

The Organization of the Particular Baptists, 1644-1660

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In this JOURNAL Dr. G. F. Nuttall has reviewed the records which he re-discovered of the Baptist Western Association 1653-8. (1) Meanwhile, unknown to him, a MS. had come into the hands of Dr. E. A. Payne which reported the proceedings of a similar association centred in Berkshire for the period 1652-60 and which he deposited in the Angus Library at Regent's Park College, Oxford, where it has lain unused for some years past. Since, either in MS. or in print, there are now known to exist the records for five similar organisations during the period of the Commonwealth and the Protectorate, namely, the two already mentioned, together with those in Wales, the English Midlands and Ireland, the time seems appropriate for a study of the organisation of the Particular Baptists during this period in Britain as a whole. Whilst there are no similar records extant for the London congregations there is clear evidence, as it is hoped to show in this paper, that the churches of the capital did associate and that they initiated and fostered closer relations between themselves and those of the provinces.

With this in mind, it is intended briefly to review the history of each group of churches in turn before proceeding to discuss their inter-relationships and the part played by the London leaders.

The earliest known detailed (2) instance of an initiative from London was connected with the dispatch of John Miles' (1621-83) to South Wales in 1649. In that year (3) Miles and his friend Thomas Proud, who had recently come to Baptist convictions, arrived in London from Glamorgan. There they encountered the congregation which gathered in the Glaziers' Hall in Broad Street, soon after the latter had prayed for evangelists to preach (4) 'in those places where the Lord had work to be done'.

(1) *J.E.H.*, xi (1960), 213-18. This essay is greatly indebted to Dr. Nuttall for his comments.

(2) Luke Howard, *A Looking Glass for Baptists*, London 1671, 5, mentioned a mission in Kent by William Kiffen 'In the year 1643 and 1644' related in some way to 'the Seven Churches' in London.

(3) For Miles see *D.N.B.*, and Thomas Richards, *The Puritan Movement in Wales*, London 1920.

(4) The Ilston Churchbook, 171 f, from an undated letter (probably 1650) from 'one of the congregations of Christ meeting in the Glasshouse in London'. This ambiguous phrase probably meant 'one or several congregations meeting there'—in association. (The Ilston Churchbook is now deposited at Brown University, R.I, U.S.A. A facsimile can be examined in the National Library of Wales—N.L.W. MSS. 0108-0. This letter was also transcribed into the Llanwenarth Churchbook (also in N.L.W.) and published by Joseph Ivimey, *History of the English Baptists*, London 1811, i. 236 f. Ilston Churchbook, 5. ii. 165.

It seems probable that the two men were baptized at Glaziers' Hall and, as the Churchbook reported, (1) 'they were again recommended into those parts'.

Their mission was soon fruitful: at Ilston, near Swansea in Glamorgan, a church was founded in October 1649; (2) next, early in 1650, Miles won over many of the members of an Independent congregation at Llani-gon, in Breconshire, who were *then* 'baptized and Joined together in the order of the gospel'. By the late summer of 1650 (4), a third congregation, based at Llanharan in East Glamorgan, had been formed from two further groups of converts. On 22 January 1651 (5) a fourth congregation was founded at Carmarthen 'who now be another City of God', and a fifth 'began to break bread' in Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, during August 1652. These churches were all founded upon the principle of 'closed communion': that is, paedobaptists were not accepted into them before baptism as believers. The temporary exception to this rule appears to have been Abergavenny, (7) which was briefly linked with some of the 'open membership' congregations influenced by John Tombes. The five churches all appear to have owed their foundation to the work of John Miles' and his assistants and so all, having a common origin, soon found it possible and, indeed, necessary to hold joint meetings.

(1) Ilston Churchbook, 165.

(2) *Ibid.*, 9.

- (3) *ibid.* 164." (162- were duplicated in numbering). This church was normally referred to as the 'church at the Hay'
- (4) *Ibid.* 168: no date given but the record of its foundation followed a letter dated May 1 61,0 and preceded one dated August 1 61.
- (5) *Ibid.*, 160. Carmarthen (see *ibid.*, 23, 25) seems to have grown from a branch of the Ilston Church.
- (6) Joshua Thomas MS.: 'The History of the Baptist Churches in Wales' (Bristol Baptist College Library), 03. This was Thomas's own translation and expansion of an earlier work of his which had been published in Welsh. The Abergavenny church later migrated to Llanwenarth nearby, hence the title 'Llanwenarth Churchbook'. These records were more extensive when Thomas examined them in the eighteenth century than to day, and his MS. contains transcriptions of sections now lost.
- (7) It is symptomatic of the pressures which this 'closed communion' group underwent when Thomas Proud was excluded from fellowship at Ilston for a period in 16thi (Ilston Churchbook, 33) for 'having grievously sinned against God by broaching ye destructive opinion maintaining ye mixed communion of ye baptized and unbaptized in visible church fellowship'. The Abergavenny congregation joined with other churches linked with John Tombes and Henry Jessey, both 'open communion' leaders, in a letter to Hexham (E. B. Underhill, *Records of . . . Hexham*, London 1854, 341-6). At a meeting of representatives of the various churches held at Abergavenny on 1 and 2 March 1654 Abergavenny was advised 'to take heed of mixed communion with unbaptized persons or any others walking disorderly' (Joshua Thomas, *A History of the Baptist Association in Wales*, London 170.^ ii).

(8) The Llanwenarth records now known do not explicitly state that the Abergavenny congregation was founded by Miles or his assistants but the Ilston Churchbook (39) recorded that, at the General Meeting in July 1653, 'the great work of settling the (The next few words are missing REP)... that John Tombes disputed at Abergavenny about the true nature of baptism and was described as coming 'to water that which Mr. Miles, Prosser and others had planted': J.W., *A Public Dispute . . .*, London 1654, The Epistle Dedicatory.

