

To Follow the Lambe Wheresoever He Goeth

The Ecclesial Polity of the English
Calvinistic Baptists
1640-1660

Ian Birch

Foreword by Stephen Holmes



To Follow the Lambe
Wheresoever He Goeth

To Follow the Lambe Wheresoever He Goeth

The Ecclesial Polity of the English
Calvinistic Baptists 1640–1660

Ian Birch

Paperback ISBN: 978 0 227 17672 6

PDF ISBN: 978 0 227 90648 4

James Clarke & Co.



Click on the link above to see our full catalogue
for more excellent titles in
Hardback, Paperback, PDF, ePub and Kindle!

Would you like to join our Mailing List?

[Click here!](#)

Enjoyed this book?

Review it on Amazon so others can too!

[Click here!](#)

To Follow the Lambe
Wheresoever He Goeth
*The Ecclesial Polity of the English
Calvinistic Baptists 1640-1660*

Ian Birch

Foreword by
Stephen Holmes



James Clarke & Co

To Elizabeth, James, and Joanna

James Clarke & Co

P.O. Box 60

Cambridge

CB1 2NT

United Kingdom

www.jamesclarke.co
publishing@jamesclarke.co

ISBN: 978 0 227 17672 6

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A record is available from the British Library

First published by James Clarke & Co, 2017

Copyright © Ian Birch, 2017

Published by arrangement
with Pickwick Publications

All rights reserved. No part of this edition may be reproduced, stored electronically or in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission from the Publisher (permissions@jamesclarke.co).

Contents

Foreword by Stephen Holmes | xi

Acknowledgments | xiii

List of Abbreviations | xiv

Introduction | xv

1. “Casting Balls of Wildfire into the bosom of the Church”: The Emergence of English Particular Baptist Churches to 1660 | 1
 - 1.1. From Jacob to Jessey
 - 1.2. Particular Baptist Expansion, 1644–1660
 - 1.2.1. Publishing
 - 1.2.2. Preaching
 - 1.2.3. Disputations
 - 1.2.4. Missionary Evangelism

Summary
2. “A True Visible Church of Christ”: The Contours of Calvinistic Baptist Ecclesiology | 32
 - 2.1. The Rule of Christ
 - 2.2. A Believer’s Church
 - 2.3. Baptism, Infant Baptism, and Church Membership
 - 2.4. A Gathered Church
 - 2.5. A Visible Church
 - 2.6. A Separate Church

Summary

3. “To follow the Lambe wheresoever he goeth”: The Church of King Jesus | 65
 - 3.1. The Forerunner, Henry Jacob
 - 3.2. “Christology” in Early Particular Baptist Confessions
 - 3.3. *Munus Triplex Christi* and Ecclesiology in Thomas Collier
 - 3.3.1. Collier on Christ’s Priesthood
 - 3.3.2. Collier on Christ as Prophet
 - 3.3.3. Collier on Christ’s Kingship

Summary

4. “A Holy and Orderly Communion”: Theology and Practice of Discipline among Early Particular Baptists | 96
 - 4.1 The Purity of the Saints in Particular Baptist Confessions
 - 4.2 Church Discipline in Hermeneutical Perspective
 - 4.3 Church Discipline in Early Particular Baptist Records
 - 4.3.1. Occasions of Discipline in Baptist Records
 - 4.3.2. Pastoral Procedure in Discipline
 - 4.4 Theology of Discipline among Particular Baptists
 - 4.4.1. The Authority of the Church
 - 4.4.2. The Glory of Christ
 - 4.4.3. Purity of the Body of Christ

Summary

5. “An Intolerable Usurpation”: Theology and Practice of Ministry among Early Particular Baptists | 129
 - 5.1 The Choosing of “Meet Persons”: Baptist Lay Ministry
 - 5.2 Offices of Ministry in Particular Baptist Churches
 - 5.3 The Calling of Ministers in Baptist Congregations
 - 5.4 Ordination among Early Calvinistic Baptists

