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(II) ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS: COMMONWEALTH AND RESTORATION, 1650-1661

(i) **Schism and debate at Earl Shilton, 1650**, as described by Nathaniel Stephens, *A Precept for the Baptisme of Infants*, (London: 1650/1), Epistle to the Reader.¹

"Many people among us, and some of good hope, have been drawn aside to follow the way of the separation. . . . I could not but rise, and look after such neighbours and friends of mine, who (in my apprehension at least) were as sheep gone astray. Therefore about the end of January last, I took occasion to go to Earles-Shilton . . . where the Masters of Division have played their principall game: My purpose was by conference with them to know the reasons of their departure from us. When a competent number of that way were gathered together, some pleaded errors in our Doctrine, others corruptions in our Ministry, a third sort faulted our Churches constitution. But in conclusion of that days discourse, I found that the point which they did bind very much upon, was this; That there was no word of command for the Baptisme of Infants in the New Testament. I found that this principally moved them to renounce the old, and to take up a new Baptisme; to leave the old, and to joyn themselves to a new Church. Hereupon I told them, that however others look to the ancient use of the Church in the Baptisme of Infants, I was perswaded that there was a word of institution: and had I time more fully to study the point, I hoped I should make it appear. They desired me to take time; and our agreement was that before my next coming I should give them a weeks warning: which I did accordingly, and appointed the 27th of March for the particular day of our conference. I desired that some of their more solid and principal men would be there, for the tryal of truth: and this I signified by letter a week before. But when I came, I did not find the men I looked for. Whether they were absent on set purpose, or whether there was a real cause of their absence, I cannot tell. Therefore I did publickly, according to that light I had, Preach a Precept for the Baptism of Infants before the People: and when I had done, I did leave one brief Argument behind me in writing, for the freinds of the separation to consider of. Since that time I acknowledge that I have received two answers, the one upon the first of May, and the other upon the fifth of September. And I could wish that the last Answerer (which was one Mr. Robert Everard) had not been so hastie to put his Answer in Print: but rather that he and I had gone on in the way we were in, to try the matter by writing each to other . . . His way of life being itinerary from place to place, it is a question whether such a narrow and set

disquisition of truth would not have fixed him too long to one place; or whether . . . he did inwardly beleeve that he had given a totall rout to the Baptisme of Infants: or whether it were to ease his own shoulders of the burden, and to call in more of the party to his assistance. . . . I am not now to deal with this or that particular man, but with the whole nation of them that are against a Precept for the Baptisme of Infants: And this I take to be no small number. For I believe the piety of former times . . . was not greater to set up high altars than it is now to divide into new Churches. And therefore to a man who maketh it one of his cheif designes to set up a new Church, to erect a new Ministry, and to cast all into a new mould, what better principle can he have to begin withall than a new Baptisme? . . .

Fennie Drayton

Nathaniel Stephens”

Novemb. 19.

1650

(ii) **The subscribers to the Midland Confession, 1651**, printed as *The Faith And Practise Of Thirty Congregations, Gathered according to the Primitive Pattern*, (London: 1651).²

“Published (in love) by consent of two from each Congregation, appointed for that purpose.

1. To inform those who have a desire to know what Religious Duties they hold forth.
2. To undeceive those that are mis-informed thereof.
3. To the end the said Congregations may in love, and the spirit of Meekness, be informed by any that conceive they walk amiss.

To all the Saints and Churches of God, who walk according to the commands of Jesus Christ, in England, Wales, Army, or elsewhere. . . .

The Names of the Subscribers with the places of their Meetings.

John Freeman.	}	Rutland
W. Dalby.		for Burley.
James Tentoft.	}	for Thorp.
Anthony Snell.		
Abraham Day.	}	for Tixover.
Matthew Ley.		Warwickshire
John Onely.	}	for Easonhall. ³
Will. Perkins.		
Rich. Wills.	}	for Marston. ⁴
Thom. Jeffes.		Northamptonshire
Benjamin Morley.	}	for Ravensthorp. ⁵
Francis Stanley.		Lincolnshire
John Lupton.	}	for Tattershall. ⁶
Will. Codlyn.		
Thomas Drewry.	}	for Golsby. ⁷
Richard Drewry.		