The first General Meeting, (1) as it was termed, (2) took place in November 1650. Those present at these meetings, as the report of the third of them made clear, were 'the Elders, and other Messengers of the several Churches' and at the fifth meeting there were twenty representatives from the five congregations present of whom seven were from Ilston. These gatherings occurred irregularly until at the fourth, in March 1654, it was decided to hold them every six months. Unfortunately, the fifth meeting was the last for which there is now any record. (3)

At the first meeting the allocation of preachers to the churches was arranged and it was agreed to raise 30, largely for the maintenance of one of the preachers, Walter Prosser, who had no state stipend. (4) It was also decided that, to bring all to a common mind, as the context probably indicates, concerning the right order and discipline of the churches, a declaration from the Hay should be examined by each congregation in turn and any queries concerning it should be raised at the next general meeting. Most of the second meeting was concerned with arranging for the supply and support of preachers in the various churches. In addition, there arose, very briefly, the first queries requiring decision by the leaders from the churches which were to become characteristic of other similar meetings and other associations. The queries concerned psalm singing and the laying-on-of-hands. For the present, they were referred back to the individual congregations for consideration. At the third meeting, among other matters, it was decided that

- (1) The General Meetings (referred to by these numbers in the main text) were: First, at Ilston, 6-7 November 1650. Ilston, Llanharan, Hay represented. (Source: Ilston Churchbook, 25, f-). Second, at Carmarthen, 19, March 1651. Ilston, Llanharan, Hay, Carmarthen represented. (Source: *ibid.*, 29 f.). Third, at Abergavenny, 14-15 July 1653. Ilston, Llanharan, Hay, Carmarthen, Abergavenny represented. (Source: *ibid.*, 39 f. and Joshua Thomas, *op. cit.*, 9, f.). Fourth, at Aberason, 1-2 March 1654-All apparently represented. (Source: Joshua Thomas, *ibid.*, 10 f.). Fifth, at Llantrisant, 30-31 August 1654. All five represented. (Source: Joshua Thomas, *ibid.*, 11—15.). According to Thomas (*ibid.*, 15), a next meeting was planned for March 1655, but he had found no records of it.
- (2) It seems that Joshua Thomas first applied the term 'association' to these meetings of the Ilston group of churches. It is not used in the extant records.
- (3) Thomas, probably rightly (*ibid.*, 16 f.), considered the meeting at Brecon 20-30 July 1656, which produced *An Antidote against the Infection of the Times*, to have been one of these general meetings. Elders and messengers from Ilston, Tredinog (near Llaii-trisaint, Monmouthshire), Abergavenny, Carmarthen, Hereford, Bredwardine and Clodock (both in Herefordshire and branches of the congregation meeting originally at Hay), and Llangorse (in Breconshire, a branch of the Abergavenny church) attended. W. L. Lumpkin (*Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Chicago 1959, 216 IT.) claimed, with some justice) that the *Antidote* was virtually a Confession of Faith. Thomas Richards, in *The Puritan Movement in Wales*, 202, 207, seems to imply that these records suggest that Miles was drifting away, in polity and doctrine, from the London leaders. On the whole this view is not substantiated by the evidence he cites.
- (4) The propriety, or otherwise, of accepting state stipends was to be much canvassed in the associations, but John Miles himself had no objection to accepting such maintenance and he came under some criticism for holding this position.

'our Brother William Richard be sent forth a public (sic) minister of the Gospel. (1)

Meanwhile, it appeared that a group of church members at Hay had withdrawn from the main body and were meeting separately. The meeting of representatives instructed them to return to their former allegiance and to bring the matter to the next general meeting. Should they refuse, that meeting would finally disown them.

Although held nearly eight months later, the fourth general meeting found the church at Hay still divided and John Miles was deputed to visit both it and the church at Abergavenny 'in order to the settling of them, and helping them to judge of the several gifts of the members among them'. This was the gathering at which Abergavenny was warned to avoid 'mixed communion', and at which it was decided that Miles and three others should draft a statement outlining the duties of church officers and members.

When the representatives met for the fifth and final meeting of which records remain, in August 1654, the matters of psalm singing, the laying-on-of-hands were again raised, and the answer was again postponed. But one most significant decision was taken: 'that the appointed fast days should be continued; for that is the agreement of the churches of *England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales*, and our promise to God and them to observe it'. This referred, as will be seen later, to an agreement of the British Particular Baptist churches. The promised answer about the mutual duties of ministers and members was also forthcoming at this meeting and, although there was no discussion of the seat of final authority in the Church, there was nothing in it (2) that many other seventeenth-century Particular Baptists would have disputed.

Such were the matters dealt with at the meetings of representative members of the Ilston group of congregations: the supply and payment of the ministry, advice to churches in difficulty, and the settlement of queries about faith and conduct.

Yet the story cannot be told merely in terms of the inter-relationships of these five congregations: always in the background was the watchful care of the church in Glaziers' Hall and behind them, at least after the summer of 16³ as the decision about fast days showed, stood the wider fellowship of those who shared the same convictions in England, Ireland and Scotland. In fact, the letters from the London church transcribed into the Ilston Churchbook (3) demonstrate that the correspondence was carried on, not only with Ilston, but also with Llanharan, Hay and Carmarthen.

(1) The individual congregation, of which the person so chosen was a member, normally took such a decision as this.

(2) Joshua Thomas, *op. cit.*, 12—15,

(3) Letters from London received before the Irish correspondence of 1653 were:

- i. 'To the Churches of Christ in Wales', n.d., probably 1650.
- ii. To Llanharan, 14 January 1631 (all dates are here given according to the new style).
- iii. To Hay, n.d.
- iv. To Carmarthen, 2 March 1630.
- v. To Ilston, 14 March 1650.
- vi. To Ilston, 14 March 1650.
- vii. 'To the churches of Christ well are in Wales', 1 February 1652.

It is clear, too, that Miles visited London at least once more, since one letter of 1652 mentioned that 'several epistles which we have received from you by our brother Myles'.(1) In the London letters, apart from general exhortations to holiness of life, great emphasis was laid upon the danger of any compromise over the 'closed communion' question. (2)

Perhaps the most important letter, headed 'Glasshouse London ye 14th 12 Mon: 51 (3) and signed by, among others of the Glaziers' Hall church, Samuel Tull—later to be found linked with the congregation meeting in Petty France—was in reply to a request for advice on two matters. The

Londoners answered first, that, though lawful, it was not expedient to listen to preachers not sharing their 'closed communion' convictions and, secondly, that a widely scattered fellowship should not divide into independent congregations' unless each group had someone able to give it pastoral oversight.

In 1653, the Ilston churches received copies of letters from Ireland and London⁽⁵⁾ urging closer links between the British Particular Baptists. These came from the Glaziers' Hall church as their London correspondents.⁽⁶⁾ The only later evidence of contact with London is to be found in the Hanwenarth Churchbook. In 1655, the Abergavenny congregation, apparently dissatisfied that the local General Meeting was dragging its feet on the question of the laying on of hands on baptized believers, approached the Glaziers' Hall church for assistance, which was willingly given. " At this point the records of the earliest 'association' in Wales come to an end.