Summary

- 6. “The Counsel and Help of One Another”: Independency and Interdependency: Particular Baptists in Association | 161
 - 6.1 The Origins of Particular Baptist Associations to 1660
 - 6.1.1 The Origins of Associations in the Association Records of the English Particular Baptists
 - 6.2 Theology of Particular Baptist Associations
 - 6.3 Associational Authority and Local Ecclesiology
- Summary

Conclusions | 192

Bibliography | 207

Index | 225

Foreword

IT IS HARD TO imagine the ordinary life of the congregation Henry Jacob founded in Southwark in 1616. For three decades they met illegally, rarely numbering more than a few dozen, seeing some of their number arrested and imprisoned, enduring multiple schisms amongst the few that remained, seeking through all such setbacks to find an agreed way to follow the Lord ‘in ways known and to be made known’.

In the early 1630s, the very future of the church must have seemed precarious. There was a lasting schism over the issue of fellowship with parish churches, leading to a breakaway congregation pastored by John Spilsbury. Jacob’s successor as pastor, John Lathrop, was imprisoned about this time, and plea-bargained his release into exile, taking a good chunk of the congregation across the Atlantic with him. The main congregation was left without a minister for three years after his departure, and when they finally called Henry Jessey, six more of their number left in protest, and joined Spilsbury’s congregation.

This last sad departure of six believers, however, marks one of the great turning-points in Protestant history, akin to Wesley’s Aldersgate experience or what happened at Azuza St. These six had come to the conviction that the ordinance of baptism should be given to believers only, not to infants; their departure and joining with Spilsbury marks the probable beginning of the very first Calvinistic Baptist congregation.

Today, Baptists are regularly described as the largest Protestant denomination, numbering comfortably over 100 million. Almost all Baptists are, via various twists, turns, and ingraftings, the spiritual descendants of those six believers, Spilsbury, and those with whom they covenanted together. (Although the beginnings of the General Baptists under Smyth was earlier, and although the two traditions developed in parallel for some decades, it was essentially the Particular Baptists and those descended from them or joining with them

who blossomed and spread into the worldwide movement of today.) From that early beginning, in two decades they spread across the UK, organised, and defined themselves as a self-conscious denomination.

Because of the temporal priority of General Baptist beginnings, historians have focused their interest there, and neglected the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey church and its baptistic offshoots. For all of us who stand in historic Baptist traditions today, however, this is the 'rock from which we were hewn'; Sabine Staesmore, Richard Browne, and the rest are our mothers and fathers in the faith. For others less personally connected, this is still the origin of one of the most significant ecclesial traditions of modern times, and the arguments and agreements of those few believers have become remarkably determinative for church history. The story deserves to be told, and to be told well.

Dr. Birch tells it well. His interests are theological, asking what ideas shaped these early Calvinistic Baptists. Of course, social and economic historians will have something to say (as will historians of gender; the remarkable Independent preacher and church planter Katherine Chidley stands in the background of this story, and other women rise to remarkable positions of leadership and influence in the newly-formed Baptist churches in the early years). It is right, however, to give intellectual history, and particularly historical theology, the primary word; these early Baptists were seeking to obey the call of Jesus, often putting themselves in great personal hardship and danger to do so, and simply out of respect for them, the primary interpretation of their story must be theological.

If their intentions were theological, however, they lacked a theologian. There is no magisterial writer who interprets their vision for them and for others in this early period (or, to be honest, in any later day). The arguments which they were prepared to break fellowship over, to suffer persecution for, must be reconstructed from slogans, sermons, and suggestions. Much of the strength of Dr. Birch's account is his patience with these fragmentary and unsystematic sources, and his patient weaving together of the threads that we have to make a convincing tapestry, a picture of the underlying belief system.

With Dr. Birch as our sure guide, we discover a community committed to following Jesus as King, to creating and maintaining pure communities of faith, to enabling all to minister so that the body may be built up, to connecting together in love and fellowship. There is much to celebrate in this vision; no doubt there are also questions to be asked of it. Dr. Birch enables us to see and appreciate the vision of these early Particular Baptists that was historically to prove so powerful over the centuries; for that, we owe him a great debt. He tells his story clearly, convincingly, and compellingly; this is an excellent book, which I commend unreservedly.