Ralph James. Daniel Chsman.	} for North Willingham. ⁸
Valentine James. John Johnjohns.	} for Lincoln.
Richard Craford. Edward Cock.	} for Boston.
William Barnes. William Hart.	} for Swyneshead. ⁹
Jo. Lacye. Robert Massey.	} for Surflet. ¹⁰
Robert Pecke. Jo. Beaver.	} for Thurlby. ¹¹
Robert Dyer. Greg. Allen.	} for Blankney. ¹²
John Lucas. Robert Tompson.	} for Leasingham. ¹³
Richard Machyn. Thom. Everard Sen.	} for Welby. ¹⁴
Robert Angleshaw. John Allen.	} for Westby. ¹⁵
Robert Cock. John Parker.	} for Waltham. Leicestershire.
Henry Redgate. Thomas Webster.	} for Earl Shulton.
Nathan Jones. George Moore.	} for Whitwicke.
Robert Hebb. Thomas Morrice.	} for Bitteswell.
Thomas Townesend. Robert Fielding.	} for Mountsorril.
William Kendall. Richard Lay.	} for Wimeswould.
William Franke. William Parker.	} for Normington.
William Wilde. William Poole.	} for Theddingworth.
William Burdet. Coniers Conigrave.	} for Leicester.
Thomas Rogers. Edmund Male.	} for Huntingdonshire. Fennystanton.
Thomas Cocks. John Danvers.	} for Oxfordshire. Horley. ¹⁶
John Numan. Thomas Partridge.	} for Bedfordshire. Sondon. ¹⁷
Samuel Tide.	

(iii) A petition to Cromwell, warning him of the danger of success, and appealing for a thorough reform of public life, 1 February 1651/2.¹⁸

"Feb. 1, 1651.

RIGHT HONOURABLE,

The consideration of the wonderfull hand of God, that hath so visibly and eminently beene lifted up amongst us (both to the admiration of his people and astonishment of the world) in bringing downe the proude and haughty ones, making them to drinke the wine of the cup of his furey, staineing the pride of all ther glory and pouring shame, judgment, and contempt upon them; together with the mighty salvation that hath beene wraught for his oppressed and afflicted ones, who for thes many generations have sadly groned under there heavy yoakes and oppressions, yea the consideration and experimentall sence hearof, with the designe of the Lord is carying on hearby (even the exaltation of the kingdom of his own Son), cannot but in the first place draw out the acknowledgment of our soules to his prayse, who hath so admirably begun, and so powerfully carryed it on hitherto, and in the next place to bless his name for you as the happy instruments he hath rayseed up, owned and honored therin, and so that you have not only beene as our valiant Joshuas in the field (wher no weapon that hath beene formed against you hath prospered, neither have the men of might att any time beene able to finde ther hands) but you have also at home beene as faithfull Nehemiahs to pleade the freedomes of your brethren whom you have redeemed, even to the rebuking of the rulers who have opprest them, and not walked in the feare of the Lord.

And therefore the Lord, by whose appointment you have hitherto acted, may still owne, and use you in the further prosecution of this greate worke begun (which must as certainly bee carryed on even till the top stone be finished;) wee, the unworthiest of the Lorde's people, have in the sincerity of our heartes presumed to lay before you what the Lord hath sett upon our spirits in relation hearto; and the rather are we imboldened and incuradged hearto, knowing the freedom of your spirites, to give eare to what may bee offred from the meanest of the Lord's servants.

In the first place therefore, wee do beseech you in the feare of the Lord, that you who have done so mightily in overcoming the proudest of your enemyes, may now beware of being overcome by your selves; and that you would consider, that having played the men in the field, you are now called to higher worke, even to deny yourselves your weapons and worke, being to be of a more spirituall nature, if you will follow the Lamb whersoever he goeth. Beware therfore of seeking high or great thinges for yourselves, being so odious and ill-becoming others in your sight; make no provision for the flesh, neither consult therewith, or carnall politicke reasonings, that having cleared your owne eyes you my bee more able with cleerness to behold and to pull out the motes that are in others.