(1) Ilston Churchbook, 186: letter vii, above, 212 n. 3.

(2) See especially letters iii, v, vi, and vii, above, 212 n. 3.

(3) Ilston Churchbook, 186.

(4) *Ibid.*, 186-0. Ivimey, *op. cit.*, i. 239 printed this paragraph.

(5) These letters, together with some information about the Irish churches, were transcribed into both the Ilston and Llanwellarth Churchbooks. All these materials were printed by Ivimey, *op. cit.*, i, 240—52.

(6) This seems the most likely explanation (other than that of a simple mistake) of the fact that The Ilston transcription of the London letter (Ilston Churchbook, 193 f.) is headed 'from the Church of Christ at Glasshouse London', whilst at its foot is a note that the letter was 'from several Churches of Christ in London', as found in other transcriptions of it.

It ought also to be noted that, although omitted by Ivimey, the transcriptions of the Irish letter, in both the Ilston and the Llanwenarth Churchbooks, are headed 'for the Churches of Christ in London when assembled'. This seems to be evidence of a meeting of Elders and Messengers in London in 1653 similar to those in Wales.

Later the Irish churches sent a general letter of exhortation to Ilston and Llantrisant, dated from Dublin 12 June 1656 (Ilston Churchbook, 207 f., printed by Ivimey, *op. cit.*, i. 253-5).

(7) Llanweirarth Churchbook, 187. The decision to approach the Glaziers' Hall church was taken in December 1655. On 27 January, William Rider (described in W. T. Whitney's *Baptist Bibliography* as 'Southwark G. B.' and who wrote *Laying on of Hands Asserted* in 1656) arrived at what may have been a General Meeting held in Hay with a commission to expound the matter. As a consequence of his exposition, fifteen men and women had hands laid upon them by Rider and his companion, Robert Hopkin. It may be pointed out that if this were a general meeting it would fit into the bi-annual pattern laid down earlier, especially if the meeting at Brecon in July were taken as next in series.

The next mission sponsored by the London churches so far as is now known was that undertaken by Thomas Tillam (1) in Northumberland. Tillam described himself as (2) 'minister, and a messenger of one of the seven churches in London'⁽³⁾ when he arrived in Hexham on 27 December 1651. He had been commissioned by the church led by Hanserd Knollys which met in Swan Alley, Coleman Street, London, as they later recalled in a letter: 'we gave him our letter of recommendation, and sent him forth to preach the gospel, and to baptize them that did believe the same; and accordingly, as the Lord did assist and direct him, to be instrumental to set them in an orderly way, wherein they might worship God in spirit and truth . . .'⁽⁴⁾

Tillam's ministry was, at first, as fruitful as that of John Miles before him. Only seven months' after his arrival, on 21 July 1652, eleven men and five women were baptized as founder members of the church at Hexham.

(1) E. A. Payne, 'Thomas Tillam' in *Baptist Quarterly*, xvii (1957-8), gave a succinct account of his career.

(2) E. B. Underhill, *op. cit.*, 289.

(3) The reference to 'the seven churches in London' is further evidence that the London 'closed communion' churches were a recognized, close-knit group in 1651.

(4) E. B. Underhill, *op. cit.*, 320. This echoes two important earlier London Particular Baptist statements of faith and policy:

i. *The Confession of Faith of those Churches which are commonly (though falsely) called Anabaptists*, London 1644. Modified editions were published in 1646 and 1651. Then, in 1652, the 1651 edition was reprinted without alteration. An introduction to, and a reprint of, the 1644 *Confession* may be found in W. L. Lumpkin, *op. cit.* The *Confession* of 1644, afforded not only the first evidence of seven London congregations of Calvinistic 'closed membership' churches acting in concert: it also outlined the convictions, and foreshadowed the policy, upon which their later missions were to be based. Article xxxiii of the 1644 *Confession* restricted membership to those who had been baptized as believers and Article xlv affirmed that any church member 'to whom God hath given gifts, being tried in the Church, may and ought, by the appointment of the congregation, to . . . teach publicly the Word of God'. In 1646 and 1651 slight

modifications appear in these articles but they are purely verbal and do not alter the substantial meaning. ii, Benjamin Cox, *An Appendix to a Confession of Faith*, 164.6. After the revision of the *Confession* in 1646 one of the signatories, Benjamin Cox, brought out this *Appendix*, later the same year (Thomason's copy is marked 'November 30th') to emphasize and expand some of the teaching given there. He wrote, he said, to meet 'the inquiry of some well-afflicted and godly persons in the Country'. The whole tone of the pamphlet, where the characteristic personal pronoun was not 'I' but 'we', suggests that Cox himself felt to be supplying not so much a personal gloss on the *Confession* but a further expansion and exposition of the joint mind of those who had signed it.

Two of his paragraphs deal explicitly with the subject of this essay. The first dealt with the qualifications and the powers of itinerant evangelists: 'A disciple gifted and enabled by the spirit of Christ to preach the Gospel . . . is a man authorized and sent by Christ . . . , And they which are converted from unbelief and false-worship, and so brought into Church-fellowship by such preachers . . . are a scale of their ministry . . . And such preachers of the Gospel may not only lawfully administer Baptism unto believers, and guide the action of a Church in the use of the Supper . . . but may also call upon the churches, and advise them to choose lit men for officers, and may settle such officers so chosen by a Church, in the places or offices to which they are chosen, by imposition of hands and prayer'.

Although the biblical references have been omitted, it is clear that the N.T., seen through the eyes of a left wing seventeenth-century puritan, is the basis of his teaching. The second paragraph of importance made the 'closed communion' doctrine more explicit: 'we . . . do not admit any to the use of the Supper, nor communicate with any in the use of this ordinance, but disciples baptized, lest we should have fellowship with them in their doing contrary to order'.

(5) Underhill, op. cit., 283.

