away from London due to persecution.

As I give Baillie's definition of Rigid Separation, please remember he shows that the English Anabaptists of his days practiced the same concept. This destroys the groundless falsehood that Spilsbury and Kiffen separated over Pulpit Affiliation, that is, Spilsbury invited unbaptized men into his pulpit.

Along with Featly and Taylor, Baillie shows that the older Anabaptists of the 1500s and the English Anabaptists of the 1600s were constant dippers. Thus, he destroys the very foundation of Whitsittism.

However, one of his most important efforts centers around John Tombs, showing him as writing in favor of open communion before he became a dipped Anabaptist. I will take up his remarks about John Tombs because they are vital in understanding some of the positions the old Midland Association of Particular Baptists took.

After I do this, then, I will turn our attention toward Daniel King and show from whence he came. I shall show the oneness of King and the London Particular Baptists in general and Spilsbury and Kiffen in particular. This will remove effectually even further some false and misleading claims about the Midland Baptists and their Confession of Faith.

John Tombs is the First English Writer in Favor of Open Communion.

Distinction here between open communion and open or mixed membership should be noted. Later Henry Jessey started the London *practice* of open or mixed membership, that is a church can include both the unbaptized and the baptized. However, early in Tombs'

ministry, even before he became an open communion Baptist in practice, he wrote in favor of open communion. Soon following Tombs' book, Jessey simply practiced what Tombs had written, but had not done. *Tombs was the first English writer in favor of open communion and mixed membership and Jessey is the first to practice it in London.*

In its proper place I will include *Orchard's History of Open Communion*, show its origin, and rise among the Polish Socinian Anabaptists. For our purposes in England, Tombs and Jessey are the originators of this disorder. John Bunyan came later.

Now, we will take up some of Baillie's remarks:

The Increase of the Mennonists:

While all the other factions of the Anabaptists did decrease, the followers of the priest Menno did much increase. They did reject the earthly Kingdom and Polygamy of the Monasterians and Battenburgicks, also the revelations and extraordinary calling of the Hophmanists, with the most of the blasphemies of David George. Against all these, Menno did write with passion. But to the point of Anabaptism and separation from all other reformed Churches to independency, and to a number more of the Anabaptists' tenets he did firmly adhere, alluring many thousands to his way, who continue to this day propagating their error to many countries. *(1646-a very note worthy statement in light of the present day denial that those old brethren practiced dipping, REP)*

The Errors of the Mennonists

The wickedness of that spirit which reigned in Menno, and yet rages in his followers, notwithstanding of all their profession of great piety, of singular modesty and extreme destation of all the other sects of Anabaptists, is apparent in the manifold grievous heresies and gross schisms, whereby they themselves have of old broken out and preserve therein to this day.

Who are pleased to read the late little and accurate and learned *Treatise of Clopenburgh*, may perceive that the Mennonists dippers do oppose the truth of Christ's human nature. *(Editor's Note, they believed in the pre-existence and heavenly origin of Christ's human nature, REP) Page 16.*

Independency the Cause of their Increase and Boldness

Hence, it was that the Anabaptists made little noise in England, till of late the Independents have corrupted and made worse the principles of the old

Separatists, proclaiming for errors a liberty both in Church and State; under this shelter the Anabaptists have lift up their head, and increased their numbers, much above all other sects of the land. Their ways as yet are not well known, but a little time it seems will discover them, for their singular zeal to propagate their way will not permit them long to lurk. Only the Confession of Faith which the other year seven of their Congregations did put forth, and of late again in a second corrected edition have set out with a bold preface to both Houses of Parl. May not no more be taken for the measure of their faith, then that Confession which their elder Brethren in Holland did print not long ago in the name of all their Congregations. (see Mr. Marshall's Defense against Tombs, page 76, REP) Page 18.

The Tenets of the old Anabaptists

The Most applauded Tenets of our modern Anabaptists are the self same with what the old Anabaptists did invent.

THE errors of thc Anabaptists and their divisions among themselves are so many that to set them down distinctly in any good order, is a task which I dare not undertake, much less can I give assurance what is common to them all and what proper to their several sects. Only that I may demonstrate the same very spirit to breath this day in the Anabaptists of Britain, which inspired their Fathers of former times in Germany, I will remark what tenets Authors of good credit ascribe to both; hoping that this discovery maybe a means to bring many simple well-meaning people who are not yet plunged in the deeps of obstinacy to a more accurate trial and greater suspicion of their ways: when they shall all see it made visible and palpable upon undeniable evidence, that their most beloved tenets and practices which they, believe to be full of truth and holiness, are no other but the same very singularities which thc known event doth now convince all who without prejudice can but read unquestionable Histories, to have been the inventions and dictates of the false and unclean spirit which acted and moved in Muncer, Becold, David George, and such like abominable monsters of mankind.

Their first and prime Tenet was a necessity of gathering Churches out of Churches, and of separating from the best reformed in their time, because of mixed communion.

The first and leading tenet of the old Anabaptists was a necessity to gather new Churches out of that which Luther and Zuingles and their followers had reformed from Popery. It is remarkable that these men had never a stomach to trouble themselves with any labor to make converts from Popery or profaneness, only so soon as gracious persons had drawn any Cities or Countries out of the kingdom of' Antichrist, then they fell on and everywhere did much disturb the work of the new Reformation.

At the beginning, they dissembled the grossest of their errors and their intention to quarrel infant's baptism they did only press a greater measure of holiness and mortification then was ordinary, in this all good men went along with them: but when they began to teach that the Church behoved to consist of no other members but such as were not in profession and aim alone, but also visibly, and really holy and elect, and therefore that new Churches behoved to be gathered, and that all the old any where extant behoved to be separate from as mixed, and so corrupted societies. Then Luther and Zuinglius did oppose themselves to this schismatic honor. Page 29.

When they found themselves disappointed of the assistance of Luther and Zuinglius, and all the rest of the orthodox Preachers, without more delay they fell upon their intended work themselves alone, first by private conventicles, then by preaching in the open streets they gathered and set up Churches after their own mind, consisting merely of Saints, who did forbear communion in religious exercises with all other Churches, whom they avowed to be for the most part but worldly, carnal, and profane Gospels, and their best Preachers, especially Luther and Zuinglius, to be but Scribes and Pharisees, false Prophets, large as evil as the Pope and his Antichristian Priests.

Antipedobaptism became at last their greatest darling

For the stricter engagements of the Saints and godly party their adherents, and for the clearer distinction of them from the profane multitude of all other Congregations, they thought meet to put upon them the mark and character of a new Baptism, making them renounce their old as null, because received in their infancy, and in a false Church. At the beginning this rebaptism was but a secondary and less principle doctrine among them, for Muncer himself was never rebaptized, neither in his own person did he rebaptize any, yet thereafter it became a more essential note of a member of their Church, and the crying down of infant's baptism came to be a most principal and distinctive Doctrine of all in their way.

Unto their new gathered Churches of rebaptized and dipped Saints, they did ascribe very ample privileges, for first they gave to every one of them a power of questioning in public before the whole Congregation any part of their Preacher's Doctrine. Secondly, to every one of their members they have a power of public preaching. Page 30.

**Their Pastors must renounce all former Ordination, and take their full call of new,
must come from the hands of their people.**

Thirdly, to their particular Churches they gave power of electing and ordaining such of their own Prophets whom they thought fittest to be Pastors to the rest.. whoever was not elected and ordained, whoever had

not their full calling from the people their full call alone, and did not renounce what ever ordination they had from any other, to them were no Pastors at all.

The Ordinance of Hearing

Upon this ground among others they refused to hear any of the Ministers of the reformed Churches, because they did not renounce their former ordination and calling to the Minister that they might take it again from the hands of their new gathered and separate Congregations.

The Congregation Has The Highest Power

Seventhly, unto their single Congregations they gave supreme and independent power to judge in all Ecclesiastical causes, not only judicially to pronounce all questions about their Pastor's Doctrine, but also to proceed to the highest censure of excommunication, as well against their Pastors as others when they found cause. Page 31.

Every Anabaptist is at Least a Rigid Separatists

For the first, the soberest Anabaptists do embrace the whole way of the rigid separation. **The Brownists did borrow all their Tenets from the Anabaptists of old, it is but equal that the Anabaptists this day should seek back again their Father's debt from the Brownists.** The chief singularities of Brownism are about the constitution and government of the Church, they say the Church is made up only of members who are really and convincingly holy, of such who do evidence the truth of their regeneration to the satisfaction of the whole or the greater part of the Church. Page 49.

Though the Independents offer to Conclude with the Anabaptists, yet they separate from the Independents no less then from the Brownists as Antichristian.