And secondly, that you would please often (as wee trust you do)

to consult with the Lord and one another about your present dutys in this worke you are engaged in, that you may bee found like the men of Isacher, who had understanding of the tymes to know what Israell ought to do; that having a prise putt into your handes, you may not want heartes to improve it; least if att such tymes you should altogether hold your peace, deliverance and enlargement arise some other way.

And thirdly to have much before your eyes, the many burdens and grievances yet unremoved, and the many good things yet obstructed, together with your many promises and ingagements before the Lord and his people, to endeavour the effectinge hearof; as also who the obstructers are, so that if any publicke instruments (as formerly) do either through selfe-seeking, ignorance, or corruption remaine as lyons in the way, that you would by all good wayes and meanes endeavour ther discovery and remoovall, in order to a thorough reformation; the prise of all the blood and treasure that hath beene spent amongst us. Go on therfor and prosper, and that you may not want either wisdom, or the continuance of the spirit of God to guide you therein, you may bee confident that (through grace) you shall not want the assistance of our prayers, who, in the name of these severall congregations of Christ, have presumed to tender these things to your serious consideration, subscribing our selves,

	Right honourable,	
	your faithfull servants	
	in the worke of the Lord Jesus.	
Dated the 1st day of the 11 Month, 1651.		
J. Darmen.	}	Stafford.
Edward Love.	}	for the church of Stafford.
Edward Hill.	}	Stafford.
William Sherbrooke.	}	for the congregation at Shadbury. ¹⁹
Thomas Hamersly.	}	Stafford.
John Slacke.	}	for the church at Berryhill. ²⁰
John Row.	}	Derby.
Jo. Tomlinson.	}	for the church at Porwidge. ²¹
Robert Stotesbury.	}	Stafford.
Thomas Cumberlidge.	}	for the church of Wasall. ²²
Thomas Rogers.	}	Leicester.
Conyars Congreve.	}	for the church of Leicester.
Robert Feilding.	}	Leicester.
Edward Smith.	}	for the church of Mountsechill.
Thomas Morris.	}	Leicester.
Thomas Townsend.	}	for the church of Busswell.
Jo. Coles.	}	Leicester.
William Burditt.	}	for the church of Gumley.
Fr. Stanley.	}	N.
Robert Teaslow.	}	for the church of Raustrop. ²³

Fr. Silvester.	}	Stafford.
Robert Prittie.		for the church of Litchfield.
Thomas Wright.	}	Stafford.
Robert Clarke.		for the church of Burton. ²⁴
James Browne.	}	Shropshire.
Tho. Jefferyes		for the church of B. North. ²⁵

*To his Excellencie
the Lord Generall
Cromwell,
this present."*

(iv) Letter from Colonel Hacker and Captain Shield to Cromwell about seditious literature in Rutland, 1656.²⁶

" May it please your highnesse

There hath beene lately sent into our county a packet of scandalous and seditious bookes directed to one mrs. Smyth a grocer's wife in Uppingham, and was by her to bee dispersed with care and speed to the severall persons, according to the directions and superscriptions here inclosed; which shee having done, one of the parties brought one to collonel Hacker, wherewith hee acquainted captain Sheild and the rest of the justices at a publique meeting that day, and upon consultation captaine Sheild ordered the apprehending by a party of his soldiers some suspitious persons, which was strangers in our country; upon which wee conceive some suspition was, that the books was discovered, and the several packetts was sent in to captaine Sheild the next day; and as it may appear by the superscriptions inclosed, all the persons, to whom the directions was, are anabaptists or separatists. Upon our examination and viewe of the superscriptions, one Anger, being likewise an anabaptist, as we are informed, whoe was lately of the life-guard, as they confesse, wee judge suspitious in this matter, who lately lived in the upper end of King's street, but nowe removed, as we find by a letter of his owne, to the great Goate-yard at the upper end of Horsey-downe in Southwark, beyond London-bridge. This being all wee can find, wee thought it our duty to signifye it to your highnes, and to subscribe our selves

Received April 21, 1656.

Your highnesse humble servants,

Fran. Hacker
Will. Shield."

(v) Decisions about messengers made at Stamford, and reported from Peterborough to Fenstanton, 1656.²⁷

" 'To the church of Christ at Fenystanton, we, the church of Christ at Peterborough, send greeting; wishing grace, mercy, and peace, to be multiplied unto you.