Soon the infant congregation itself sent out its first missionary, to Scotland. (1) Early in January 1653, a letter from Swan Alley recognized the Hexham congregation as 'a visible constituted church of God'. (2) In April Tillam was dispatched by the church on a highly successful preaching tour in Cheshire and, in July, he saw a Baptist congregation formed at Stokesley in Yorkshire (3) when he baptized the minister there, William Kaye, with nineteen of his people. However, although Tillam came from a 'closed communion' church, he soon found himself in conflict with the far more rigid 'closed communion' leaders, Paul Hobson (4) and Thomas Gower, who led another congregation some twenty miles away at Newcastle. The cause of conflict was partly personal and partly doctrinal—Tillam believed that after baptism believers should be received into church membership with the laying-on-of-hands, which he had himself received from Peter Chamberlain. (5) Whilst a letter from Swan Alley (6) to Hexham mentioned the decision to draw the 'closed communion' churches nearer together—a decision taken in the summer of 1653—it is clear from a letter dispatched to Hexham by Henry Jessey's congregation (7) that Tillam had been in touch with the group of open membership churches linked with John Tombes since, at least, the early summer. Consequently, it is hardly surprising that a further cause of conflict with the Newcastle leaders was reported in a letter on 20 April 1654, (8) dispatched from Hexham to Jessey's church, which complained that a 'spirit of rigidness doth so far sway among them, that

(1) Underhill, op. cit., 201. This man, Edward Hickhorngill (who appears in *D.N.B.* as Edmund Hickeringill), 1631-1708, then joined the Parliamentary troops at Dalkeith as chaplain. His letters to Hexham have survived (Underhill op. cit., 307 ff.) all having been written in 1653. He seems to have been an unstable and an unsatisfactory missionary. Another Hexham member, Thomas Stackhouse, reported (ibid.) 330) that the church at Leith had excommunicated Hickhorngill, but that he, Stackhouse, had pointed out 'that it was the judgement of some in the church at Hexham, that no person ought to have the censure of excommunication past upon him in any church, but in that only wherein he was first a member; and that it was conceived to be their duty only to admonish, withdraw, and certify concerning him'.

The church 'usually meeting at Leith and Edinburgh' (J. Rippon, *The Baptist Annual Register*, 1794-7, 361) published a reprint of the London *Confession* in March 1653) insisting upon their unity, in faith and order, with the London churches. One of their leaders, Abraham Holmes, had shared in the Army debates at Putney in 1647 (*Clarke Papers*, passim).

(2) Underhill, op. cit., 303.

(3) Ibid.) 292 f.

(4) Hobson and Gower had signed the London *Confession* in 1644 and 1646 on behalf of a church there. W. T. Whitley, 'The Rev. Colonel Paul Hobson', *Baptist Quarterly*, ix (1938-9), reviewed some of Hobson's activities.

(5) E. B. Underhill) op. cit.) 333) for Chamberlain see *D.N.B.* He was a Seventh-Day Baptist leader.

(6) Ibid., 336-40-

(7) This congregation met in Coleman Street proper: ibid., 346 ff.

(8) Ibid., 349 ff. Henry Jessey (1601—63), who was baptized in 1645 by Hanserd Knollys, continued to practice 'open communion' in his congregation, which had originally been gathered by Henry Jacob on paedobaptist principles. Hence, Jessey did not share in the *Confession* of 1644 or its later editions. On the other hand, Knollys, who had signed the *Confession* in 1646, collaborated with him both in dealing with Thomas Tillam (ibid., 345) and in the propagation of Fifth Monarchy views.

they cannot own us, because we can own unbaptized churches and ministers for churches of

Christ and ministers of Christ; though we also judge in those churches and ministers something as to order wanting, which God in his own time may reveal unto them'.

While relations between Hexham and Newcastle deteriorated, the influence of the latter prevailed in London, (1) 'with the church in Coleman Street, as to a disowning of Mr. Tillam, and all that are in the practice of laying on of hands'. By July 1655 Tillam had left for Colchester and the church at Hexham seems to have been divided.(2) The wretched business was not finally cleared up until a meeting held at Heyleyfield near Newcastle on 22 July 1656.(3) So ended one of the less successful mission launched from London: congregations were gathered, but the local conflict made it impossible to develop a regular association.

Meanwhile, on 8 October 1652 (4) representatives from churches in Abingdon, Reading and Henley had met together to agree upon matter: requiring inter-congregational collaboration and had decided that this would be profitable for mutual advice, financial support, and 'ye carrying on of the work of God'. At the next meeting, on 3 November, came representatives from Kensworth in Hertfordshire and Eversholt in Bedfordshire. Thereafter the meetings were held in the Oxfordshire village of Tetsworth where, in March 1653, the representatives, consistently termed 'messengers' in the records, met again to sign a document entitled (5) 'The Agreement of the Churches'. The 'Agreement' was in no sense a Confession of Faith but rather the basis upon which they agreed to work together. The messengers also agreed to continue their meetings and to keep in touch with each other by letter through friends in London. (6) Furthermore, it was decided that recommendations from the meetings of messengers should be sent to the respective church meetings for approval before being returned for confirmation at the next association meeting.

(1) Underhill, *op. cit.*, 205. Evidently 'the church in Coleman Street' is here a loose way of referring to Knolly's congregation in Swan Alley: see *ibid.*, '204, where Gower is said to have labored with the church at London, from whom Mr. Tillam was a messenger', i.e.—against Tillam.

(2) *Ibid.*, 295 f. and E. A. Payne, 'Thomas Tillam', *loc. cit.*

(3) E. B. Underhill, *op. cit.*

(4) E. A. Payne, *The Baptists of Berkshire (1951)* 147-9) printed from the Gould (Berks.) MS. the record of the meetings held in October and November 1952 at Wormsley, Oxon. These were not recorded in the Abingdon MS. The latter, deposited in the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, came into Dr. Payne's hands too late to be used in his *The Baptists of Berkshire*. It reports the meetings of what eventually became the Berkshire Baptist Association from December 1652 to June 1660 and consists of 87 pages (9 in. by 5 in.) in the small, neat, hand of a single scribe. I shall cite it as the 'Abingdon Association MS.' to distinguish it from the Gould (Berkshire) MS. (which reports, more briefly, some of the same meetings), first because it came to include, during this period, more congregations outside Berkshire than inside it and secondly to follow the precedent set by the report of the 1690 General Assembly which referred to 'The Association of the Churches in Abington, &c.'.

(5) This was printed by Payne) *op. cit.*, 14.9, but included the names of congregations at Wantage, Kingston, etc., who joined later. The Gould MS. has them inserted in a hand different from that recording the first five.