The first of these pleas the Independents hold fast with both their hands, and upon it are as rigid Separatists as any we know. But the Anabaptists take possession of both the grounds, that the walls of their separation may the more firmly be established. They will have all their members to be real Saints, and they separate from all other Churches who neglect to press the necessity of such a qualification, but to strengthen the right of their separation, they go on to pronounce all these Churches from whom they separate Antichristian. And, this their charity they extend to their other ways very dear friends the Independents and Brownists, for all even of them are such who by their doctrine and practice of Pedobaptism, deny that Christ is yet come in the flesh. The Brownists in their honest simplicity are loath to be long in the Anabaptist's debt. They quickly unchurch and excommunicate them also for denying baptism to infants, but the Independents will be wiser then their Fathers, Anabaptism to them is so small a peccadillo that is deserves no censure at all. They are most willing to retain the Anabaptists in their bosom, but here they pity, no caresses can

keep the most of the Anabaptists in the Independent Congregations. So soon as they begin to weigh their own principles, they find their infant baptism a clear nullity, and so a necessity laid upon them to be rebaptized. The Independents denying to them this Sacrament, they cannot choose but to go out to the avowed Anabaptists, who by this means embodies them in their Churches, where they alone can partake of baptism. Page 50

They avow all their Members to be Holy and Elect, and some of them are for their Perfection.

But for the more clear and distinct demonstration of these things, consider yet further first that in the qualification of members, the Anabaptists go as far as either the Independents or Brownists. The Confession of the Seven Churches do clearly bear this much, but others go further, avowing with their Fathers, the Dutch Perfectionists, that all of their society are so perfectly holy as they may not pray for the remission of any the least sin. Page 51.

After They Separate from all other Churches, they run next away from them their own selves.

As for the second, a natural result of the former, a separation from all other reformed Churches as impure, it is clear by their constant uniform practice which M. Kiffen, one of their prime Confessionists does justify at length against his opposite, Mr. Ricraft. In this separation, they run on so rashly that themselves know not where to stop it; for first with the Separatists they divide from all other Protestants, thereafter they shake off the Separatists. For the most intelligent and zealous among them refuse to remain in any congregation either of the Independents or Brownists. Lastly, the break among themselves in many pieces. Page 51.

They Separate from all who renounce not Pedobaptism

Fifthly, by their rejecting of infant baptism, they fall into the error of rigid Separation; they baptize none but actual believers, such as give them satisfaction of their actual faith and holiness. Thus far, they go along with the rigid Separatists. But hence they proceed to another ground, whereupon they leave the Separatists and all who follow them not to Anabaptism. They take baptism for a sacrament of initiation, for a door and means of entering into the Church. These who are not baptized, they count not as Church members. Infant baptism they pronounce a nullity, and such a disobedience to the Gospel as infers Antichristianism, and a real denial that Christ is yet come in the flesh. So the separatists who are all baptized in their infancy, and refuse to be rebaptized, to them are no better than unbaptized and Antichristian rebels, not capable of Church membership, or of any Church communion. Upon this ground (as their great Patron acknowledgeth) (Spilsbury REP) they are forced to declare the Independent

and Brownists Congregations, how dear otherwise soever, to be but Antichristian Synagogues, and no true Churches. Pages 90, 91.

Mr. Tombs' New Way

Seventhly, of those who impugn Pedobaptism some go a new way of their own, wherein as yet they have very few followers, if any at all, for to this day I have heard of none. Mr. Tombs, a learned and very bold man, at this time when so many new ways are in hand, had thought meet to make a hotchpotch of many of them together:

First, with all his strength and greater diligence then any before him, he impugns Pedobaptism.

Secondly, though as yet I have marked nothing to fall from his pen, neither for any of the old Anabaptist for the rite of dipping, or against our custom of sprinkling, yet in spoiling of Christian infants not only of Baptism but of all interest in the Covenant of Grace, as much as the children of Turks, and Pagans, in making Circumcision a seal to the Jews only of earthly and temporal privileges;

in denying to Jewish infants all right to the New Covenant, till their riper years when they become actual believers; in giving a power to persons unbaptized to baptize others;

in making apologies for the work of the Anabaptists, even those of Munster, and invectives against the best that oppose them, the first reformers, the Assembly at Westminster, the Church of Scotland, M. Marshall, Mr. Goodwin, and others;

he flies as high as any civil and discrete Anabaptist I have met with: but in those things he goes far beyond all the Anabaptists I have heard of.

He makes Baptism a Rite Needless either to Young or Old

First, he esteems baptism so unnecessary a rite, that men who are meet to receive it, may very well be without it, as Constantine, Ambrose, and others, did delay to their old age that Sacrament; and as it seems, himself is careless to this day to be baptized; for his infant baptism according to his arguments must be null, and another Baptism, so as yet it seems he has not received; for he professed an unwillingness to join himself as a member to any of the Anabaptist Churches. I suppose they are unwilling to baptize any who will not join in communion with them.

He Allows of a Frequent Rebaptism

Secondly, when a man is baptized according to his own mind he allows him to be oft thereafter rebaptized; even so often as he repents for sin, which by

the godly is done, at least ought to be done, every day oftener than once.

He admits unbaptized persons to the Lord's Table

Thirdly, he makes it lawful for persons before they are baptized to partake of the Lord's Supper.

He is a Gross Erastian.

Fourthly, to show how little inclinable he is to join with the Anabaptists, he declares himself a complete Erastian; avowing that no scandalous professor ought to be kept from the Lord's Table. Also, that there is no such thing as any censure of excommunication; further, that Christ in Scripture has not appointed nay particular government for His Church, but that the governing of the Church belongs to the Magistrate only, and to such whom he appoints to that service by virtue of a commission flowing from himself. Pages 91, 92.

This concludes Mr. Baillie's remarks.

When Did Mr. Tombs become a Baptist?

Thomas Crosby gives the following account:

After this (after being turned out of the Temple in London in 1646, REP), the people of Bewdley in Worcestershire, the town of his nativity, chose him for their minister. And now he began to preach and dispute publicly against infant-baptism, and to put his opinion into practice, being baptized by immersion, on a personal profession of faith. And seeing no prospect of any reformation in the established church in this point, he there gathered a separate church of those of his own persuasion, continuing at the same time minister of the parish.

His society of Baptists was not very large, but consisted of such who were of good esteem for their piety and solid judgment; and three eminent ministers of that persuasion were trained up in it, Mr. Richard Adams, Mr. John Eccles, and one Captian Boylston, and it continued till about the time of the king's restoration. Volume 1, pages 287, 288.

Richard Adams joined with William Kiffen in favor of closed communion. Mr, John Eccles became a close friend and helper to John Spilsbury and preached his funeral sermon. These two left open communion and ceased in their open communion and mixed membership practices.

In B. W. White's notes at the conclusion of his history of the Midlands Association, this is found:

37. Bewdley appears to date from 1649 (*T.B.H. S.*, VII.12) and the work of John Tombs. In 1653, a letter was sent to Hexham (E. B. Underhill, *Records of the churches of Christ, Hanserd Knollys Society, London; 1854, 344f.*) signed by Tho. Bolstonne, Philip Mun and Robert Goodlad. The hesitation

over Bewdley's membership of the association is likely to have been due to its open-membership practice inherited from Tombs.

Daniel King

Now, we direct our attention towards Daniel King. Some time in the late 1640s and early 1650s, Daniel King was pastoring the Particular Baptist Church at Warwick, outside of London. We will take up from William Stokes' *History of the Midlands Association of Baptist Churches, from its Rise in the year 1655 to 1855*; London: 1855.

The Midlands Association was formed in the following manner:

On the 3rd of May, 1655, a preliminary meeting of Pastors and Messengers was held at Warwick, for the purpose of considering certain Articles of Faith to be submitted to their respective churches, as the doctrinal basis of the intended Association. These brethren represented Baptist churches at Warwick, Morton, Bouton-on-the-Water, Alcester, Tewkesbury, Hook-Norton, and Derby. By whom they were called together, or who organized and conducted the correspondence that must have preceded such a meeting is not distinctly stated. Yet, there is strong reason for believing that the excellent and devoted Mr. King, then pastor of the Baptist Church at Warwick, was the principal man in these arrangements That each of these churches had a much earlier origin is evident from the undoubted circumstances that in 1655 they were able to depute their pastors and to bear their charges when distance and time were important considerations to the successive meetings for deliberation which the intended union required. And when it is remembered that so early as 1643, the Rev. Benjamin Cox (son of Bishop Cox) had visited Coventry, at the express invitation of a number of Baptists there who wished to be formed into a church, and that for his success in spreading his "Anabaptist" sentiments he was committed to Coventry goal, it is not hazarding in the way of opinion more than then general circumstances warrant, to affirm, that these churches were formed at least as early as 1640. Pages 22-24.

Where did Daniel King come from and who were his ministering brothers? He came from London and was one of John Spilsbury's young ministering brothers.

Here are more of B. W. White's remarks from his footnotes at the conclusion to his Midlands Baptist Association.

5. Daniel King published, *A Way to Sion* in 1650 (Thomason: 23 March) describing himself as 'Preacher of the Word near Coventry'. Included was an 'Epistle Dedicatory' signed by 'Thomas Patient, John Spilsbury, William Kiffen, John Pearson' commending the tract and describing King as one 'whom we judge a faithful and painful Minister of Jesus Christ'. He later published *A discovery of some troublesome thoughts* dated from 'rile Lime-kiln at Pickle hexing in Southwark this 7th of the 11th Month mentioning that he was 'near related' to the following churches: 'the Churches of Christ in London meeting usually at the glass-house in Broad

street, the Church in Coventry, the Church in Warwick, the Church at Hook Norton in Oxfordshire and the Church meeting near Morton-Hinmarsh in Gloucestershire. The title page describes the tract as published in 1651 but there is no Thomason copy and therefore no indication as to whether the date given by King relates to February 1650/51 or 1651/2. All that can be safely claimed is that these member churches of this association which he mentioned were in being by February 1652. In 1658 King was one of the Particular Baptist leaders made trustees of money bequeathed by Robert Bowes (*B.Q.*, VII.217). In 1672, he joined William Kiffen to produce material incorporated in *The Life of Henry Hills*; 1688: King's name does not appear among those attending the 1689 Assembly.