Brethren, this is to acquaint you with the proceedings of our friends at Stamford, the 2nd and 3rd of July, 1656. The things that are agreed upon by the messengers and brethren, are as followeth:—

First, That two messengers be sent into the west, for the work of the ministry.

Secondly, That our beloved brethren, John Fairbrother, and Will. Reignolds, be sent to the said work.

Thirdly, That the church shall defray the charge of the messengers and their families. And these are the names of the persons that did engage for the societies hereafter named:

Will. Inge and Tho. Christian for Leicester, and to stir up Earl Shilton and Mount Sorrell;

John Kirby for Nottingham and to stir up Winford and Rimson; Isaac Spence and Christoph. Bell for Peterborough, and to stir up Wisbeach and Fenystanton;

Benjamin Morley and Francis Stanley for Ravensthorpe, and to stir up Newton, and as many as they can;

George More for Whitwell and Markfield, and to stir up Twyford;

John Wilkinson to stir up Langtoft, Thurlby, and Bitome.

Fourthly, That Cristoph. Bell, Isaac Spence, and John Wilkinson shall take care of sister Reignolds, to visit her in her husband's absence; also that Benjamin Morley and Francis Stanley shall take care of sister Fairbrother, to visit her in her husband's absence.

Fifthly, That the brethren that meet at Uppingham be sent unto, to certify them that, according to bro. Ainsworth's desire, we have sent two messengers into the west . . .

Sixthly, That the church of Christ be exhorted to make prayers for our beloved brethren aforesaid; that the work of the Lord may prosper in their hands.

Seventhly, That the messengers aforesaid shall go forth speedily to the work.

Eighthly, That our beloved brethren aforesaid shall have ten shillings a week for themselves and their families.

Ninthly, We desired several parties of our friends to go to end the differences in general societies, and to use the utmost of their abilities for the making them up again, and to settle them in peace and truth . . .

Your brethren and companions in the Lord,

John Dargen, Isaac Spence, Christo. Bell,

Tho. House,

Cristop. Grungell, }

Deacons.

with the consent of the brethren. From Peterborough, the 18th day of the sixth month, 1656.'

. . . It was concluded that, for the present, we should not do anything in the business, . . .

First, Because no man can tell by this way of proceeding, whether little or much would be gathered in

Secondly, Because one of the messengers was adjudged unfit for that work, he being formerly one that fell from the truth, and joined with those wicked people called Ranters . . . ”

(vi) *A Further Testimony to Truth*.²⁸ an appeal for thorough reform made to the Army officers who in October 1659 replaced Parliament, five months after Richard Cromwell's death.

"A further Testimony to Truth; or, some Earnest Groans for a Righteous Settlement, in this hour of distraction, agreeable to the late Essay, so suitably offered by some Friends and Brethren, to this purpose: By some Baptized Congregations, and other Cordial Lovers and Assertors of the Publick Good Old Cause, in the Counties of *Leicester, Nottingham, Rutland, Lincoln, Stafford, Darby, and Shropshire*.

To all that bear good will to *Zion*, and love the Lord Jesus, that have either power, opportunity, or hearts to appear for Him, and his Righteous Cause, in this Day. ["1659" added in manuscript.]

That in sense of the late eminent and wonderful appearance of the Lord, who hath pleased not only thereby to work out so miraculous a salvation and deliverance for a poor scattered and divided handful of his unworthy people, from the rage and malice of a potent, united, and enraged enemy, that like Bees on every side rose up against them.

But more especially, and that which is more worth then thousands of our Lives and Liberties, has he given such good hopes (by his still continued Revolutions and Over-turnings) of reviving his blessed Cause again in the midst of us, after so many years death upon it; *viz.* The Exaltation of the Kingdome and Interest of Jesus Christ, the glorious King of Saints and Nations, in the promised ruine and downfall of the Tyrannous, Beastly, and Antichristian Interest, which for so many hundred years has so bloudily domineer'd in the earth.

We therefore having our hearts somewhat warmed and affected herewith, seeing as yet so little improvement of the opportunity once more offered, do take our selves concerned, with others of our dear Brethren that have gone before us herein, to be pleading and crying out for those things which the Lords late Voice seems loudly to call for at our hands.