(6) Abingdon MS., 3. 216

This decision was central for the constitution of such representative meetings and underlines the fact that, whilst such gatherings could acquire considerable moral authority, they were not held to have coercive power over individual congregations. (1) This meeting was the first at which the names of individual delegates were recorded and it is noteworthy that one of the two from Kensworth was Benjamin Cox. (2)

At the next meeting, held in June 1633, the most important business transacted was evidently the drafting of a letter to London (3) reporting that, 'we solemnly entered into such an association,(4) each with other as this enclosed copy of our Agreement doth manifest; and have agreed to the confirmation of some conclusions, of which we also send you here an enclosed copy. These things we thus represent unto you, not only because we desire to conceal nothing of this nature from you, but also that we may manifest both our due esteem of you, and also our desire to partake of the benefit of the gifts which god hath given you for counsel and advice and brotherly assistance; and for the increase and furtherance of love and amitie and good correspondence between us'.

At the four meetings that followed,(5) the business was concerned with matters relating to the life of their local congregations. Then, from Tetsworth at the meetings held 26-27 December 1654, (6) an answer was sent to the church at Warwick in response to an inquiry for advice about the

formation of an association in the west midlands. The messengers at Tetsworth wrote to encourage them, sending a copy of their Agreement and a report of the proceedings at their current meetings and commenting, in passing, 'we suppose you are already acquainted with the results of former meetings'. The letter also promised to send John Pendarves of Abingdon and Benjamin Cox of Dunstable as representatives to any meeting the Warwick church should arrange.

(1) These constitutional decisions are not recorded of any other association owing, no doubt, to the brevity of the extant documents. Since, however, this association later divided (see below) and since the so-called 'Midland Association' was probably, as will be seen, modeled upon this and has records of a similar type, it may be fairly assumed that they all shared the same basis. Similar records for the Western Association, together with considerable mutual inter-association visiting, would support the view that that association was similarly constituted.

(2) Abingdon Association MS., 4- There can be little doubt that this Benjamin Cox wrote An Appendix in 1646. In *Trans. Bap. Hist. Soc.*, vi (1918-19), 'Benjamin Cox', the author noted a gap in Cox's known biography 1646-58 together with his association with Edward Harrison (once vicar of Kensworth) and the congregation meeting at Petty France, London. The Abingdon Association MS., 9, mentions Cox as 'of Dunstable' and reveals links with Petty France.

(3) *Ibid.*, 4. f. This letter's address to the 'Church of Christ of which our brethren John Spilsberie and William Kiffen are members, and to the rest of the churches in and near London, agreeing with the said church in principles and constitutions, and accordingly holding communion with the same' poses a problem, since the Confessions of 1644. and 1646 show Kiffen and Spilsbury as leaders of different congregations. Had they come together again during this period? It hardly seems possible that Benjamin Cox would make a mistake about the London leaders.

(4) This letter appears to contain the earliest use of the term 'association' in the materials now extant.

(5) October 1653 27 December 1653, 29 March 165.1, 5—6 September 1654.

(6) Abingdon Association MS., 7-11.

(1) The churches of the Abingdon Association then each received a letter requesting them to authorize Pendarves and Cox to go to Warwick in their name.

When the messengers next met, 19-20 June 1655) (2) the churches at Wantage, Watlington, Kingston(3) and Haddenham were received into the association 'by the express consent of the churches before associated; and did by their messengers subscribe the agreement of the associated churches'. At the autumn gathering 17-18 October 1655(4) the church at Pyrton in Oxfordshire was received into membership and an association letter(5) from Chard, in Somerset, was read. It was decided to invite each of the associated congregations to read it and to ask them to permit their messengers to enter formally into correspondence with the Western Association. When, at the meeting in March 1656,(6) the churches at Oxford and Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire were received into membership, the messengers answered a request for advice from Kensworth (7) whose congregation was too scattered to be able to meet comfortably in one place. The messengers, after carefully reviewing the position, advised a division into two. The second day was spent in prayer and a letter to the churches reported that 'Diverse brethren had such sweet, and lively, and soul-ravishing manifestations of Gods gracious presence, as they could not sufficiently express; and such as some of them had not enjoyed in all their lives, till this day'. From this, they concluded that all the churches could enter into similar blessing by similar means. Before they parted it was agreed to ask the churches to consider whether it was lawful before God to pay tithes and churchrates.

At the next meeting, on 27-28 May 1656,(8) a defense of the payment of tithes was received and rejected and negotiations were begun with the church at North Warnborough (now part of Odiham) in Hampshire concerning membership of the association. In their association letter the messengers noted the coincidence in three different parts of the country of a day of prayer which had been discovered when God 'sent three of his choice servants to London, who acquainted each other with what was intended'.

(1) For John Pendarves cf. Payne, *op. cit.* W. T. Whitley, in *A History of British Baptists* (and ed. 1932), 92 wrote: 'fraternal intercourse was maintained, but not between the associations as such'. This statement can now be seen to be incorrect. It should also be noted that the Warwick church was requested to send details of their meetings for Pendarves and Cox 'to our brother Samuell Tull of London'. It will be remembered that Tull had shared in the listen correspondence at one point.

(2) Abingdon Association MS., 11—13.

(3) E. A. Payne (op. cit., 19) thought 'Kingston' was Kingston-on-Thames in Surrey but the Abingdon Association MS. (75) suggests that it was in fact, more probably Kingston Blount in Oxfordshire.

(4) Abingdon Association MS. 13-21.

(5) This letter was signed by John Pendarves and Thomas Collier. Pendarves also signed the letter from Wells in April 1656: cf. G. F. Nuttall, 'The Baptist Western Association 1653-1658', J.E.H., xi (1960).

(6) Abingdon Association MS. 21-30.

(7) Cf. J. Ivimey, History, ii. 170 ff. for Kensworth. (8) Abingdon Association MS., 30-40.

The meeting held in the following September (1) received the churches' reactions to the suggestion that they should empower two representatives(2) to visit each of the associated congregations. Kensworth, Eversholt, Pyrton and Hemel Hempstead opposed this and suggested instead that, first, stronger congregations should release members to aid weaker ones and, secondly, that at each meeting the messengers of each congregation should report on its spiritual health and decide if special help were needed. These proposals were adopted, and, thereafter, a new item appeared regularly in the records summing up, in a sentence or two, the current condition of each congregation.