Stephen Holmes

Acknowledgments

I WOULD LIKE TO place on record my gratitude to the many people who have helped make the research and writing of this book possible. In particular I am indebted to the guidance and wise comments of my PhD supervisor Revd. Dr. Stephen Holmes of the Divinity Department of the University of St Andrews. His own interest and writing in early Baptist theology has made for a stimulating partnership throughout the course of my writing. Advice and suggestions for lines of enquiry have also been sought and given by Professor John Coffey, and Dr. Larry Kreitzer, and for these I am most grateful.

In my pursuit of sources and original documents the library staff at my home institution, the University of the West of Scotland, have been of considerable help. In the initial stages of the research a profitable week was spent at the Angus library at Regents Park College, Oxford.

Parts of the work were read by my colleague Revd. Dr. James Gordon, whose sharp eye for grammar and punctuation has enabled me to avoid numerous errors. The remaining faults are of course my own.

Support for the work has come from the Scottish Baptist College, the Baptist Union of Scotland, my parents and friends. I hope that seeing the work completed is an appropriate reward for their support.

My wife and children have been patient, supportive, encouraging throughout, and without them, especially Elizabeth, this work would not have been possible.

Abbreviations

- ARPB* *Association Records of the Particular Baptists*
- BQ* *The Baptist Quarterly*
- EEB* Stephen Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603–1649*.
- EED* C. Burrage, *The Early English Dissenters in the Light of Recent Research (1550–1641)* 2 vols.
- HBB* W. T. Whitley, *A History of the British Baptists* 2nd.
- HEB* A. C. Underwood, *A History of the English Baptists*.
- JEH* *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*
- JTS* *The Journal of Theological Studies*
- ODNB* *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
- TBHS* *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*

Introduction

IN 1641, THOMAS EDWARDS wrote to members of the Long Parliament to alert them to what he considered the major issue of the time:

Tis not unknown to You, Right Noble and Worthy Senators, that the Great and Present Controversie of these Times is about the Church, and Church Government.¹

Edwards, an Anglican clergyman at the time but soon to become a virulent Presbyterian, recognized that the political instability of the early 1640s had provided an opportunity for religious sects, notably “Anabaptism, Brownisme, &c.,”² to flourish. The settling of a national church government was therefore a matter of urgency so not to incur Divine displeasure upon a nation which had known God’s grace.³ Edwards’s appeal added to the growing momentum in Parliament for ecclesiastical reform.

In the eighteen months between the calling of the Long Parliament, in November 1640, and the outbreak of Civil War in August 1642, while most members of Parliament believed in the necessity of church reform few, if any, had a clear program for national church polity. Kirby observes, “[Puritans] were more accustomed to dissent, not to constructive thinking.”⁴ When asked what he would put in place of the bishops Oliver Cromwell replied, “I can tell you, sir, what I would not have, though I cannot, what I would.”⁵ A range of opinions were canvassed in a flurry of published pamphlets. Disenchanted Puritans had established contact with Scottish radicals

1. Edwards, *Reasons against the Independent Government*, Epistle Dedicatory.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, A3.
4. Kirby, “English Presbyterians,” 420.
5. Kenyon, *Stuart Constitution*, 252.

and their agenda for reform had in view the Presbyterianism of the Scots. Robert Baillie came to London in 1640 to promote the Covenanter cause and agitate against episcopacy.⁶ Less radical reformers in the House longed for a return to an idealized Jacobethan age of Prayer Book Protestantism. This moderate Anglicanism was represented in the *Grand Remonstrance* presented by the Commons to the King on 1 December 1641.⁷ They stated,

our intention is, and our endeavours have been, to reduce within bounds that exorbitant power which the prelates have assumed unto themselves, so contrary to the Word of God and to the laws of the land, to which end we passed the bill for the removing them from their temporal power and employments.⁸