Daniel King was one of the founders of the Midlands Baptist Association and a ministering brother with Spilsbury, Kiffen, Thomas Patience, and others among the London Particular Baptists. King published his *A Discovery of Some Troublesome Thoughts*, London; 1651. This little work of about 65 pages is one of the sweetest and most important from that time dealing with Christian Experience, Assurance and Hope. In this sweet little work, King says this on the last page of his Introduction:

So I commit it to the blessing of God, and the approbation of the Churches of Christ, and such in them, as are most experienced in the dealings of God with troubled souls; and desire to continue as by the grace of God I am. From the Lime-kiln at Pickle Hering in Southwark this 7th of the 11th month, A servant to Christ and the meanest of His Saints, Daniel King.

In his footnote, he lists those churches:

As namely, the churches of Christ, in London, meeting usually at the Glasshouse in Broad Street, The Church in Coventry, the Church in Warwick, the Church at Hook Norton in Oxfordshire, and the Church meeting near Martin-Hinmarsh in Gloucestershire, or any others whom I am near related.

We can us identify the other churches as follows from the church listing at the Second Meeting of the Midlands Baptist Association. King was in a special way already, in 1651, related to those in Warwick, Hook Norton, Martin-Hinmarsh, and the church at Coventry.

First, the Glass House Church is one of those issuing the First London Confession.

Of Warwick(5)′ Daniel King(6) and Henry Vencent(7);

Of Morton(8)′ John Mayo, John :Man;

Of Bourton-on-the-Water(9)′ Henry Collins and John Mitchell, Anthony Colet;

Of Alchester(10)′ Thomas Arme and Stephen Wade(11);

Of Teuxbury(12)′ John Brian, Samuel Toney;

Of Hook Norton(13)′ James Willmore and Mathew Tomlinson (16).

Of Derby(15)′ Henry Davise and William Tomlinson⁽¹⁶⁾.

Benjamin Cox, in about 1643, gathered the church at Coventry, one of the foundational

churches in the association. Cox was from the London Particular Baptists and signed the 1646 Confession with Thomas Kilcop from the Petty France Church. At this point we should also remember that Benjamin Cox issued his *Appendix to the Confession of Faith*, in 1646 for the benefit of those dear saints in Coventry.

Now, note B. W. White's remarks:

17. **This agreement should be compared with the Abingdon or Berkshire Association agreement printed as Appendix I to E. A. Payne's, *The Baptists of Berkshire, London 1951, 147ff.* The share taken by the Berkshire Association and their representatives in the foundation of this association will be seen in the Abingdon MS.**

At the organization of the Midlands Baptist Association, the older Abington Association sent representatives. I have already showed that the London Particular Baptists helped form the Abington Association.

The Midlands Baptist Association owed its origin to:

First, the ministry of Benjamin Cox from London, one of the ministering brethren from the Seven Churches in London;

Second, from Daniel King, one of the ministering brethren from the Seven Churches in London, and;

Third, from the older Abington Association that came from the Particular Baptists in London.

Why, then, is the Midland's Baptist Confession so different from the First London Confession? For several reasons:

First, it was never designed to be printed in a book form as was the First London Confession. It was copied and placed in a church record book.

Second, it was an abridged form of the First London Confession. Daniel King, doubtless, wrote the Midland's Confession.

Third, it is no more different from the First London than the Somerset Baptist Confession is. Yet, in their introduction, those who published the Somerset Confession affirmed their oneness with that older Confession and the churches and ministers in London who issued it. See my remarks on The Somerset Baptist Association and its Confession of Faith.

The old Midlands Baptist Association came into being from the London Particular Baptists and may be considered one of their outreaches from London.

Let us consider on further into the differences between mixed membership and open communion, or the battle between John Tombs and Daniel King.

Daniel King verses John Tombs

Note B. W. White's remarks:

The Leominster Churchbook, p.21, reads: 'The 28th day of the 7th month

1656 was the Church of Christ meeting at brother Joseph Patshalls house in Leominster constituted and the persons undernamed did, after a solemn seeking of God, give up themselves to the Lord and to one another to walk together in all the ordinances of Jesus according to his appointments. Which was done in the presence of, and with the assistance of our brother Daniel King and other brethren'. A long list of over 130 men and women followed but most of these presumably joined later.

Question 4, raised by the Leominster messengers at the eighth General Meeting, more probably indicates the size of their congregation at this time. Edward Price represented Leominster as pastor, at the 1689 Assembly. A man named Patshall left Jessey's congregation for believer's baptism in 1643 (*T.B.H.S.*, I. 245) and a Joseph Patshall signed the new revision of the 1644 confession in 1651.

Please note the name of Joseph Patshall and see his development:

First, in Jessey's church and then leaving it in 1643 for gospel baptism;

Second, please note the constitution of the Particular Baptist Church at Leominster in 1656. Many of these persons came from Tombs' church. In the Associational records you will note their leaving and forming a new church. When they did this, Tomb's church complained and the association upheld the new church and ruled against Tombs and his church's objections.

Third, when the Particular Baptists reissued the London Confession in 1651, it was not simply a confession of the London Churches. Note these introductory remarks giving several reasons why they reissued their old Confession:

First, The invitations and earnest solicitations of several of our brethren, from all parts of the nation, whose hearts long to behold (in public) our stability and perseverance in the way and truth of our God, that by it they may have wherewith to put to silence those who have lately taken liberty to reproach and undervalue the truth professed by us.

Joseph Patshall signed the 1651 edition of the First London Confession. He is with King and opposing John Tombs. They assisted in the gathering of the New Church at Leominster.

In the old Midlands Baptist Association you find one of the signers of the First London Confession, Joseph Patshall, plus Daniel King and Benjamin Cox, all from the London Particular Baptist Churches.

B. W. White says further about John Tombs:

28. **John Tombs (*C.R.*, 487f.) was probably the most learned defender of the Baptist position during this period when he was active in, among other places, Bewdley, Ledbury and Leominster. He remains peripheral to the story of the Particular Baptist associations of the time because of his open-membership practice. No doubt, it was**

disagreement over these that led to the withdrawal of Patshall and his friends at Leominster in 1656.

29. **Richard Harrison (*C.R.*, 250, two successive entries) also practiced open-membership almost certainly.**

Establishing another link to the London Particular Baptists to the Midlands and also their rejection of open membership, is Benjamin Cox's letter against Richard Harrison over the matter of taking state pay for preaching the gospel.

30. **Benjamin Coxe (*T.B.H.S.*, VI.50-59) acted here as the messenger of the Abington Association. His rather lengthy paper against Richard Harrison's willingness to accept state pay has been transcribed from the Leominster Churchbook and is to be found as an Appendix to these records. For further details see White, 'Organization' 216-20.**

Now here are additional names that interest us. Thomas Shephard signed the First London Confession in 1644.

White continues:

31. **According to T. Thache, *The Gainsayer Convicted*, London 1649, (Thomason date: 6 August), 16 a Londoner called Harrison had drawn together a congregation in Cirencester whom he had not yet fully persuaded of the truth of believer's baptism. Among his disciples were 'M. Rudge' (mentioned in the epistle to the Reader), Thomas Chutterbuck, William Burge, Giles Handcox, Thomas Shephard, Caleb Setfe (p.29) and others referred to (p.61) as 'Roger the Shoemaker' and 'Samuel the Boddicemaker'. Of these the Cirencester Churchbook (deposited with the Gloucestershire Record office) mentions Caleb Setfe only although Richard Burge and James Clutterbucke were members by 1655---the year in which the first entries are to be found. A certain Giles Waticins (who went as minister to the 1689 Assembly) was also a leading member in 1655. On the '9th day of the 7th month 1659' it was agreed that 'our friends in the country' could 'sitt downe as a church of them selves', probably under the leadership of one William Moulder. It should be noted that the association record does *not* say that the church at Cirencester became a member of the association at this point.**

Edward Harrison is the Londoner named Harrison here. He was another signer of the First London Confession of Faith.

How many signers of the First London Confession were active in the Midlands Baptist Association? Cox, Harrison, Patshall and Shepherd. Then, there is Daniel King, that great leader who opposed John Tombs. The old Midlands Baptist Association was in reality the Second London Particular Baptist Association! It stood just as solidly against John Tombs and his open communion and mixed church membership as the London Brethren did against Henry Jessey.

Now, we are ready for the minutes of the Old Midlands Baptist Association.

White continues:

**Association Records of the
Particular Baptists of the Midlands to 1660**

Editorial Note.