And first; we desire in sense of his great goodness, (and as we would be serviceable to the Lord in his great designs on foot) earnestly to stir up our selves, and all the Lords people that are any way toucht with his late gracious Appearance, to a speedy, thorough, and serious search, how far any have had heart or hand in the late Dreadful Revolt and turning aside from the Lord in that fearful Apostacy, by setting up, standing by, or flatteringly addressing to either of those two persons, or others, that in opposition to the Work and Cause of God, has in chief been set over us, occasioning so much Atheisme, Reproach, and Blasphemy: And that as any may be justly chargeable herewith, that there be accordingly a hearty return to the Lord, by a suitable repentance, taking the shame, and giving God the glory.

Secondly, that since the Lord has been pleased once again, by his distinguishing Providence, upon the late decision, to make a visible separation betwixt friends and enemies; (and so far to unravel the

Apostacy, whose chief work it was to twist all Interests together, as though Christ and Antichrist were to be united) that in order to common preservation and protection, and the securing our beings, all speedy and lawful ways may be taken for the incorporating, uniting, and empowering all known friends; the discountenancing, weakening, and outing all known enemies.

And thirdly, we do, as in conscience bound, cry out for some speedy exemplary Justice and punishment upon the heads of all sorts that had their hands in the late Treason and Rebellion, that occasioned the expence of that Blood and Treasure, and gave such general disturbance throughout these three Nations.

And fourthly, in order to our well-being, and carrying on a thorough Reformation so long groaned after, and bled for, we loudly call out for that holy, equal, brief, and plain Law given by God in the Scriptures, to be declared Law of these Nations, in opposition to the heathenish, tyrannous, and Popish Laws yet in force amongst us: And that men that are best read, and practised, and most answering the qualifications of Magistrates, according to Scripture-Rule, *viz.* men of courage, fearing God, and hating covetousness, may be only employ'd (as near as possible) to dispence and execute under Christ this righteous Rule, in opposition to the ignorant, prophane, and scandalous; that so also some speedy course may be taken to suppress that dilatory, vexatious, and oppressive way, that has so long been exercis'd by the mercenary, cruel, and covetous Lawyers, the shame of our Nation, and so utterly (in their corrupt course of practise) inconsistent to a Commonwealth.

Fifthly, that as the most effectual way to suppress and remove the Antichristian Ministry, (who have been such Ring-leaders in this late Rebellion;) and so consequently to promote and propagate the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the New-Testament-Ministration thereof: First, we claim, that the imposition of that Jewish and Antichristian yoke of Tythes be removed: And the rather;

First, Because we find neither Law of God, nor by his Providence any from man, at this day, to inforce the same.

Secondly, Because of late there has been that light, that strength of Reason and Argument offered to publike view, both from the Laws of God and Man, that none has been able to stand before, or rationally to reply unto: See *Milton, Pierson, Osburn, &c.*

And secondly, that as an intolerable burden, inconsistent with the Liberty of Conscience unto all, the Rulers forbear for ever to impose any National or Parochial Ministry, so as to inforce any form of Worship suited to their interest, or compel men of one persuasion, to maintain any man of another in the Ministry, or to lay a stumbling-block in the way of unbelievers, to the derogation of Christ, by compelling them to maintain his Ministers.

And lastly, the better to make all this practicable, and to remove all lets out of the way, we do most earnestly beg and cry aloud for a speedy and effectual applying the Rule laid down by the late Rulers,

so agreeable to the Word of God, to all Officers in Publike Trust, both Civil and Military, throughout the Nation, which we herewith insert, wishing it may be writ in Letters of Gold, for every one to take notice of, that he that runs may read; *viz.* That Declaration of the ninth of May, 1659. *That all such as shall be in any place of Trust and Power within this Commonwealth, be able for the discharge of such Trust, and that they be persons fearing God, that have given testimony of their true love to all the people of God, and of their faithfulness to the Cause of this Commonwealth.* And that all such as answer not this wholesome Rule, (thus by Gods Providence own'd, laid down, and asserted, as the qualification to Magistracy and Trust) be speedily removed all places of Authority and Trust, and others be forthwith still called, answering the same; that our enemies be not our Judges, nor rule over us: And that there may be a Publike Liberty to charge; and that it may be penal for any to continue, that are found unanswerable thereto.