And we desire to unburden the consciences of men of needless and superstitious ceremonies, suppress innovations, and take away the monuments of idolatry.⁹

While the Grand Remonstrance expressed Parliament's intention to bring about church reform, it was equally clear that religious tolerance for sectaries was not intended. They stated,

We do here declare that it is far from our purpose or desire to let loose the golden reigns of discipline and government in the Church, to leave private persons or particular congregations to take up what form of Divine Service they please, for we hold it requisite that there should be throughout the whole realm a conformity to that order which the laws enjoin according to the Word of God.¹⁰

For a moment it appeared that the momentum for ecclesiastical change was with the conservatives who favored a reformed Church of England with a modified episcopacy. Pym, the *de facto* leader of the opposition to the King in parliament, recognized that the unity of the Commons might be threatened by this article, and under his influence provision was made for an assembly to consider the question of reform of Church government:

And the better to effect the intended reformation, we desire there may be a general synod of the most grave, pious, learned and

6. Coffey, "Toleration Controversy," in Durston and Maltby, *Religion in Revolutionary England*, 44.

7. See Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, 202–32.

8. Article 183. *Ibid.*, 229.

9. Article 184. *Ibid.*, 229.

10. Article 184. *Ibid.*, 229. For the wider debate see Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 137–39.

judicious divines of this island, assisted with some from foreign parts professing the same religion with us, who may consider of all things necessary for the peace and good government of the Church, and represent the results of their consultations unto the Parliament, to be there allowed of and confirmed, and receive the stamp of authority, thereby to find passage and obedience throughout the kingdom.¹¹

By the mid-1640s three visions of the church were being worked out simultaneously, Presbyterianism, Independency and a variety of forms of sectarianism. This thesis is a historical and theological engagement with one element of the ecclesiastical controversies of the 1640s and 1650s, the emergence and polity of the sect later known as the English Particular Baptists.

In 1962 Glen Stassen, then a PhD candidate at Duke University, noted that Baptist historiography had largely ignored the origins and theology of the English Particular Baptists, a lacuna he judged to be a serious issue for Baptist confessional scholarship. He stated:

Whatever the reason for this lack, its consequence is that the most profound Baptist theology of this period [the seventeenth century] just simply seems not to have been investigated. This injustice cries for righting.¹²

This present work is a contribution to this omission,¹³ particularly in relation to the developmental phase of English Particular Baptist ecclesiology, 1640–1660. The approach is situated within the discipline of historical theology, and contextualizes the theology of the church developed and promulgated by the English Calvinistic Baptists within an account of their rise and consolidation.

Around the year 1640 a Calvinistic Independent congregation, led by Henry Jessey, generated a group of members who separated themselves from the main body in order to administer believer's baptism by immersion. By the time of the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, after a period of considerable growth, the English Calvinistic Baptists had established a strong sense of distinct identity, and were about to face renewed persecution as episcopacy was re-established as the national, compulsory form of

11. Article 185. Gardiner, *Constitutional Documents*, 229.

12. Stassen, "Anabaptist Influence," 322.

13. Renihan has published a doctoral dissertation examining the later ecclesiology of the Particular Baptists, which discusses the subsequent phase of development—*Edification and Beauty: The Practical Ecclesiology of the English Particular Baptists, 1675–1705*.

church.¹⁴ These dates form the boundaries of this enquiry into the doctrine of the church in the thought and practice of the English Calvinistic Baptists.