Two attempts have made to tell the story of the churches associated together over the years in the Midlands and these have both included some material from the earliest period. They are William Stokes, *The History of the Midland Association* (London 1855) and J. M. Gwynne Owen, *Records of an old Association* (n.p. 1905). In addition, W. T. Whitley produced a useful survey which included some relevant material in *Baptist Association life in Worcestershire 1655-1926*, n. p. 1926).

Nevertheless, the great bulk of the material primed here from the Tewkesbury and Leominster Church books has not been made available before. Much of it, like that contained in the Welsh Records, concerns the answers of the messengers to queries proposed by the churches. However, unlike the Welsh records, no arrangements appear to have been made at association level for preaching plans. What seem characteristic of both sets of records are the churches' two major concerns: over and over again the queries raise questions concerned with internal church life and discipleship on the one hand and forms of ministry upon the other.

THE MIDLAND RECORDS

(The Original Midlands Baptist Confession-REP)

The first General Meeting, 2 May 1655

Articles unanimously agreed unto by all the messengers of the churches met at Warwick on the 2nd day of the 3rd month 1655.

1. We believe that there is one only true God which is one God who is eternal, almighty, unchangeable and incomprehensible, infinite; who is a spirit having (3) his being of himself and giveth being, to all creatures and doth what he will in heaven and in earth moving all things according to the counsel of His own will.

2. That this infinite being is set forth to be Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit and these three are one. I. J'n.5.7.

3. We profess and believe the Holy Scriptures, the Old and New Testament, to be the word and reveled mind of God which are able to make men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus and are given by inspiration of God serving to furnish the man of God to every good work and

that by them we are instructed to try all things whatsoever that are brought unto us under pretense of truth. Is. 8.20; 2 Tim. 3.15ff.

4. Though Adam was created righteous yet he fell through the temptation of Satan and in his fall overthrew not only himself but all posterity making them sinners by his disobedience so that we were by nature children of wrath and defiled from the womb being shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin. Ps. 51.5; Ro. 4.11.

5. That God elected and chose, in his eternal counsel, some persons to life and salvation even before the foundation of the world. Acts 13.48; Eph. 1.3f; 2 Thes.2.13; I. Pet. 1.2. Whom accordingly he doth and will effectually call and whom he doth so call he will certainly keep by his power through faith and unto salvation. 2 Tim. 1. 9f; I. Cor. 1.9; I Thess. 5.24; I. Pet. 1.5 etc.

6. That election was free in God and of his good pleasure and not at all for or with reference to any foreseen works or faith in the creature as the motive thereunto. Eph.1.4f; Ro. 11.5f.

7. That Christ Jesus was in the fullness of time manifested in the flesh being borne of a woman and being perfectly righteous gave Himself for His elect to redeem them unto God by his blood. Jn. 10.15; Eph.2.25ff; Ro.5.9.

8. That all until they are quickened by Christ are dead in sin and trespasses, Eph2.1, and therefore have not power to believe. savingly of them selves, Jn.10.23; Is.26.12, but faith is the free gift of God and mighty work of God in the soul even like the raising of Christ from the dead, Eph. 1.9. Thus, we consent not with those that hold that God hath given power to all men to believe to salvation.

9. That Christ is the only true king, priest and prophet of the Church. Acts 3.22f; Heb. 4.14; 7.1.

10. That every man that is justified is justified by Christ, Ro. 8.33; I. Cor. 6.11 apprehended by faith. And that no man is justified in the sight of God partly by Christ, partly by works. Ro. 3.20, 28, 30; Gal. 5.4.

11. That Jesus of Nazareth of whom the Scriptures of the Old Testament prophesies (*sic*) is the true Messiah and Savior of man and that he dyed on the cross, was buried, rose again in the same body in the which he suffered and ascended to the right hand of the majesty on high and appeareth in the presence of God making intercession for us.

12. That all that have faith wrought in their harts by the power of God according to his good pleasure should be careful to maintain good works and to abound in them acting from principles of true faith and unfeigned love looking to God's glory as the main end. Tit. 3.8; Heb. 11.6; I. Cor. 13.1; 10.31.

13. That all those that profess faith in Christ and make the same appear by their fruits are the proper subjects of baptism. Acts 8.37.

14. That baptizing is not by sprinkling but dipping of the person in the water representing the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Ro. 6. 3f; Col. 2.12.

15. That persons so baptized ought to walk together by free consent as God shall give opportunity in distinct churches or assemblies of Zion continuing in the apostle' doctrine and fellowship and breaking of bread and prayers as fellow members caring for one another according to the will of God. Acts 2.42,46.

16. That at the time appointed of the Lord the dead bodies of all men shall rise again that they may receive according to what they have done good or evil. I. Cor. 15.53; Mt. 24.31.

The Second General Meeting, 26 June 1655.

The agreement of certain churches at our meeting together at Morton hinmarsh the 26 day of the 4 month 1655.

The Lord our God having, according to his free and infinite mercy, given us to be in his son Jesus Christ and in himself, through him and to be baptized into his name and to walk in distinct churches and assemblies of Zion; according to the rule of His word, according to the measure and knowledge of grace which he hath bestowed upon us and given unto us to agree in the same principles as appeareth by our unanimous consenting in the same truths and especially contained in sixteen articles of faith and order agreeable to the holy Scriptures hath effectually taught us to endeavor to walk answerably, we do therefore, according to He will! of God, clearly appearing in his word, with true thankfulness unto him for his grace, mutually acknowledge each other to be true churches of Christ, and that it is our duty to hold a close communion each to other as the Lord shall give opportunity and ability, endeavoring that we may all increase more and more in faith and knowledge and in all purity and holiness to the honor of our God, and it is our resolution, in the strength of Christ, to endeavor' thus to do. Subscribed in the name of the churches above mentioned by us the messengers of the said churches respectively by them thereunto authorized and appointed.

Of Warwick(5)′ Daniel King(6) and Henry Vencent(7);

Of Morton(8)′ John Mayo, John :Man;

Of Bourton-on-the-Water(9)′ Henry Collins and John Mitchell, Anthony Colet;

Of Alchester(10)′ Thomas Arme and Stephen Wade(11);

Of Teuxbury(12)′ John Brian, Samuel Toney;

Of Hook Norton(13)′ James Willmore and Mathew Tomlinson (16).

Of Derby(15), Henry Davise and William Tomlinson(16).

Forasmuch (17) as the churches of Warwick, Morton hinmarsh, Bourton-on-the-Water, Teuxbury, Hook Norton, Darby, Alcester do mutually acknowledge each other to be true churches of Christ and that it is their duty to hold a close communion each with other according to the rule of his word and so be helpful each to other as God shall give opportunity and ability and these churches are now desired to consider that they acknowledge each other and are faithfully to hold such communion each with other and to endeavor to be helpful each to other:

1. In giving of advice after serious consultation and deliberation in matters and controversies remaining doubtful to any particular church as plainly appear in the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch. Acts 15.

2. In giving and receiving all so in case of poverty and want of any particular churches as appeareth in the approved and due acting of the churches of the Gentiles towards the churches of Jerusalem. Rom. 15.26f.

3. In sending their gifted brethren to use their gifts for the edification of the churches that need the same: as they shall see it seasonable, as the church at Jerusalem sonic J2:mabas to Antioch. Acts 11.22.

4. In a joint caring (*sic*) on of any work of the Lord that is common to the churches as they shall! have opportunity to join therein to the glory of God as appears in 2 Cor. 8.19.

5. In watching over each other and considering each other for good in respect of purity of doctrine, exercise of love and good conversation: they being all members of the same body of Christ, I Cor. 12:12, who therefore ought to have care one of another, I Cor. 12:29, especially considering how the glory of God is concerned in their standing and their holy conservation.

The (18) churches now associated are desired to take these things into consideration and to signify by their messengers at the next meeting how far they close with the same and that they judge expedient to be farther considered and done for the glory of God and the good of His people.

Touching marriage:

1. Whether it be not utterly and manifestly unlawful for a church member to marry one who cannot be duly looked upon to be a true believer in Christ considering' I. Cor. 7.39; 9.5; I. Peter 3.7.

2. Whether it be not at best a very inconvenient and uncomfortable and dangerous thing, for a church member to be married to one who, though pretending godliness, doth yet stand out against the ways of Christ refusing

to yield obedience to his command touching baptism, and walking in church communion. Whether the fruit of such marriages have not ben lamentable and consequently whether all church members whom this may concern, ought not to be admonished and charged to take heed of such a snare, and that they be fart from following the example of those sinners in Gen. 6.2 and that they be not found to temp God by their exposing themselves to a continual temptation or clog from a bosom companion and yoke-fellow.

Also the churches are desired to be careful of their duty in this respect so by their messengers to signify their judgment and resolution (22).

Resolution touching these things at the next meeting.

Touching the practice of any brother that doth or shall preach to the world and take maintenance from the world, whether tithes or augmentations or any other salary or pension, the churches am in-treated to consider:

1. Whether this be not a thing of evil report and that which opens the mouths of the world against the people and ways of God.
2. Whether it doth not savor of taking an enforced maintenance which was justly condemned in the Babylonish clergy, and whether such a one doth not act as one preaching for hire.
3. Whether that practice be any way agreeable to the New Testament rule touching preachers' maintenance, which we see in Gal. 6.6.
4. Whether it doth net commonly and principally (if not altogether) unavoidably dash him that practices upon other evils (viz.) as acting towards the world as it were the church, a countenancing of national worship and ministry and a hardening of the people in their idolizing of their temples.
5. Whether it doth not deprive the churches of the benefits of those gifts given for the churches' edification, as in Eph. 4. 12.
6. Whether it doth not manifest much covetousness or much mistrust in Christ's promises or provision or both.