Attested and subscribed in the Name, and by the appointment of the respective Congregations under-written, *viz.*

LEICESTER AND NOTTINGHAMSHIRES

Leicester

William Inge
Robert Coltman
Edmond Perkinson
Thom. Pharren
George Hopkins
Rich. Hardy

Loughborough

William Parker
William Sadler
Thom. Berington
George Tomlinson
Jo. Quinton
Rob. Peale

Twiford

Jo. Louth
William Mobery
William Pocklington
Ri. Hill

Markfield

George Moore
Nicholas Ward
Peter Sykes
Thom. Bunney
William Sykes
Jo. Moore

Quarndon

Ed. Smith
Rob. Stevenson
Fr. Harris
Edw. Thornton
William Hull
George Shittlewood
Tho. Heford

Winswold

Edw. Blount
Thom. Feaks
Thom. Hall
Jo. Blunt
Edw. Thomson
Gabriel Leake

Ratby

Ri. Booth
Daniel Cox
Jo. Garner
Steven White
Peter Symkin
William Cox

Knighten

William Wells, *Sen.*
William Wells, *Jun.*
Thom. Carthright
Ri. Carthright
Rob. Coltman
Ed. Heggs
Ed. Brooks

Langton
 Hen. Hartshorn
 Thom. Grewcock
 Barthol. Cox
 Dennis Wright
 William Charton
 Thom. Iminges
Nottingham
 Charles Jarman
 George Tacey
 Thom. Gerey
 Rob. Shering
 William Bush
 Matth. White
 Jo. Rick

Rutland, Lincolnshire, Staffordshire, Derbyshire, and Shropshire

*Burleigh*²⁹
 Thom. Smyth
 Ri. Wale
*Narborough*³¹
 Jo. Bishell
 Jo. Measure
*Sweaton*³²
 Rob. Towers
 Jo. Foster
Westby
 William Pridgen
 Thom. Worth
*Witham*³⁵
 William Hidson
 VWilliam Bell
Berrey-Hill
 Henry Haggar
 Tho. Ginder
*Burton*³⁶
 Luke Budworth
 John Blundill
Shrewsbury
 Rich. Newton
 VVill. Highway
*Darliston and Elsmeer*³⁸
 Arthur Atkin
 George Chathcock
*Darbyshire-Peak*³⁹
 Robert Daken
 Thurstone Wright

Waltham
 Tobias Watson
 Jo. Darker
 Thom. Bishell
 Hen. Redgate
 Ed. Templeman
 Pet. Smith
Thornton
 Ri. Fletcher
 Ri. Man
 Thom. Graunt
 Steven Bunney
 William Newbould
 Ed. Sketchley

*Thorpe*³⁰
 Jo. Osburn
 James Tiptaft
Thurlbye
 Jo. Wilkinson
 Rob. Perk
*Easton*³³
 Jo. Allin
 Sim. Ingram
*Burne*³⁴
 VWilliam Bell
 Jo. Skyrrit
Stafford
 VWilliam Elives
 Rich. VVistons
Litchfield
 Lawrence Spooner
 John Cupper
*Halmer-end*³⁷
 Tho. Sillito
 Tho. Beech
Ludlow
 David Jones
 VVill. Haiton
Bridgenorth
 Walter Gaferis
 Tho. Law

An Assent also hereunto has been given by the *Warwickshire* Churches, whose subscriptions, through some miscarriage, came not timely to hand.

This testimony was intended before the late Change, though not unseasonable (as we judge) to be now publish'd; trusting these great and astonishing Revolutions will but make the more way for the accomplishment of our just desires herein. Hoping the chief Instruments hereof, will now be the more engag'd heartily to return to the Lord, and to prosecute their former Resolutions and Engagements to Christ herein (in the day of their straights: if not, we shall again inminde them of that seasonable Word, so lately laid before them, Num. 32.23. And that if [copy mutilated] some other way, &c. Est. 4.14. 1659

[Imprint mutilated] at the [] in Popes-head-alley 1659."

Nichols' copy concluded: "A Claim for Christ; exhibited to a Committee of the Officers of the Army the 15th day of the eighth month, 1659, by divers Well-wishers to the Cause."