This book concentrates exclusively on the ecclesial polity of the Calvinistic Baptists. This is for two primary reasons. First, the development of the General Baptists has been studied in some depth in recent work. Notably, Stephen Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603–1649*, James Coggins, *John Smyth's Congregation: English Separatism, Menmonite Influence, and the Elect Nation*, Stephen Bratchlow, "Puritan Theology and General Baptist Origins," Lonnie Kliever, "General Baptist Origins: The Question of Anabaptist Influence," Mark Bell, *Apocalypse How?*, Barry White has written manifold articles.¹⁵ Traditionally, the English Particular Baptists have received less detailed attention than the older General Baptists. Second, I have focused on only one Baptist group because despite having in common the practice of believer's baptism by immersion, and congregational church government, the two groups developed separately and independently throughout the period studied here.¹⁶ Though similar in a number of features the two groups had little to do with each other.¹⁷ At the individual level characters like Thomas Lambe defied theological classification as either a General or Particular Baptist, though ecclesially he associated with the Generals.¹⁸ At the level of organized communities convictions were forged separately, with little or no reference to the other.

The task of enquiring into early Calvinistic Baptist ecclesiology is made more difficult than chronicling contemporary alternative polities, for example, that of Presbyterianism or Independent Congregationalism, since the nature of their theological writings is non-systematic. The exception to this is the First London Confession of 1644, but even here articles of faith are brief, creedal statements, not developed theological argument. Baptists had no Baxter, Marshall or Owen. Baptist writings are occasional, often apologetic, and sometimes homiletic. The theology available in these sources is therefore not always fully developed. The investigation of this enquiry is

14. See Morrill, "Church in England," in Morrill, *Reactions to the English Civil War*, 89–114.

15. E.g. White, "English General Baptists," 16–27; see also *The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*.

16. This was not an absolute demarcation, and there were exceptions to the general rule, especially in the early 1640s. See Wright, *EEB*, 94.

17. See Howard, *Looking-Glass*, 5–6. Howard reports that those who switched from the Particulars to the Generals, or *vice versa* were required to be baptized again, since they were regarded as having been baptized into the wrong faith. Brown, *Political Activities*, 4.

18. In *A Treatise of Particular Predestination* Lambe affirmed his commitment to both general redemption and particular election. Lambe, *Treatise*, 2–4.

therefore necessarily eclectic in its use of sources, drawing from a number of writers, preachers, and evangelists to identify theological commitments energizing their work of bringing into being new congregations, conformed to the Rule of Christ. The risk of this approach is assessing whether the views of one Baptist represent the views of the movement, or are only idiosyncratic. In regard to major issues of Baptist ecclesial polity I therefore seek to provide corroborating evidence.

The book divides thematically into three sections. The first section considers the historical context for the emergence of the English particular Baptists. Chapter 1 is foundational for later theological analysis, and explores the origins of Baptist churches derived from the semi-separatist congregation formed by Henry Jacob in Southwark in 1616, up to the Restoration of 1660. The theme is one of emergence and growth, in a period of relative religious freedom caused by political turmoil, especially from the calling of the Long Parliament. As Baptist churches were formed, divided, multiplied, and associated throughout this period, theological convictions both drove the process forward, and were further forged in debate and defense of their congregational ecclesiology. The first part of the chapter uses the Stinton manuscript¹⁹ as a basis for describing the rise of the Calvinistic Baptists in London, and the second part of the chapter sets out the primary reason for their relative success in surviving persecution, spreading their ideas, and planting new congregations.

Chapter 2 builds on the historical foundation of the first chapter, and describes the theological features of Baptist congregationalism in its emergent phase. The Baptist form of church was typically sectarian and voluntarist, Reformed, congregational, prioritizing experiential faith and the visible church. Calvinistic in soteriology, Particular Baptists were committed to a church separate from state control, and state sponsored religious conformity. This apparent political posture was the result of conversionist experience, which inspired Baptists to acknowledge Christ alone as immediate head of every congregation, as of every believer. Spiritual conversion was an experience of the unmediated power of Christ to effect inner renewal of life. Sins were forgiven, assurance of salvation secured, without any human mediator or sacramental means of grace. Since Christ was immediately present to the soul of saints, surely his kingly presence must be likewise available to the church. Building on this personal, experiential, understanding of the Gospel Baptists determined to have a church conformed to the purposes

19. A full transcription of the so-called Stinton Repository with historical introduction is available in *TBHS* 1 (1908–9), 193–245. See White, “Who Really Wrote,” 3–10, 14.

and precepts of King Jesus, that is, “the Rule of Christ,”²⁰ the immediate head of every congregation of saints gathered in his name.