The churches are humbly pressed, to seek the Lord for right information in the thing, there being preset need of the same and that they would signify their judgment touching it also at the next meeting.(19) As, likewise, whether they can see it either convenient or lawful for any church member to go forth to preach to the world without any approbation or sending from the church Also that they would consider whether they have not members fit in some measure for the offices that Christ hath ordained in his Church and, if they have, that then they would lay to heart their duty to endeavor that

they may orderly be brought to serve Christ and his Church in these offices. And that for help to know and do the will of God in these, things there may be an earnest seeking of the face of God in prayer with fasting.

The next meeting appointed at Morton hinmarsh, October 24, 1655 at 9 of the clock in the morn.

The third General Meeting, 24 October 1655.

The conclusions of the messengers of the churches upon some of the queries at the last meeting that were sent to the churches:

In answer to the first question, what it is to be duty a true believer in Christ, that they explain themselves by, "duly" that is, to be rightly and warrantable in Christ in profession and conversion' that is to have a principle of grace through he or she be not baptized nor in church communion, but they that are baptized are more orderly. This question was put to clear the former (viz) whether a believer sinneth in marrying any other but a believer considering I Cor. 7:39.

It is affirmatively, they sin if they marry with any other. The second question, whether it be not a very inconvenient and dangerous and uncomfortable thing for 'a church member to be married to one who, professing godliness, yet standeth out against baptism and church communion, [they] answer affirmatively: it is very inconvenient.

To the first of the 6 questions about ministers' maintenance: whether it be not a thing unlawful and of evil report for preaching of the Gospel to take tithes, augmentations, or any other salary or pension from the world? '

Answer: as the case of the question standeth some are in the negative and some in affirmative provided the maintenance be freely given, except tithes.

Next, this following quest/on is put to se if it will answer the former: whether it be nor unlawful for a member of the Church of Christ to go forth to preach by the magistrate's authority and to be maintained by him accordingly.

Answer: it is unlawful:

- 1. Because our Lord Christ sends forth his ministers by his power alone, Mt. 28.19, and he is the head of the body the Church that in all things he might have the preeminence, Col. 1.18; Eph. 1.22.**
- 2. Because Christ hath left all power in his Church both to call and send forth ministers, Matt. 28.20, saying, I am with you to the end of the world, and I. Tim.**

3; Titus 1; Acts 14; Mt. 18 and 16.18f. 3. Because we find the Church only exercising that power both in choosing and sending forth ministers as appeareth by these Scriptures, Acts 1.23, 26; 8.14; 13.2f and 11.22. We think fit to add that we taking this question entire consider it to be fully answered.

The 6 questions about ministers' maintenance are supposed by the messengers generally to be fully answered in the former question and therefore have waved them.

In answer to the next question whether it be lawful for a church-member to go forth and preach to the world without the sending or approbation of the church: it is unanimously agreed upon that it is not except in extraordinary cases.

In answer to the last question, whether it be the duty of every church of Christ to call to forth those to officiate in the offices of Christ and His Church as they find in a good measure qualified for the same according to the Scriptures: it is agreed in the affirmative and that from these Scriptures: Matt. 24.45; Tit. 1.5; Eph. 4.11; I Cor.12:28; Acts 20:28.12.28; Acts 20.28.

There are many congregation[s] that have gifted brethren that are approved of for the public preaching of the word that do not baptize nor administer the Supper. The churches are desired to consider whether these churches may not call forth those members to break bread and to baptize as need shall require.

Answer: in the affirmative, the churches may call forth such to baptize and administer the Supper provided they be very careful that their effectual endeavor after an official minister be not hereby neglected.

1. Because preaching the word is the greater work as appeareth, I Cor. 1.17, Paul was not sent to baptize but to preach the Gospel, which, we conceive, is he was not so much sent to baptize. If he was not sent to baptize at all he had done evil to assume that authority, but his main work was to preach the gospel though he was sent to baptize as appears, Acts 26.16, where God appeared to Paul for this purpose' to make him a minister and a witness, both of those things which he had scene and would appear to him. In Acts 9 God promises to tell Paul what he must do and he acknowledged he was an apostle of Christ in quality, and proportion with the rest of the apostles, 2 Cor. 12.11, who had commission to preach and baptize, Mt. 28.19f., for that he had authority, comparing the Scriptures together. It proves his not being sent to baptize is not so much as preaching which was the greatest work.

2. Because, where there is ability to preach publicly, there is authority to baptize also, Mt. 28.19; the disciples were to preach and baptize together as appears in Phillip's baptizing the eunuch, Acts 8.38.

Signed by the messengers of the churches respectively:

Morton John Mano;

Warwick Daniel King, John Career;

Bourton: John Michill, John Fox;²⁰

Tewkesbury: John Fluck, Thomas Smith, William Haines;

Hook Norton: James Willmat, John Archer;²¹

Alcester: Thomas Arme, John Johnstones;

Derby: Godfrey Archer, Henry Davis.

The next meeting to be at Warwick on Monday in ester week by 12 a clock and to continue two days.

The Fourth General Meeting, 7/8 April 1656.

The joint agreement of the messengers of the several churches being met at Warwick the 7 and 8 day of the 2nd month 1656 after they had joined together in prayer to seek the Lord for their direction in answer to these quires following'

Question 1. How the church ought to send forth their public approved gifted brethren that so they may answer the Scripture role..

Answer: with fasting and praises and laying on of hands with care for their maintenance, Acts 13.3; I. Tim. 4.14; Mt. 10.9f; Mk. 6.8; 3 In. 7; I. Cor. 9.7.

Question 2. Whether in churches that are associated if they have one or two or more of able, gifted, approved brethren in one or two churches, whether they ought not rather to improve them for the good of the whole churches that are in want than to confine him or them to any particular church.

Answer: they ought to improve the gifts of God to the honor of God's majesty. Therefore, considering the end of members congregating and churches associating, we judge wherein particular churches ought not to suffer other churches to want but they ought to partake of their gifts as they appear to have need both in spiritualities and temporals, Acts 11.22; 8.14; 2 Cot. 8.13-18; Eph. 1.11f.

Question 3. Whether it be not a great part of a gospel minister's work to instruct his flock by catechizing of them as well as preaching for their more perfect education.

Answer: by catechizing only is meant questioning for the more perfect knowledge of the condition of members so that by the discovery. of weakness, suitable strength may be added. We judge it a duty of a minister of Christ in this as in all other particulars as occasion offers itself to show himself a man approved in the work of God's house, 2 Tim. 3.15, which we conceive he cannot do except he inquire into the state of the flock that he may give everyone his portion of meat in due season and, we judge, there ought to be a readiness in every member to give an account of their state and condition to the elder or to any appointed thereunto, I. Thess 3.5ff; Prov. 27.23; I. Pet. 3.15.

The conclusions of these messengers of the things going before at their meeting at Warwick the 7th and 8th days of the second month 1656.

**Warwick: Nathaniel Alsop, John Turner.
Morton hinmarsh: Daniel King, John Doll.
Alcester: Thomas Arme, Stephen Wade.
Hook Norton: James Willmatt, John Archer.
Bourton: John Michael, Anthony Collett.
Derby: Robert Hope,²², William Tomlison.**

The next meeting is to be at Morton hinmarsh, June 4th by 8 of the clock in the morning and to continue three days of the 4th month 1656.

The Fifth General Meeting, 4/6 June 1656.

The conclusions of the messengers of the churches at their meeting at Morton Hinmarsh the 4th, 5th and 6th days of the 4th months 1656 to certain queries as they, follow:

Question 1. Whether baptized believers may join in any part of worship or public hearing the national ministers preach or others that are not baptized.

Answer: baptized believers ought not to hear the national ministers preach nor join with them in their public worship, their pretended ministry being Babylonish, Rev. 18.4. Neither may they so hear or join with unbaptized persons, though hoped to be godly, because they are disorderly in carrying on a public ministry and worship without baptism, Col. 2.5; 2 Thess. 3.6 no, nor with baptized persons neither if not sound in the faith which is the cause of those that are called free willers, Prov. 19.27.

Question 2. Whether it is the duty of church members always to call each other brother and sister?

Answer, it is the duty of church members 'always' to owe each other in their hearts as brethren and sisters and to manifest the same by calling each other so when it is expedient and convenient, I. Pet. 2.17. But, sometimes,

we know it may lawfully be forbore as divers Scriptures' example do manifest, Col. 1.2; 1. Tim. 1.12; Titus 1.4.

Question 3. Whether an approved gospel minister, who hath gathered many churches, which churches have no administrator of the ordinances but himself, he may be chosen into office by any of the said churches without the full consent of the others?

Answer, such a gospel minister cannot be orderly chosen as an officer by any church unless he be orderly a member of the same, Acts 6.3; 14.23. And that church of which he is orderly a member ought in this cause to do that and only that which shall be most for the churches' good and for the glory of God, 1 Cor. 10.31.