The first entry concerning the December meeting involved the transcript of a letter to Petty France(3) seeking advice concerning the appointment of elders and deacons. The reply, (4) signed by Samuel Tull and Edward Harrison, was transcribed into the association records in full.

In May 1657, (5) when the messengers next assembled, a limit was set to the rigid application of 'closed communion' principles when the church at Eversholt was advised that those baptized by a man practicing 'open communion' need not be re-baptized in order to join a 'closed communion' congregation. The autumn meeting in that year (6) was of great importance, for it was then that Kensworth, Eversholt, Pyrton and Hemel Hempstead suggested that they should be allowed to form a separate association, both in order to cut down travelling and to draw congregations in their neighborhood into association with them. The proposal was unanimously agreed and, when they came together in March 1658, they 'did solemnly commit and commend the said churches . . . to be henceforth a distinct Association'. (7)

At Tetsworth, in September 1658, (8) some additional congregations were represented: Longworth and Newbury (in Berkshire), Andover (in Hampshire) and Isleworth (Thistleworth)." Benjamin Cox attended as one of the two sent on behalf of 'the association of churches in Hertfordshire &-c., whose messengers lately met at Hempstead'. The spring meeting in 1657 gave a glimpse of the sister association's meeting at Dunstable in March, (10) where the churches represented had been not only the original four but also Bedford, Luton (in Bedfordshire), Newport Pagnell (in Buckinghamshire), Watford (in Hertfordshire) and Stukeley (in Huntingdonshire).

(1) Abingdon Association M. S., 40-6.

(2) Cf. the suggestion in the 1653 Irish letter to be discussed below.

(3) Abingdon Association MS., 46 f.

(4) Ibid., 48 ff.

(5) Ibid., 50-5.

(6) Ibid., 55-9.

(7) Ibid., 60

(8) Ibid., 65-8.

(9) Its single messenger was Richard Deane.

(10) Abingdon Association MS., 68-79. At Tetsworth Wallingford was represented.

These reported that a recently gathered congregation at "Wooliston' (Wollaston in Northamptonshire) had applied to join them, while first desiring to examine 'those sixteen articles of faith and order (1) yet we professedly agree in and those twelve conclusions that we have consented unto'.

The following year saw only five churches represented at the spring meeting (2) and it is quite clear from the record that the reason assumed at the time for this was the unsettled political situation. The final meeting recorded in the Association MS., 19-20 June 1660, (3) was attended by single messengers from Abingdon, Reading, Henley, Wantage, Kingston, Watlington,

Haddenham, Oxford, Longworth, Wallingford and New-bury, with Benjamin Cox from the sister association. Probably already, a number of the leaders (4) were in gaol.

After tracing the development of the Abingdon Association to the close of the period it is now time to turn to the Irish churches which, 1. June 1653) dispatched a letter from Waterford to London. This was accompanied by two other documents (5) —a list of congregations (with their leaders) described as 'The Churches of Christ in Ireland united together', and a general call to prayer. This latter paper carried a superscription implying that already the Irish congregations had held at least one meeting to decide upon joint action. It read as follows: 'The churches of Christ in Ireland, walking in the faith and order of the Gospel, do agree together, through divine assistance, to set apart the first fourth day, called Wednesday, in every month, solemnly to seek the face of our God; and by fasting and prayer humbly to mourn before him for the things following, which is also recommended to our dear friends in England, and scattered brethren in several places, who have obtained like precious faith with us'. (6)

The messenger was John Vernon, one of several members of the Glaziers' Hall congregation mentioned as having been active in the Irish churches. (7) Thomas Patient, one of the signatories of the letter, (8) had earlier worked in London with William Kiffen and had signed the London *Confession* in 1644 and 1646, and *Heartbleedings for Professors Abominations*, sent out by the London leaders, in 1650. Whilst the first part lamented the breakdown of correspondence recently between the Irish and the London leaders it went on to make specific proposals for the future.

(1) Presumably, these were those adopted by the Midland Association: see below. At the autumn meeting in 1657, the right of women to speak in church meetings was discussed at Tetsworth and account was taken of the decision of the Midland messengers on the same subject at Moreton-in-the-Marsh in 1656. Cf. Abingdon Association MS., 64.

(2) Abingdon Association MS., 79-83

(3) *Ibid.*, 83-7.

(4) Henry Jessey, *The Lords Loud Call to England*, 1660, 24—6, printed a letter from Reading Gaol dated 16 July signed by John Jones, Richard Steed, Robert Keate, Thomas Jones, John Peek, John Combes. (Only John Jones attended at Tetsworth in June.)

(5) These were printed, with minor inaccuracies, by Ivimey, *op. cit.*, i. 240—52.

(6) It will be remembered that the Welsh churches took up this suggestion.

(7) E.g., William Gossett and Edward Drapes (who had died in Ireland), Also Peter Row, Edward Roberts.

(8) Patient had been a prime mover in a letter sent from Waterford to Dublin warning the latter church against 'open communion': cf. John Rogers, *Ohel or Belh-Shenwsh*, 1653. The letter (*ibid.*, 302-6) was dated 14 January 1651/2).

First, they proposed an agreement 'to keep the first Wednesday of every month, from six to six' a time of fasting and prayer. Secondly, since they had recently profited from their own closer union, (1) they now requested 'the same brotherly correspondence with you and from you; and by your means, with all the rest of the churches of Christ, in England, Scotland, and Wales; whom we trust you will provoke to the same things, which we hope may be mutually obtained once in three months'. Such a request, made by men many of whom had personal knowledge of the London churches, is clear evidence that they knew the Londoners to be in touch with a wide circle of congregations throughout the British Isles. Two further suggestions were made, that London should send them a list of churches in communion with them and that the leaders there should send out two or more leaders to visit and instruct local congregations up and down the land. There is no evidence that this last recommendation was ever specifically taken up, but there is considerable reason to believe that inter-congregational and inter-association visitation took place as has already been shown.

On 24, July the London churches wrote a covering letter to accompany copies of the Irish documents to the congregations with which they were in touch. This letter, signed by several leaders, including William Kiffen and Edward Harrison, gave the Irish proposals general support and asked that they should be communicated to any neighboring churches of the same faith and order.

Among those to whom they wrote was probably, 'the Church of Christ, usually meeting at Leith and Edinburgh', (2) which had published a reprint of the 1651 edition of the London *Confession* earlier that year. It was this group, together with some in St. Johnstown, who wrote in support of the Protectorate the following year 1654. (3) Unfortunately very little more is known about the congregations which sprang up in Scotland among the English garrisons in the early 1600s.