(vii) Letters reporting Baptist sedition in Leicestershire at the time of Venner's Fifth Monarchy revolt, January 1660/1.

Richard Orton to Lord Loughborough, Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire (in London):⁴⁰

"1660, Jan. 15. Peatelinge.

"On the alarum we repaired to Leicester where was a very free and speedy appearance of the gentry and others, and many more were coming but, being informed that it was false, returned. We secured some few persons of dangerous principles and known disaffection to his Majesty and seized the arms of several fanatics. Being informed last night of many Anabaptists (whereof several had been in arms and some in command under Lambert) flocking to Earleshilton, we sent a small party of horse with power to seize their arms and bring their persons to Leicester this day, where several of the justices will be with the rest of the commissioners about the six months' assessment. I hope we have not erred, but we could not gain the company of a justice to stay with us."

Postscript: "Several persons near Melton were upon their guard, as also at Belvoir Castle. Sir William Hartoppe went thither in haste with his lady."

The Mayor and Aldermen of Leicester to Lord Loughborough:⁴¹

"1660, Jan. 20. Leicester.

"... There have heretofore been many meetings of fanatics in this Town (that came from several towns in this county) at some houses of their party. Some of the Chief of them were secured upon the first rumour of the late troubles, but since the King's proclamation we cannot find that they have had any meetings although we have made strict searches. We have some few in prison for refusing the Oath of Allegiance, but they are very inconsiderable persons and so we conceive their party in this town and county would have been if their wicked design had proceeded."

(viii) Letter from Charles Twickton of Empingham to Abel Barker, High Sheriff of Rutland, concerning dangerous Baptist meetings, 25 April 1661.⁴²

“Honoured Sir

My best Respects salute y^u. I am bold to trouble you with a line or two to certify you that yesterday meeting Sir Richard Wingfield hee Commanded mee to write to your Worship or to Sir Thomas Hartoppe, that you our honoured Justices would bee pleased to send a warrant from y^e Sessions to Day to Empingham for a strict keeping of y^e night watch, and for y^e suppressing of Anabaptisticall Meeting. For hee is Informed that y^e Connstables are negligent in their Duty, and the other too Diligent, and frequent in Conveneing. If your Worships please to send a warrant to mee I shall Carry it to Sir Richard (as hee has enjoyn’d mee) to signe it. Thus I rest your very servant
ffrom Empingham

Aprill y^e 25
1661

Charles Twickton ”

Other documents of the period for the same area concern George Fox’s encounters with Baptists, 1647-1655;⁴³ Samuel Oates’ conviction at Leicester, 1649;⁴⁴ a financial appeal from the Baptist church at Tyford, 1655;⁴⁵ and the laying on of hands controversy, 1655-57.⁴⁶

NOTES

¹ Nathaniel Stephens, *A Precept for the Baptisme of Infants Out of the New Testament. Where the Matter is First proved from three severall Scriptures, that there is such a word of command. Secondly it is vindicated, as from the exceptions of the Separation, so in special from the Cavils of Mr. Robert Everard in a late Treatise of his intituled Baby-Baptisme routed*, London: January 1650/1. Copy consulted in the Angus Library, Oxford, 1.c.11 (f).

² The text is reprinted in W. J. McGlothlin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, Philadelphia: 1911, pp. 95 ff., without the names of subscribers and their meeting-places. These are given on their own in varying detail in J. H. Wood, *A Condensed History of the General Baptists of the New Connexion*, London: 1847, pp. 118 ff., and in *Baptist Quarterly*, vol. II, pp. 246 ff., neither of which quite agrees with the copy of this Confession in the Angus Library, 2.g.9 (4).

³ Easonhall is four miles northwest of Rugby and near the Lawfords.

⁴ Marston Jabbett is 1½ miles northeast of Bedworth.

⁵ Ravensthorpe is eight miles northwest of Northampton and near Long Buckby.

⁶ Tattershall is adjacent to Coningsby.

⁷ Goulceby is adjacent to Asterby and between Horncastle and Louth.

⁸ North Willingham is between Market Rasen and Louth.

⁹ Swineshead is six miles southwest of Boston and six miles north of Gosberton.