Question 4. What are the spiritual duties of believing parents and masters to their children and servants ?

Answer, for the first branch of it. In general to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. 6.4, which takes in these particulars, to instruct them in the things of God according to our ability and their capacity, Prov. 22.6, to exhort and charge them' to walk closely with God, 1. Thess. 2.11. 3rdly, to do it in such a way as not to provoke them to wrath lest they should be discouraged, Eph. 6.4; Col. 3.21. 4thly, to chastise them with severity if they be perverse or stubborn in sin, Deut. 21.18; Heb. 12.7; Prov. 23.13f. 5thly, to pray for them (so did Abraham for Ishmael, O that Ishmael may live in th3' sight; so did Job, Chap. 1, see also 2 Sam. 12.16; flit. 19.22).

To the second part, what are the spiritual duties of believing masters to their servants? 1. If they are believing servants, they are to perform duties to them as to brethren for this relation, 1. Tim. 6.2, but, if they be unbelievers, thus, the master what in him lieth must not suffer them to live in sin.

3. He may and ought to hold forth the truth of God to them to prepare them for the Lord as it is probable Cornelius did.

4. He ought to endeavor to rule them well, 1. Tim. 3.4; Eph. 6.9; compared with the former verses. 4thly, so to walk as to show them a good example himself, Ps. 101.2.

Question 5. Whether there be a distinct (*sic*) difference between noting and casting out?

Answer, agreed unto by the messengers of the churches of Warwick, Alcester, Tuexbury, Morton hinmarsh, Borton-on-the-water and Hooke

Norton as their present judgment that the withdrawing, noting and having no company with, spoken of in 2 Thess. 3 is all one with casting out.

Question 6. What ought to be the behavior of a church or each member to one noted or cast out?

Answer, agreed by the messengers of the churches aforementioned, we judge that our carriage to a *person* cast out of the church ought to be as towards a heathen or a publican, Mt. 18.17. Iii we find him hardened and persisting in sin then to leave him and take no more notice of him than of another wicked person. But if we find him willing to hear us and so likely to be gained then to use such means as the Scriptures affordeth for the regaining of him.

Question 7. Whether any part of church business may not be done before the world and what it is?

Answer: some parts may,

- 1. as preaching or prophesying in general, I. Cor. 14.24. But, if it be for trial of gifts or trial of a man before late be chosen into office, it is most convenient to be done before the church only: because the world is not concerned in such cases, I. Cor. 2.14.**
- 2. Baptism may be administered before the world for we conceive John baptizing such multitudes as he did and in a river, did it before the world. Acts 2.38,41 [is] considerable to this purpose: those 3,000 we conceive professed faith and were baptized before the world being so great a work done in so short a time and the people being generally drawn together it is probable that it could not be done privately.**
- 3. Prayer, we judge, may be made before the world, I. Cox,. 14.15, I will pray with my understanding, saith Paul, that is, in a known tongue to others that stand by and this being a church meeting, as appears vv. 18, 19, and unbelievers being admitted to hear prophesying as v. 24 we judge they stood by at prayers also. But this we desire may be considered, that we mean prayers upon common occasions at ordinary church meetings. But for prayers upon special occasions, particularly to the church, we see not grounds then to admit them.**
- 4. We judge breaking of bread may be done before the world because it is the Lord's death and is to show forth I Cor. 11.26, which is a weighty doctrine of the gospel and if the Lord's death may be showed forth in preaching and baptizing, as is clear, we conclude in this ordinance also.**
- 5. We judge also the pronouncing of the sentence of excommunication may be done before the world that they may see the church doth not bear**

with sin and sinners. That it may mind them of the woeful condition of wicked man and that God will denounce that terrible sentence against them, Go, ye cursed.

6. But, for admonition generally before excommunication in hope the offender may be recovered, that may not be done before the world because sins of offending brethren are not to be told the church till former admonition be visited.
7. Debating of doubtful [matters] that concerns the church only may not be before the world, Acts 15 (the former part of the chapter).
8. Trial, election and ordination of officers we judge is not to be done before the world because the world is not concerned in such cases, neither are such chosen to officiate to the world as officers but to the church.

Question 8. Whether a competent number of baptized believers in a troop or regiment may there walk as a church?

Answer: we do not discern that a number of disciples in a troop or regiment can there walk as and act as a particular church of Christ as there is no Scripture to warrant it nor discerning them to be in a capacity to keep close to the rule of the word in receiving of members, dealing with them in all cases as the matter shall require, and that they are continually liable to be dissolved.

Question 9. What is a true gospel prophesying in the church and who may or ought to appear in that great duty?

Answer: to the first branch, we answer, we find in I Cor. 14.3 concerning gospel prophesying that he that prophesieth speaketh to edification and exhortation and comfort. Hereupon we humbly offer it to consideration, whether it may not now be called gospel prophesying when men thus speak. To the 2nd branch we answer that they and they only may and ought to appear in the work whom God hath endued with gifts thus to speak, I. Pet. 4.10.

Question 10. How far women may speak in the church and how far not?

Answer: we answer that women in some cases may speak in the churches and in some cases again may not. That in some cases they may not speak manifestly appears in I. Cor. 14.34f. and I Tim. 2.11f. They may not so speak as that their speaking shall not show a not acknowledging of the inferiority of their sex and so is an usurping of authority over the man and more particularly thus-

1. A woman may not publicly teach in the church. This appears to have been

much in the apostle's eye, I. Cor. 14.

- 2. She may not speak in the church by way of passing sentence upon doctrines or cases in the church.**
- 3. She may not stand up as a ruler in the church and so speak upon that account.**
- 4. She may not speak in prayer as the mouth of the church, that is very clear in I. Tim. 2;**
- 5. yet, in the cases that follow and, possibly, in some other cases a woman may speak in the church and not be found to offend against the rule of the apostle, she desire to make a profession of her faith to the church to express her desire to baptism and communion with the church.**
- 6. if she be a witness concerning the church admonition of one that the church is to deal with or must herself tell the matter to the church according to the rule in Mt. 18.17.**
- 7. If she be sent from another church as a messenger, she may deliver her message.**
- 8. If she have need of the church's assistance in any things she may impart her just desire and lay open her case to them.**
- 9. if a woman have sinned and [ben] cast out of the church and God hath given her repentance, undoubtedly she may manifest it in the church.**

Some queries presented to the several churches.

First, if a gospel minister be mistaken in something he delivered publicly, or some member of the church conceive so, he may be questioned before the world or whether that is to be done before the brethren only.

- 1. Whether it be not the duty of every gospel minister to join himself as member to some particular church of Christ who may encourage him in well doing and deal with him in case he sin or fall?**
- 2. What are the duties of believing servants towards their masters and governors?**
- 3. Whether it be regular for a church to call in help of those that are not properly members there, to deal with offenders before the church themselves or [if] herself and her own members have tried what they can do of themselves.**
- 4. Whether persons in case of offence or trespass against brethren may**

regularly have their matters brought to the church before they have been twice admonished according to Mt. 18.17?

The next meeting of the messengers is appointed at Allcester the 15th day of the 8th month 1656 by 10 of the clock in the morning where those queries before laid down are answered by the messengers.

The Seventh General Meeting, 2/4 Apr. 1657.

Debated and resolved by the messengers of the several churches at their meeting at Morton Hinmarsh the 2nd and 3rd and 4th days of the 2nd month 1657.

Question 1. Whether it be lawful for a Christian to join or make a show of joining with a visible unbeliever when he makes a show of speaking in prayer, either in saying of grace, as they call it, or otherwise.

Answer: we judge it not lawful considering that the sacrifices of the wicked are abomination to the Lord, Prov. 15.8, therefore his prayers also, Prov. 28.9. And that we are not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers, 2 Cor. 6.14, nor to be partakers of other mens' sins, I. Tim. 5.22. But we judge it a Christian's duty in a discreet, sober, way to bear witness against such a practice.

Question 2. Whether a brother, having no other church member nor visible godly person with him, being desired to speak in prayer either as craving a blessing on God's creature to be received or praying for a sister presence [present], may lawfully so do and, if he may, what rule he is to observe or must then observe in the action.

Answer: we offer it to the serious consideration of the churches a brother may lawfully pray as is in this question mentioned so taking heed to his manner of expressing himself that he doth not make a show of taking in the unbelievers company and joining with him in prayer, Acts 27.35; 28.8.

The next meeting is to be at Alcester the 15th day of the 7th month 1657 by two of the clock afternoon and to continue 3 days if need require.

A letter from Daniel King

I do entreat the churches to hasten the view of their copies by this and send it with as much speed as may be to each other, and that the church at Teuksbury (to whom I suppose it will come last) [is] to hasten the return of it to Matron hinmarsh to Brother Rowland Freman for me because I would send it to the church at Lemster who will send messengers to our next meeting, that they may also consider of the particulars, and certify us by their messengers how far they are on with us in these things or wherein they differ. are on with us in these things or wherein they differ. Your poor

unprofitable brother in the faith and fellow in the gospel: Daniel King

The eighth General Meeting, 15/17 September 1657

Question 4. Whether disciples may sit down as a church under the number of 12 or 13.