The Western Association, on the other hand, has not only left printed records of some of its meetings, but has also had its meetings reviewed (4) quite recently by Dr. G. F. Nuttall. The records are of two types: first a collection of queries and their answers as put out at successive association meetings and, secondly, a series of letters sent out to the associated churches and others from these gatherings. The nature of these records, so similar to those of the Abingdon Association and those of the Midland Association, (5) suggests a similar association, constitution and origin.

(1) The word 'association' was not used in any of the Irish documents, although the contrary was implied by W. T. Whitley in 'The Plantation of Ireland and the Early Baptist Churches', *Baptist Quarterly*, i (1022-3), 280.

(2) W. L. Lumpkin, *op. cit.*, 151 f.

(3) W. T. Whitley, *Baptist Bibliography*, i. 57.

(4) G. F. Nuttall, *loc. cit.*

(5) See below. It seems likely, from the careful index prepared for the Abingdon Association MS., from a similar index in the Leominster Churchbook of 'ye Principal things handled in these conclusions of ye messengers', and from Collier's publication of *Several Resolutions and Answers of Queries for the Western churches*, that these decisions were recorded to give a background of 'case-law' for the guidance of local congregations.

The stipends. It is probable that when the Irish leaders had sent their letter to England in 1653 they had not anticipated that the correspondence they invited would take this form.

It now remains to trace the course of the early years of the Midland Association, from its foundation in June 1655 upon the twofold basis of a Confession of Faith (1) in sixteen articles and an Agreement of the churches based closely upon that of the Abingdon Association. There is some evidence that Daniel King had been at work for several years past in the Midlands founding new congregations (2) and that he was one of those active in drawing them into association together. Furthermore, it is clear (3) that King had been in touch with the London leaders for some time and that he shared with Benjamin Cox, who played a part in the life of the infant association, a common stress upon the principle of 'closed communion'. (4)

The first congregations to associate together in the Midlands were Warwick, (5) Moreton-in-the-Marsh, Bourton-on-the-Water, Tewkesbury, Hook Norton, Derby and Alcester. From June 1655 there were to be twelve meetings, the last of them being held at Gloucester on 5-6 October 1658. The meeting that launched the association was held 26 June 1655. (6)

(1) W. L. Lumpkin, *op. cit.* 108-200.

(2) Daniel King may have been a General Baptist at first, since a small treatise, entitled *Self the Grand Enemy of Jesus Christ*, written by a 'Daniell King' and undated was printed by the General Baptist Francis Smith. But, in *A Discovery of some Troublesome Thoughts* (1651), dated from Southwark '7th of the 11th Month' (1651), he mentioned, in his Preface, '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 Martin-Hinmarsh (sic) in Gloucestershire, or any others to whom I am near related'.

(3) In *A Way to Zion* (1650) by Daniel King, the Epistle Dedicatory was signed by Thomas Patient) John Spilsbury, William Kiffen and John Pearson. The mention, in the previous footnote, of the 'Churches' meeting in Glaziers' Hall suggests regular inter-congregational meetings there, perhaps of an association type. It will be remembered that the Welsh churches received the important Irish letter of 1653 'from the Church of Christ at the Glasshouse London' and yet, at the foot, it was designated as from 'the several Churches of Christ in London'.

(4) Abingdon Association MS., 8-9, has a transcription of a letter to Warwick from Telsworth dated 27 December 1654, answering a request for advice as to how to associate. With the letter were enclosed 'a copy of the Agreement of the churches, and of the grounds for the said Agreement, and the result of this present meeting'.

(5) The existing records of this association during this period are to be found in: i. the Bourton-on-the-Water Churchbook, as transcribed by Benjamin Beddome in the eighteenth century in an abbreviated form. ii. the Leominster Churchbook, where, on the whole, the material is briefer than in iii. the Tewkesbury Churchbook. Warwick, with records from 1697, is the only one of the other churches holding any material from the seventeenth century. Moreton-in-the-Marsh eventually settled a few miles away at Stow-in-the-Wold. Derby died out, but had earlier signed an Address to the Protector (E. B. Underhill, *Confessions*, 331-4) in company with Hexham and Wliarton near Bradford, on 1 March 1655. The signatories were 'Robert Holpe' and 'William Tomblinson': presumably, the same pair were those reported as messengers from Derby at Warwick in April 1656—'Robert Hope' and 'William Tomlison'.

(6) The meetings that took place are all recorded in the Tewkesbury Churchbook, with the exception of that at Alcester in September (recorded by the Leominster Church book).

After that held on 3 May 1655 to draft the Confession, there were meetings as follows:

- i. 26 June 1655, Moreton-in-the-Marsh.
- ii. 1\ October 1655, Moreton-in-the-Marsh.
- iii. 7-8 April 1656, Warwick.
- iv. 4-6 June 1656, Morton-in-the-Marsh. v. 15 October 1656, Alcester.
- vi. 2.- April 1657, Morton-in-the-Marsh.
- vii. 15-17 September, Alcester (reported in the Leominster Churchbook). viii. 13-14 October 1657) Gloucester. ix. i June 1658, Cirencester.
- x. 13-14 April 1658, Alcester.
- xi. 22 September 1658, Moreton-in-the-Marsh.
- xii. 5-6 October 1658, Gloucester.

It dealt with three queries, the most important of which involved the question of the lawfulness of state payment of the minister. The messengers decided firmly against state stipends, but this particular matter was to become prominent in the discussions that were to follow. The matter was taken further at the next meeting, held at Morton-in-the-Marsh, where the 'closed communion' issue was also raised, for the messengers decided that it would be most unfortunate for a church member 'to bee married to one who professing godliness yet standeth out against Baptism & Church communion'.(1) At the meetings held in June 1656 this position was taken further, when it was recommended that 'Baptized believers ought not to hear the national ministers preach nor Join with them in their public worship'.

Meanwhile, on 28 September 1656, a note was recorded in the Leominster Churchbook that 'The 28th day of the 7th month 1656 was the Church of Christ meeting at brother Joseph Patshall's house in Leominster constituted . . . in the presence of, and with the assistance of our brother Daniell King and other brethren'. (2) This seems to have been a breakaway, on the basis of 'closed communion', from the group of churches led by John Tombs. (3)

At the next meeting, held at Alcester 15 October 1656) it was not, however, Leominster which was discussed but rather a number of queries from several churches including one from Tewkesbury which reflected the Fifth Monarchy agitation of the period. The question was whether believers should continue to submit to the government. The advice of the messengers was wise and unhysterical: 'When the Lord shall make his people a smiting people will He not first clearly put a Just & lawful power & authority in to their hands . . . If so then whether it doth not

(1) Tewkesbury Churchbook, 7.