Chapter 3 develops further the theological commitments of the Particular Baptists, focusing on what I consider to be their primary and controlling conviction, namely devotion to the kingship of Jesus over his people. In particular, attention is given to the influence of the *munus triplex* doctrine in shaping early Baptist Christology. This model provides the basis for speaking about ecclesiology in Christological perspective, a foundational principle in Particular Baptist ideology.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 consider the practical outworking of ecclesiological core beliefs in congregational life. The focus will be upon the formation of holy communities and the implementation of congregational discipline. Since Baptists rejected the *corpus mixtum* model of the Church, though affirmed in Reformed theology and operated by Anglicans and Presbyterians, in favor of a believer’s Church, gathered under the reign of Christ, the question they faced was how to maintain the purity of the body of Christ.

In chapter 5, Baptist ecclesiology will be examined in relation to ministry. The variety of offices and organization of officers in Baptist congregations, as set out in their publications will be discussed in relation to other models of ministry functioning in the period. Finally, the Baptist understanding of church in trans-local reality will be surveyed. The primary basis for this analysis will be the *Association Records of the Particular Baptists*, a compilation of documents, mainly from the 1650s, providing access to the thoughts and processes of early Baptist leaders, churches and associations in the development of what was more accurately called *consociation*. This chapter brings to a conclusion the account of earliest Particular Baptist ecclesiology, which began with the independent church of Henry Jacob, and led to the formation of a number of sectarian congregations, but eventually settled into a denominational form of inter-related churches, sharing common convictions, expressed confessionally in subscribed documents of 1644 and 1687, by which they were bound together. By 1660 it can be said that the identity and unity of these churches was consolidated, ensuring their distinct identity through the persecution of the Restoration, and beyond the Act of Toleration.

Throughout the work I have adopted the contemporary style of dating. In the period covered in this thesis England was using the Old Style, or Julian calendar. The year officially began on 25 March. In this text, the Old Style is maintained in order to reflect dates given in original documents. Spelling, punctuation and formatting have followed the original sources in

20. For example, Kiffin, *Brief Remonstrance*, 6.

citations given in the text. This accounts for the variation in the names of Thomas Collier, sometimes spelled Colyer, and William Kiffin, sometimes spelled Ciffyn, Cufin, or Kiffen.²¹ The spellings are used randomly in the original sources, since spelling in the seventeenth century was not standardized, therefore except for citations where I have remained true to the original text for the sake of accuracy, I have adopted the spellings “Collier” and “Kiffin.” On occasions where discussion of sources takes place in the body of the material, modernization of spelling has been used to maintain the flow of the argument.

21. In the most detailed work on Kiffin to date, Kreitzer employs the spelling “Kiffen,” however the majority of documents I have consulted, and the majority of modern commentators, use the spelling Kiffin. See Kreitzer, *William Kiffen and his World (Part 1)*, 8–9.

1

“Casting Balls of Wildfire into the bosom of the Church”¹

The Emergence of English Particular Baptists to 1660

Introduction

ENGLISH PARTICULAR BAPTISTS APPEAR as an identifiable collective organization in the mid seventeenth century. The date by which it can be stated certainly that there existed a group of at least seven Independent churches practicing believer's baptism and holding to Calvinistic tenets of theology is October 1644, the occasion of the publication of the First London Confession.² The unity of these churches is expressed in the preface to the Confession where they stated,

though wee be distinct in respect of our particular bodies, . . .
yet are all One in Communion, holding Jesus Christ to be our
head and Lord.³

1. Featley, *Dippers Dipt.*, Preface.

2. There were other Calvinistic Baptist churches which did not sign the London Confession in 1644, for example, and somewhat ironically, the congregation of Henry Jessey, the “mother Church of the Independents.” Shakespeare, *Baptist And Congregational Pioneers*, 178. Jessey's church at this time still practiced infant baptism and could not sign the article on ordinances. See Whitley, *TBHS* 1, 235, n. 17.

3. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions*, 155.

2 To Follow the Lambe Wheresoever He Goeth

Prior to 1644 it is only with caution that we can speak of the English Particular Baptists as a collective entity.⁴ Murray Tolmie has suggested that the concept of “proto-denomination” be employed to describe a group of churches fully evolved ideologically, but organizationally incomplete.⁵

In this chapter I will draw on near contemporary documents⁶ to trace the emergence of English Particular Baptists from the mother church founded by Henry Jacob to the restoration of the monarchy, in order to provide the necessary context to examine the doctrine of the church among these believers.

1.1 From Jacob to Jessey

The emergence of English Particular Baptists may be traced back to the congregation of Independent Puritans⁷ founded by Henry Jacob in Southwark,⁸ London, in 1616.⁹ The formation of the church is recorded in a document known as Stinton Numb: 1, where it states:

The Church Anno 1616 was gathered

Hereupon y^e said Henry Jacob wth Sabine Staismore, Rich Browne, David Prior, Andrew Almey, W^m Throughton, Jno Allen, M^r Gibs, Edw^d Farre, Hen Goodall, & divers others well-informed Saints haveing appointed a day to seek y^e Face of y^e Lord in fasting & Prayer, wherein that particular of their Union

4. See Hill, “History and Denominational History,” 65–71. Wright, *EEB* 11.

5. See Tolmie, *Triumph of the Saints*, 50. Mark Bell notes the denominational features of Interregnum Baptists, particularly their aspiration to national association. See Bell, “Freedom to Form,” in Durston and Maltby, *Religion in Revolutionary England*, 183. Author’s emphasis.

6. The so-called Stinton Repository. See “Introduction,” n. 18.

7. This is the term used by Burrage for Jacob’s church. See Burrage, *EED* 1, 287. Other terms such as “non-separating Congregationalist” and “semi-separatist” (Tolmie), “moderate separatist” and even “Jacobite” (Watts) are also used to convey their distinct churchmanship. The terminology is compared in Watts, *Dissenters* 1, 52–3, 94–99; also Duesing, “Henry Jacob (1563–1624): Pastoral Theology and congregational ecclesiology,” 298 n. 5.

8. It is interesting to think that the General Baptist congregation of Thomas Helwys, now led by John Murton, was meeting at the same time in Newgate, but since Jacob did not have anabaptist convictions they would be of no importance to him. See Burrage, *EED* 1, 259.

9. The story of the foundation of Jacob’s church is told in detail in Burrage, *EED* 1, chapter 13; White, *English Separatist Tradition*, 165–68; Tolmie, *Saints*, chapter 1; Watts, *Dissenters* 1, 50–62. Additional material may be found in von Rohr, “*Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus*,” 107–21.

together as a Church was mainly commended to y^e Lord: in y^e ending of y^e Day they were United, Thus, Those who minded this present Union & so joyning together joined both hands each wth other Brother and stood in a Ringwise: their intent being declared, H Jacob and each of the Rest made some confession or Profession of their Faith & Repentance, some, ware longer some ware briefer, Then they Covenanted together to walk in all Gods Ways as he had revealed or should make known to them.

Thus was the beginning of that Church of which proceed, they within a few Days gave notice to the Brethren here of the Antient Church.

After this Hen Jacob was Chosen & Ordained Pastor to that Church, & many Saints ware joined to them.¹⁰

The *Confession* affirmed Jacob’s willingness to submit to all civil authority,¹¹ both godly magistrate and government. He did not advocate separation of church and state, but sought freedom and toleration to be an independent congregation, that is, “Christ’s visible political Church under the Gospell.”¹² What Jacob desired was an end to human tradition in the church, and liberation from the authority of priests and bishops.¹³

The basis on which Jacob’s pioneering “independent” church¹⁴ formed was clearly covenantal, the members committing themselves as a gathered congregation. It is less clear to what extent it was their intention to be a separatist conventicle. The argument for separatism derives from the detail that a few days following the first gathering of the church Jacob consulted with “the Brethren here of the Antient Church,”¹⁵ a strictly Separatist congregation with Barrowist convictions.¹⁶ Jacob’s approach may suggest he de-

10. *TBHS* 1, 209. Biographical details of early members are given by Tolmie, *Saints*, 13.