Answer: it is judged necessary they should amount to the number of 12 or 13.

Question 5. How to answer an opposer demanding assent for the partaking of our own supper after the Lord's Supper was waved till next meeting.

It was debated whether the church at *Leominster and Hereford that walks distinct from Mr. Tombs' were rightly constituted.* It was proved and judged they were a true constituted church. It was likewise considered whether the said church might have association with these respective churches. It was generally judged they might only [they] left the completing of it till the messengers had acquainted the several churches.

The people walking with Mr. Tombs put in a letter to the messengers referring to their consideration to consider whether the withdrawing of members were not a great evil. It was found, upon debate, to be their liberty and their duty and an answer was sent of the letters to justify and approve of it.

A paper was sent likewise from Brother Harrison (30) with 3 Queries. The paper is agreed upon by the messengers to be answered by Brother Coxe. (31)

The questions in substance were this:

- 1. In what cases a member may lawfully depart the church.**
- 2. If lawful, whether all means should not be used to call in the assistance of other churches.**
- 3. If not lawful to depart, how to proceed toward those that shall.**

Agreed upon by the messengers of 7 congregations and likewise by messengers of 2 associations that next meeting to be at Alchester in Easter week, 2nd, 3rd and fourth days if need require.

Daniel King, Richard Creed, John Tomlinson, Benjamin Cox.

The ninth General Meeting, 13/14 October 1657³².

The substance of the conclusions of the messengers of the churches when met at Gloster the 13th and 14th days of the 8th month 1657 in answer to some queries at that time propounded.

Question 1. Whether that those that have received the work of regeneration may be said to be baptized with the spirit baptism according to the Scriptures.

Answer: the messengers answer in the negative; first, because we do not find that the work of regeneration is anywhere in Scripture called the baptism of the Spirit. Secondly, because wheresoever we find the Scripture speaking of the baptism of the Spirit, we do understand it to be meant of gifts and miracles and tongues, Acts 2. 3f 19.& Thirdly, because the disciples had the work of regeneration wrought within them yet had not the *Spirit's* baptism till after Christ[']s Ascension, Jn. 7.38f; Acts 1.4f., compared with Acts 2. 2ff, 33 yet we do believe that that work is wrought by the Spirit.

Question 3. Whether a gifted brother so judged by the church may go out to preach at his own will at the time of the church meeting or is to be alone at the disposing of the church.

Answer: we answer that such a brother so adjudged of by the church ought wholly to be at its disposing. First, because that all those gifted are the church's, I. Cor. 3.22; 12.28; Eph. 4.11f.

Secondly, because if one brother go forth at his own will, then another and so a third, and by that means the church may be wholly neglected.

Thirdly, because, if such a brother miscarry in his ministry, it would be charged upon the church, and so it would prove very dishonorable to the church and truth of Christ.

Fourthly, because, in such a disorderly going out, he cannot expect the prayers of the church for the Spirit of God to accompany h/m, Col. 4.3; Eph. 6.18f. and we judge if any brother shall persist in such disorderly practice after admonition that it is the church's duty to deal with him as an offender.

Letter from the messengers of the associated churches.

To the several churches of Jesus Christ the messengers of the several congregations met together at Gloucester the 13th day of the 8th month 1657 sendeth (s/c) greeting:

Dearly beloved brethren-in our Lord Jesus Christ whom we love in the Lord and unto whom our bowels yearn in all tenderness of affection: with our hart breathing and sighing with longing desire at the throne of grace: both for you and for all that love our dear Lord Jesus Christ. That you may grow and increase in all the gifts and graces of the Spirit and may be kept steadfast and unmovable in these staggering [?staggering] times and that you may shine forth in your conversation as lights in the world. That you may adorn the precious gospel of our Lord Jesus with a holy and humble conversation and that you may press forward towards the mark that is set before you and that you may be kept unblamable until the coming of our lord Jesus Christ.

Dear brethren, we have been by the precious hand of God our Father brought together from several parts according to our appointment to seek the face of our God together by fasting and prayers. And we can say that our Lord hath not altogether been wanting unto us but hath in some sweet measure kept us humble in him. And we have, through his grace, been enabled to pour out our sorties before him and for more of that blessed Spirit of Christ to be poured out upon Zion in general, and upon ourselves in particular that we might be thereby the more enabled to glorify him in our generation and perform the duties of our relation each to other as becometh a people redeemed by Christ. And we humbly and earnestly beg of you that you may be more in consideration of those blessed cautions that our Lord hath left upon record for to warn us that so a sluggish and drowsy frame of spirit sease [?seize] not on us which is very apt do both on the wise as well as the foolish virgins towards the time of the bridegroom's appearance. Brethren, we have agreed, the Lord assisting [and] willing, to keep our next general meeting at Siseter upon the day usually called Whitson Tuesday.

At which time and place we desire you to send your messengers with your epistle wherein you may let us understand the state and condition of your churches with a resolution to stay with us till our meeting be ended which will continue two days at the least. So, committing you to the Lord on whom you believe, and to the word of his grace, we rest, Your weak and unworthy brethren in the faith and fellowship of the gospel of our Lord Christ.

**Signed by us in the name and by the appointment of the whole, John Noob,
John Michell**

The twelfth General Meeting, 22 September 1658.³⁸

The substance of the conclusions of the messengers of the church when met at Morton hinmarsh the 22 day of the 7th month 1658 for the work of the Lord.

The first question. Whether it be lawful for a church member at any time to hear a person preach which hath been excommunicated by true church?

Answer: it is not lawful at any time to hear an excommunicated person preach unless some necessity shall be found to require some able brethren to hear in order to a present discovery and refutation of his errors, Lev. 19.17.

Secondly, we should by our hearing of him, both harden him in his sin and embolden others to follow him in it, I. Jn. 3.15.

Thirdly, such a one must be unto us as a heathen and a publican, Mt. 18.17.

Fourthly, in our hearing of him we should not according to the apostle's rule, 2 Thess. 3.14.

Fifthly, we should by our hearing and so owning of him [do] what in us lies to make void the church and null the act of the church by which he is excommunicated.

Further abbreviations used in the footnotes

- 1. B. Q. Baptist Quarterly, 1922-**
- 2. G.R.,- A. G. Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, Oxford 1934.**
- 3. Ivimey,- J. Ivimey, ,4 *History of the English Baptists* (4 vols), London 1811-1830.**
- 4. O.R.,- G. L. Turner, *Original Records of early Nonconformity under persecution and indulgence* (3 vols), London 1911.**
- 5. T. B. H.S., *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society* (7 vols) 1908-21.**

FOOTNOTES

- 1. All the records printed in this section are transcribed from the Tewkesbury Churchbook unless specifically noted to have been from the Leominster book. The extent of the extracts from the Leominster source is indicated by a line down the left-hand margin of the page.**
- 2. This 'Midland Confession' is printed from the Tewkesbury Churchbook. There are numerous unimportant variations from this in the Leominster version but the only significant difference is an addition to be found at the close of the Leominster version of article 15. It is possible that this was added later since Tewkesbury was an original member of the association and Leominster did not join until later. It reads as follows: 'All these Ordinances of Christ are enjoined to his Church being to be observed till his second coming which we all ought diligently to wait for'. The whole Confession was printed by W. L. Lumpkin in *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Chicago 1959, 198-200, as 'edited in 1905. from the Tewkesbury and Bourton Churchbooks' (*ibid.*, 198 note 36).**
- 3. The Tewkesbury scribe frequently repeated the last word in each line of his MS as the first in the next. These repetitions have been omitted.**
- 4. This section is taken from the Leominster Churchbook.**

5. The Warwick church was in being by 1652 (see note 6) but has no records from this period. Paul Fruin who, in 1653, was elder at Dymock, Gloucestershire, was pastor at Warwick in 1689 (*B.Q.*, 11. P.364).
6. Daniel King published, *A Way to Sion* in 1650 (Thomason: 23 March) describing himself as 'Preacher of the Word near Coventry'. Included was an 'Epistle Dedicatory' signed by 'Thomas Patient, John Spilsbury, William Kiffen, John Pearson' commending the tract and describing King as one 'whom we judge a faithful and painful Minister of Jesus Christ'. He later published *A discovery of some troublesome thoughts* dated from 'rile Lime-kiln at Pickle hexing in Southwark this 7th of the 11th Month' mentioning that he was 'near related' to the following churches: 'the Churches of Christ in London meeting usually at the glass-house in Broad street, the Church in Coventry, the Church in Warwick, the Church at Hook Norton in Oxfordshire and the Church meeting near Morton-Hinmarsh in Gloucestershire. The title page describes the tract as published in 1651 but there is no Thomason copy and therefore no indication as to whether the date given by King relates to February 1650/51 or 1651/2. All that can be safely claimed is that these member churches of this association which he mentioned were in being by February 1652. In 1658 King was one of the Particular Baptist leaders made trustees of money bequeathed by Robert Bowes (*B.Q.*, VII.217). In 1672, he joined William Kiffen to produce material incorporated in *The Life of Henry Hills*; 1688: King's name does not appear among those attending the 1689 Assembly.
7. Henry Vencent. Nothing is known about this man: like others mentioned in the association records for whom there will be no note this means that no plausible identification of him seems possible with any bearing a similar name in the works listed above under new abbreviations.
8. The Morton in the Marsh church was in being by February 1652 (see note 6) but no records exist for it from this period. At the 1689 Assembly, it was represented by John Goring as pastor and Anthony Freeman. F. E. Blackaby, *Past and Present: History of the Baptist Church, Stom on the Wold, Stow* 1892, 6-13 cited evidence suggesting that the congregation originally meeting 'near Moreton' (note 6) had moved four miles south to Stow in the 1690's when their first meetinghouse was built.
9. There is no evidence of the existence of the Bourton church before this meeting in 1655 and no records of the church remain for this period. When Anthony Palmer was in Bourton 1646-1660 (*C.R.*, 380) his congregation, if Baptist at all, was of the 'open membership' type and so was separate from that linked with the association. Apparently, no one attended the 1689 Assembly from Bourton.
10. This is the first known mention of the church at Alcester and no contemporary records otherwise remain concerning it. It was represented at the 1689 Assembly by John Willis and John Higgins.
11. In 1663, S. Wade, minister at Chard, was in prison. This could have been the man who represented Alcester in 1655 (*B.Q.*, IV.30).
12. Tewkesbury, in spite of the detailed association records preserved its Churchbook, has no other evidence from this period. Eleazar Herringe