(2) Leominster Churchbook, 21.

(3) In E. B. Underhill (ed.), Records of the Churches of Christ, 344 f. a letter dated 2 October 1653 was signed 'for the church at Linthe' (probably Leinthall Starkcs), 'in Herefordshire' by John Tombs as pastor and by John Patsliall and John Waneklin as deacons. At Alcester, 15-17 September 1657 (Leominster Churchbook, 16f.), 'It was debated Whether ye Church at Leominster & Hereford yet walks distinct from Mr. Tombs were rightly constituted'. It was agreed that it was and that it should be received into association and that a protest from Tomb's congregation claiming that their withdrawal as members was wrong should be answered that that withdrawal had been 'their liberty & their duty'. As late as 1689 a Letter in the Leominster Churchbook reported that there were still supporters of Mr. Tombs in the area.

behoove us with patience & quietness to wait for the time'. (1)

Whilst Leominster was discussed at Alcester in September 1657 Benjamin Cox was present representing his association (2) and was charged with the task of reasoning with 'bro. Harrison' about the question of state stipends. A month later the messengers (3) met at Gloucester and drafted the only Association letter from this group of churches which survives, (4) desiring each congregation to send a letter with their messengers to the next meetings to report 'the state and condition of your churches'.(5) At the next meeting, however, at Cirencester on 1 June 1658 there 'was but little done by ye messengers'.(6)

At Alcester, on the 13-14 April 1658, (7) it was agreed to receive the church at Gloucester into association and that the church at Bewdley, in Worcestershire, should 'consider of & peruse or (sic) articles of faith & order with ye conclusions of ye Messengers, & if they can close with us & wee with them. It is to be concluded ye next general meeting of messengers'. The record of this gathering was signed first by Benjamin Cox. The last meetings of which records remain were held at Morton and at Gloucester, in September and October 1658. Although the Gloucester report was quite brief, it gave no indication that with this the association would stop gathering. Nevertheless, the following pages of the Tewkesbury Churchbook were in code, largely

composed of the names of church members, and it seems that the same fears and pressures as those felt at Tetsworth brought this series of meetings to a rather earlier close.

While the account of the Midland Association concludes this outline of the extant evidence concerning the 'association' life of the period in the provinces, some further evidence is available for the part played by the London churches. The basis for co-operation between individual churches had been laid in the original *Confession* of 1644. (8) and this, together with the right of each church to send out its own chosen evangelists to plant new congregations based upon the principle of 'closed communion', was the basis for the development outlined in this essay.

(1) Tewkesbury Churchbook, 22.

(2) Cr. Abingdon Association MS., 45 for a letter commending Cox to them.

(3) E. B. Underhill, *op. cit.*, 345 listed Richard Harrison as leader, in 1653, of a church meeting in Netherton, Works. Cox's letter to 'bro. Harrison' was transcribed into the Leominster Churchbook (141-6). It is noteworthy that Cox cited 'ye grounds & Arguments of our brethren in ye west' (cf. Several Resolutions and answers of queries, 9-10 reporting on Wells, 8-10, April 1656). Earlier in 1657 the whole matter had been discussed at Devizes at a meeting on 9 July at which Tull, Harrison, Kiffen, Deane, Hobson and Cheare had been present to sign a letter which was also transcribed into the Leominster Churchbook (148-9).

(4) Tewkesbury Churchbook, 30 f.

(5) A similar decision had been taken at Tetsworth the year before.

(6) Tewkesbury Churchbook, 31.

(7) Leominster Churchbook, 18 ff.

(8) Article XLVII reads: 'And although the particular Congregations be distinct and several Bodies, every one as a compact and knit City in it self; yet are they all to walk by one and the same Rule, and by all means convenient to have the counsel and help one of another in all needful affaires of the Church, as members of one body in the common faith under Christ their only head'.

In 1657, however, in response to a plea from Abraham Cheare about the poverty of many ministers in the west country, the London leaders took a new initiative(1) and recommended that a central fund, for which some contributions had already been made, should be set up 'towards the maintenance of a gospel ministry abroad in the countries'. In view of this, they asked the associated churches, once 'their own ministry and poor' had been provided for, to make a contribution. The leaders at Tetsworth agreed to transmit this appeal to their churches and to neighboring congregations not yet in association with them. It is also noteworthy that the local churches were asked to send their replies directly to 'the messengers at London meeting weekly at brother Spilberies house'. (2) While, apparently, this scheme did not receive the support that it required, there is evidence that the provinces still looked to London for advice and support. Indeed, in March 1658, (3) Nathaniel Strange wrote to Tetsworth regretting his inability to be with them and saying that he had written to the London brethren offering to meet with one or more of them to visit a number of provincial congregations, 'in order to the setting of officers'. As (yet) he had had no reply. (4)

The evidence that has been surveyed, though often fragmentary, does permit certain conclusions to be drawn about the organisation of the Particular Baptists in the period 1644-60. First, the importance of the London theology and the London leadership is evident throughout: if the Western Association be considered a partial exception, it was at least in living touch with the wider fellowship. Secondly, the 'association' or, as they preferred to say, the 'general meeting' of messengers, was the characteristic unit of their organisation. Thirdly, the local associations kept in close touch with each other by personal visitation and by sharing the reports of their meetings. Finally, it must be recognized that a comparatively small group of men, among them Benjamin Cox, John Miles, Thomas Patient, Thomas Collier, Daniel King and Nathaniel Strange, made it their business to supply the cement of their personal concern to a nation-wide program. The program itself was based upon local congregations commissioning chosen members to organize new Particular Baptist churches all holding to the principle of 'closed communion'.

(1) Abingdon Association MS., 51-3.

(2) The scheme was revived at the 1689 Assembly, but did not become effective until the foundation of the Particular Baptist Fund in 1717.

(3) Abingdon Association MS., 61 ff.

(4) Letters for Strange were to be sent 'to brother Cree's at the Adam and Eve upon the old Exchange, or to brother Tull's'.