¹⁰ Surfleet is 3½ miles north of Spalding.

¹¹ Thurlby is two miles south of Bourne.

¹² Blankney is midway between Lincoln and Sleaford.

¹³ Leasingham is two miles north of Sleaford.

¹⁴ Welby is four miles northeast of Grantham.

¹⁵ Westby is a hamlet of Bassingthorpe, six miles southeast of Grantham, and near Ingoldsby.

¹⁶ Horley is three miles northwest of Banbury.

¹⁷ Sundon is five miles northwest of Luton.

¹⁸ J. Nickolls, *Original Letters and Papers of State, addressed to Oliver Cromwell; concerning the affairs of Great Britain. From the year MDCXLIX to MDCLVIII. Found among the Political Collections of Mr. John Milton*, London: 1743, pp. 80 f.

¹⁹ Probably Shugborough, 4½ miles east of Stafford.

²⁰ There are possible localities near Stafford, Lichfield, and Stone. As Henry Haggard, the baptizer of Henry Danvers at Stafford, is linked with this church in 1659, Berryhill is most probably the hamlet at Berry Ring, a hill fort only one mile from Stafford Castle.

²¹ Parwich is five miles north of Ashbourne.

²² Walsall.

²³ Ravensthorpe, Northamptonshire.

²⁴ Burton-upon-Trent.

²⁵ Bridgnorth.

²⁶ *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe, Esq.*, London: 1742, vol. IV, p. 720.

²⁷ E. B. Underhill (ed.), *The Records of the Fenstanton Church*, London: 1854, pp. 195 ff.

²⁸ The only known copy of this broadside is in a bound volume of miscellaneous printed materials in the Massachusetts Historical Society Library, Boston, U.S.A., to whose librarian I am indebted for a xerox copy. It is recorded in H. Dexter's Bibliography as no. 105, and Dexter's information was simply copied into Whitley's *Baptist Bibliography* as item 99-659. Appearing immediately after an item by H. Wollrich, it is erroneously attributed to him by V. C. H., *Leicestershire*, vol. IV, p. 190. J. Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, London: 1804, vol. III, part II, pp. 893 f., had seen a copy with a different conclusion, and bound with similar pamphlets from London and the Abingdon Association.

²⁹ Burley-on-the-Hill, Rutland.

³⁰ Thorpe-by-Water, Rutland.

³¹ Northborough is six miles north of Peterborough.

³² Swaton is seven miles southeast of Sleaford, Lincolnshire.

³³ Easton is six miles south of Grantham, Lincolnshire, and near Westby.

³⁴ Bourne, Lincolnshire.

³⁵ Witham-on-the-Hill is 3½ miles southwest of Bourne.

³⁶ Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire.

³⁷ Halmer End is four miles northwest of Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire.

³⁸ Darliston is a hamlet twelve miles east of Ellesmere, and lies in Prees parish, six miles west of Market Drayton. Nearer Ellesmere is Dudleston, four miles towards the Welsh border.

³⁹ Especially around Bakewell and Ashford, Derbyshire.

⁴⁰ Historic Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the MSS. of the late Reginald Rawdon Hastings, Esq., of the Manor House, Ashby-de-la-Zouch*, London: 1930, vol. II, p. 141.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, London: 1947, vol. IV, p. 219.

⁴² Leicestershire Record Office, "Barker MSS. 1544-1743", DE. 730/3, p. 60. I am grateful to the owner of the Barker letters, Mr. John Conant, for permission to publish this.

⁴³ J. Nickalls (ed.), *The Journal of George Fox*, Cambridge: 1952, pp. 18 f., 24 f., 45 f., 222.

⁴⁴ H. Stocks (ed.), *Records of the Borough of Leicester, 1603-1688*, Cambridge: 1923, pp. 385 f., 399 (see also D. Ashby, *Friar Lane: the story of three hundred years*, London: 1951, pp. 12 f.); E. Calamy, revised by S. Palmer, *The Nonconformist's Memorial*, London: 1775, vol. II, p. 116.

⁴⁵ *Records of the Fenstanton Church*, pp. 167 f.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 202-6; Thomas Morris, *A Messenger Sent To remove some mistakes*, London: 1655, pp. 23, 25.

(To be continued)