- represented the church at the 1689 Assembly as pastor and Edward Canter. Herringe died 27 April 1694 (*Ivimey*, II.168).
13. Hook Norton possesses a MS copy of its history by Joshua Thomas with a dedication dated 31 March 1786. (Used in *Ivimey*, II. 517-21). The church was in being by February 1652 (see note 6). Thomas had used Crosby's *History*, III. I24f, other printed materials, oral traditions, and a marble monument which is still to be seen in the present meeting house commemorating William Harwood, a member and benefactor, who had suffered during the Persecution after 1660. According to Crosby, James Willmot, presumably the messenger in 1655 et seq., and Charles Archer, were joint pastors. During the Persecution, they were both imprisoned in Oxford and Witney gaols: unfortunately, no records of these in the period remain. Charles Archer represented Hook Norton at the 1689 Assembly. Members of the Willmot family remained linked with the church throughout the 18th Century.
 14. Matthew Teyton. His surname has been variously transcribed as Taylor, Tyton and Wyton.
 15. The church at Derby joined with those at Hexham and 'Wharton near Bradford' on 'the first day of the first month 1654' in a letter of loyalty to Cromwell. The letter was signed on behalf of 'the church of Christ at Derby and Burton upon Trent' by Robert Holpe (Hope?) and William Tomblinson. (E. B. Underhill, *Confessions of Faith, Hanserd Knollys Society*, London 1854, 331-4). Derbyshire was not represented at the 1689 Assembly.
 16. William Tomblinson's house was licensed for the worship of a Baptist group at Burton on Trent in 1672 (*O.R.*, II.713).
 17. This agreement should be compared with the Abingdon or Berkshire Association agreement printed as Appendix I to E. A. Payne's, *The Baptists of Berkshire*, London 1951, 147ff. The share taken by the Berkshire Association and their representatives in the foundation of this association will be seen in the Abingdon MS.
 18. This section is taken from the Leominster Churchbook.
 19. It is clear from the Tewkesbury Churchbook that their response to the queries about marriage with those not looked upon as 'true' believers, about the acceptance of any kind of salary from the 'world' and about preaching publicly without the church's permission, were firmly negative.
 20. John Fox may have been the owner of the barn in Nailsworth, Glos., registered for worship in 1672 (*O.R.*, 11.816) but this was some 25 miles from Bourton and was, rightly or wrongly, considered a Presbyterian meeting.
 21. John Archer from Hook Norton may have been related to the better remembered Charles Archer (see note 13).
 22. See note 15.
 23. Cf. *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696), 1.51 for the following more widely known example of a similar suggestion: when Cromwell lay at Cambridge long before with that famous Troop which he began his Army with, his Officers purposed to make their Troop a gathered Church, and they all subscribed an invitation to me to be their Pastor, and sent it me to

Coventry. I sent them a Denial, reproving their Attempt, and told wherein my Judgment was against the Lawfulness and Convenience of their way, and so I heard no more from them'. It would be interesting to have Baxter's reasons but all we know is that he after regretted his refusal--apparently upon the grounds that the men in that 'Troop' included many of those who later exercised wide influence.

24. The Leominster Churchbook reads 'sword' for 'worde' here and it probably to be preferred--as the slightly harder reading which makes good sense.

25. This section is taken from the Leominster Churchbook.

26. This letter is only to be found in the Leominster Churchbook.

27. This section is taken from the Leominster Churchbook.

28. The Leominster Churchbook, p.21, reads: 'The 28th day of the 7th month 1656 was the Church of Christ meeting at brother Joseph Patshalls house in Leominster constituted and the persons undernamed did, after a solemn seeking of God, give up themselves to the Lord and to one another to walk together in all the ordinances of Jesus according to his appointments. Which was done in the presence of, and with the assistance of our brother Daniel King and other brethren'. A long list of ~ of over 130 men and women followed but most of these presumably joined later. Question 4, raised by the Leominster messengers at the eighth General Meeting, more probably indicates the size of their congregation at this time. Edward Price represented Leominster as pastor, at the 1689 Assembly. A man named Patshall left Jessey's congregation for believer's baptism in 1643 (*T.B.H.S.*, I. 245) and a Joseph Patshall signed the new revision of the 1644 confession in 1651.

29. John Tombs (*C.R.*, 487f.) was probably the most learned defender of the Baptist position during this period when he was active in, among other places, Bewdley, Ledbury and Leominster. He remains peripheral to the story of the Particular Baptist associations of the time because of his open-membership practice. No doubt, it was disagreement over these that led to the withdrawal of Patshall and his friends at Leominster in 1656.

30. Richard Harrison (*C.R.*, 250, two successive entries) also practiced open-membership almost certainly.

31. Benjamin Coxe (*T.B.H.S.*, VI.50-59) acted here as the messenger of the Abington Association. His rather lengthy paper against Richard Harrison's willingness to accept state pay has been transcribed from the Leominster Churchbook and is to be found as an Appendix to these records. For further details see White, 'Organization' 216-20.

32. This meeting at Gloucester only a month after the last one is unexpected in both venue

and timing. Perhaps it was summoned because of the foundation of the congregation that applied for membership of the association at the tenth General Meeting in April 1658.

33. According to T. Thache, *The Gainsayer Convicted*, London 1649, (Thomason date: 6 August), 16 a Londoner called Harrison had drawn

together a congregation in Cirencester whom he had not yet fully persuaded of the truth of believer's baptism. Among his disciples were 'M. Rudge' (mentioned in the epistle to the Reader), Thomas Chutterbuck, William Burge, Giles Handcox, Thomas Sheppard, Caleb Setfe (p.29) and others referred to (p.61) as 'Roger the Shoornker' and 'Samuel the Boddicemaker'. Of these the Cirencester Churchbook (deposited with the Gloucestershire Record office) mentions Caleb Setfe only although Richard Burge and James Clutterbucke were members by 1655---the year in which the first entries are to be found. A certain Giles Waticins (who went as minister to the 1689 Assembly) was also a leading member in 1655. On the '9th day of the 7th month 1659' it was agreed that 'our friends in the country' could 'sitt downe as a church of them selves', probably under the leadership of one William Moulder. It should be noted that, the association record does *not* say that the church at Cirencester became a member of the association at this point.

34. The apparent confusion in entering this meeting, *before the tenth* must be due to a scribal mistake: the Cirencester meeting, though ineffectual, was intended whereas the meeting at Alcester which took place before it was not.

35. This section is taken from the Leominster Church Records.

36. Nothing else is known of the church at Gloucester at this time. It was not represented at the 1689 Assembly.

37. Bewdley appears to date from 1649 (*T.B.H. S.*, VII.12) and the work of John Tombs. In 1653, a letter was sent to Hexham (E. B. Underhill, *Records of the churches of Christ, Hanserd Knollys Society, London; 1854, 344f.*) signed by Tho. Bolstonne, Philip Mun and Robert Goodlad. The hesitation over Bewdley's membership of the association is likely to have been due to its open-membership practice inherited from Tombs.

38. Note the conflict of this date with that said to have been proposed in the last paragraph above.

39. The first Churchbook now known at Sansome Walk, Worcester opens in 1796 with an historical survey by the then pastor, William Belsher. He reports, (p.1) that 'There is before me an old book belonging to the Baptists of Worcester' with an entry by Thomas Fecknam (O.R., 11.786, S02, two entries concerning him as active in 1669) of January. 1658/9 with the names of 17 men in addition to himself and 21 women in membership. Belsher also noted that the Worcester church had proposed two queries for discussion at the meeting of the association at Alcester 12/13 days of the 2nd month 1659. This reference contains the only information extant about this meeting: unfortunately, Belsher did not trouble to transcribe any details. Cf. W. T. Whitley, 'Persecutions of Worcestershire Dissenters under the Stuarts', (*B.Q.*, L373-83). The church was not represented at the 1689 Assembly.