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Two Association Meetings in Kent, 1657.

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

- 1 In answer to ye quiriors about fighting we say y^t
in some casses it may be Lawfull; but as ye affaires
of ye nation now standeth & is like to continue till
ye appeareing of ye Lord Jesus we account it exceed-
ing dangerous Ro:13. 10. Tit. 3. 1. 1 pet. 2. 13.
Luk 3. 12, 13, 14—Jer 25, 15 to 34. dan 11. 32, 33.
Reu: 13. 10.
- 2 And for officers of Churches to list themselves either
as private soulders or Comission officers y^t it is
altogether vnlawfull.
Rom 12. 7. Luk. 16. 13. 1 Tim 3. 3
- 3 That there be all possible care in propogateing the
Gospel by Imploying ye Messengers in ye work of
ye Lord Jesus sending with each of them one young
disciple of good report that himselfe shall approue
of and that ye Deacons of ye Respective Congre-
gations be desiered to take speciall care not only of
ye Messengers to supply them with all things nesces-
sary for their Journeying but also that their
ffamilies be well provided for in ther absence
mark 16. 15. 1 Cor 9. 16 matt 24. 45 & 9. 38.
acts 6. 4. Acts 16. 1, 2, 3. 1 Cor. 9. 14. 2 Tim 2. 6
- 4 That all diligence be used by ye Churches to Cherish
young gifts & that thos that begin to speak be put
forward at thos times that may be most seasonable
puting them in minde y^t they continue their dis-

courses no Longer than they can speak as y^e oracles of God and finde assistance from y^e Spirit to speak with power.

2 tim. 1. 6. 1 Cor. 14. 39.

heb. 5. 12. 1 peter. 4. 11.

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

heb: 10. 25 act. 2. 7.

Jo^a 20. 19 1 cor. 16. 1.

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

Ro: 6. 17 & 16. 17. 1 tim. 6. 34

2 Jō. 9, 10. heb. 6. 1, 2.

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

That y^e Elders of y^e Church may not go in y^e time of the Churchs appointed meeting to any Sister Church or y^e world to preach y^e Gospel with out y^e assent of y^e Congregation

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

Yet not withstanding y^e Churches & Elders ought to take such care that both sister Churches & y^e world may have y^e more of y^e Gosple Ministered unto them at all seasonable times so farr as in them lieth.

phi 1. 27. Rev 22. 17. 1 Thess 2. 16 & 1. 8. act 18. 26, 27.

It is also agreed that Gifted members of Churches may not without y^e approbation of y^e Churches they be-long unto go forth by their own appointment to preach to the world or to make it their frequent practice to preach to other Churches

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

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

heb. 13. 17. & 10. 25.

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

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

And further more it is agreed that Elders cannont fulfil their Ministry on y^e first days of y^e weeke but allso must spend some other time in vissiting of y^e Sicke & seeking after y^e straying disiples &c in order to which it is farther agreed that y^e Churches are bound in duty to assist them upon that accompt so that they & theirs may live comfortablely & farthermore that some as helpes of Government may very much helpe the Elders their work so that they may not leave of their callings but contrarywise work with their hands at all seasonable times

act 20. 34, 35. 2 tim 4. 21. Matt 18. 12, 13. James 5. 14. 1 tim 4. 13, 14. gall. 6. 6. 1 tim. 5. 17, 18

That it is Lawfull for y^e ending of strife in a soleme way to swear by the name of y^e Lord & not otherwise or in such a mañer as paul did

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

That y^e Congregations of Christ ought not to hold communion with any y^t do not believe & practis all those

principles mentioned heb 6. 1, 2. we mean touching that of laying on of hands that we cannot own communion w^t any that do not believe & accordingly submite unto prayer with laying on of hands for y^e receiveing of the gifes of the Spirite as a principle of the Doctrine of Christ.

Act. 12 to y^e 21. chap. 9. 7 cha 19. 5, 6, 7. 2 tim. 1. 6. heb. 6. 1, 2. Ro. 6. 17. cha. 16. 17.. 2 thes 3. 6.. 1 tim. 6. 3, 5. Joh Ep. 2. 9.

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

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

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

They indicate that the local officers, Elders and Deacons, were being sharply distinguished from the itinerant officers, Messengers; but that the system still needed clear definition. It is regrettable that no signatures are appended, to compare with the lists of both known in 1654 and 1660, or with the signatures to the Minutes of Assembly in 1656, recorded in this same book, and printed in our edition of 1909.