11. Jacob affirmed his willingness to swear the oath of the king’s Supremacy, and the oath of Allegiance. Jacob, *Confession*, E3.

12. *Ibid.*, article 3.

13. *Ibid.*, D5.

14. Crosby recounts the forming of Jacob’s church from a manuscript of William Kiffin, “There was a congregation of Protestant *Dissenters* of the *independent* Persuasion in *London*, gather’d in the year 1616, whereof Mr. *Henry Jacob* was the first pastor.” Kiffin’s memoir speaks of independence not separatism. Crosby, *History of the English Baptists*, 1:148. Indeed, the earliest reference to “independency” was in regard to Henry Jacob’s polity. See Ha, *English Presbyterianism, 1590–1640*, 7.

15. *TBHS* 1, 210. The background to this church is given in Watts, *Dissenters* 1, 34–40; see also *TBHS* 1, 210 n. 6.

16. The opinion of the Ancient Church regarding the Church of England is known

4 To Follow the Lambe Wheresoever He Goeth

sired friendly relations, and possibly hoped that they would join with him, but they did not.¹⁷ This implies that the Ancient Church did not recognize Jacob's ecclesiastical polity as commensurate with their own separatism, for even as late as 1624 they regarded "Mr Iakobs people [as] Idolators in their going to the parish assemblies."¹⁸ Furthermore, on the formation of his own congregation Jacob submitted to re-ordination,¹⁹ and in *A Confession and Protestation* listed twenty-eight Articles, "wherein onely wee dissent from the publique Ecclesiastical order, and doctrine in England."²⁰

In fact, Jacob's attitude towards the Church of England was far from hostile, and he refused to separate entirely from the National Church.²¹ In *A Confession and Protestation* Jacob rejected "the slander of schism . . . and also of separation" on the basis that his own church recognized the parish churches of England as true churches "in some respect."²² He stated clearly that he did not refuse to attend the parish church "on occasion."²³ Thus, while Jacob accused the Church of England of false worship, irregular ordination and unjustified episcopal jurisdiction, making impossible his remaining within the National Church, "all communion with them could not be severed without schism from Christian fellowship."²⁴ Jacob's "independent" church therefore maintained communion with the parish churches, a policy which planted in his congregation an ambiguity which proved an enduring source of tension as the church grew, causing a series of secessions in the 1630s and 1640s. Jacob left the Church in 1622 for Virginia,²⁵ and John Lathrop²⁶ succeeded as pastor in 1624.

through a Clement Gamble, who betrayed them in 1588–89. See Burrage, *EED* 1, 126.

17. *Ibid.*, 314.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Stinton No. 1, in *TBHS* 1, 210–11.

20. Jacob, *Confession*, A4.

21. Jacob's initial convictions were Puritan, and non-separatist, as made evident in his discussions with Francis Johnson in 1599. See Jacob, *Defence of the Churches*. His involvement in the Millenary Petition of 1603 sought the Reformation of the Church, not separation from it. For an overview see Dale, *History of English Congregationalism*, 215–17.

22. Jacob, *Confession*, Title page, and article 8.

23. *Ibid.*, B4.

24. Tolmie, *Saints*, 11. Ha describes Jacob's achievement as a "Third Reformation" following the "Second Reformation," namely the protracted Presbyterian assault on episcopacy. Ha, *English Presbyterianism*, 7.

25. *TBHS* 1, 212; Burrage, *EED* 1, 319–20 corrects the date in the margin of the Kiffin manuscript to 1622, as also Whitley in *TBHS* 1, 212–13 n. 10.

26. Lathrop's background is outlined in Tolmie, *Saints*, 16–17.