

Letters of Henry Jessey and John Tombes to the Churches of New England, 1645¹

ON 22nd June 1645, seven days before his baptism by Hanserd Knollys, Henry Jessey wrote to the churches of New England urging the reverend elders to be more tolerant of those persons within their congregations who dissented from the practice of infant baptism, and encouraging the New England divines to keep an open mind to what he believed was the truth of the antipedobaptist position. To add weight to his argument Jessey requested the assistance of John Tombes, who was by the late 1640s, according to Richard Baxter, “reputed the most Learned and able Anabaptist in England”.² Jessey obtained and sent to New England a transcript of Tombes’ as then unpublished response to Stephen Marshall’s sermon of 1644 defending infant baptism, delivered in Westminster Abbey as the morning lecture to the House of Commons.³ Tombes also contributed a prefatory letter, dated 25th May 1645, addressed to John Cotton and John Wilson of Boston.⁴

Henry Jessey (1601-1663) became pastor of the Independent Jacob-Lathrop congregation, meeting in Southwark, London, in 1637.⁵ Gathered in 1616 by Henry Jacob, the church, over the years, had had some contact with the New World; Jacob had emigrated to Virginia in 1622, and Jessey’s other predecessor, John Lathrop, had emigrated with some members of his congregation to Massachusetts Bay in 1634. In November 1624, Jessey became chaplain to Brampton Gurdon at Assington, Suffolk, and there came to know the family of John Winthrop; Winthrop (1588-1649) was elected governor of the new Massachusetts Bay corporation on 20th October 1629, while still in England, and sailed from Southampton on 8th April 1630.⁶ Throughout the 1630s Jessey conducted an occasional correspondence with the family, particularly with John Winthrop, Jr. (1606-1676), who later became governor of Connecticut. In several letters, Jessey sent news to New England of, among other things, Gustavus Adolphus and the course of the Thirty Years’ War, an eclipse of the sun in 1632, and (in great detail) the imprisonment and punishment of Henry Burton, William Pryne and John Bastwick in 1637. Moreover, he showed he had other friends among the leaders in New England when he asked the younger Winthrop to relay greetings to John Wilson and Thomas Weld (and their wives), and to George Phillips. Jessey also pledged himself to be “New Englands faithful friend so far as I am able”. In a letter of 18th August 1637, Jessey indicated that he had hoped to emigrate to New England earlier that spring, but that he had hesitated because of his recent involvement with the Jacob-Lathrop congregation, “though

not undertaking any office, though now urged to it, desiring first to hear from some in N.E. to whom I writ about half a yeer ago".⁷

Henry Jessey could probably expect, therefore, that his letter of June 1645 would be considered with some respect by those who knew him. In addition to Jessey's efforts, a group of English Independents, led by Thomas Goodwin and John Owen, wrote to the Massachusetts General Court *circa* June 1645 urging greater toleration of antipedobaptists and requesting "that you would trust God with his truth and way soe farre as to suspend all corporall punishment or restraint on persons that Doe Dissent from you and practise the principall of their Dissent without Danger or Disturbance to the Civill peace of the place . . .".⁸ It is not clear whether there was any direct connection between the two letters, but prior to his baptism on 29th June 1645, Jessey had participated in "several debates" and "many conferences" concerning infant baptism with Nye, Goodwin, Jeremiah Burroughes and other leading Independents. It is certain, however, that the letters of Jessey, Tombes, and the Independents were reactions against recent legislation in New England which prescribed punishment of antipedobaptists.

Jessey's letter began as follows:

To all the Officers of the Churches of Christ in New England.
The Elders & Deacons—there.

Henrie Jacie (alias Jesse,) from his soul desireth the multiplying of Grace and Peace, through the knowledge of God our Father, & of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Much Honoured, and Dearly loved in our Lord Jesus, the beholding of your Faith and Order,⁹ which hath so shined forth, even to us, hath often greatly refreshed and greatly comforted the saddest hearts (through many afflictions, as need is,) not only of my selfe, & our Church & other Churches of Saints here; but of the Saints generally throughout this kingdome. Oh that you may stil shine forth more and more therein, with al love, patience, long=suffering, gentlenes, bowels of mercies to all Saints, even to the least of them that beleeve in Christ, that none may take away your Crowne. Now in all love, and with all Due and Dear Respects to you all in the Lord, I give you notice, that here it is reported commonly, & use is made of it in the pulpits against the Gathered Churches called Independents, that in NEW-ENGLAND they will not suffer others to live with them, that differ from them about Church=affaires: and what Reason then have such (say these,) to expect that here they should be suffered to set up Churches that differ from our Churches.

The like is alledged also here in the Assembly, to our Friends there. Tis said, that you (or some of you) proceed against some, for being Non-singers,—some for being Anabaptists.—That an

Order was made in your Court in November (viz. 1644) wherein it was Enacted, that if any should purposely go out, when an Infant was to be Baptized, or should declare their judgement against Infant-Baptisme, either openly or secretly, (though this might be out of Conscience:) that unlesse these should recant within such a time after light was held forth to them, they being judged obstinate must be banished the Plantation—or ye like.¹⁰ And this is counted a smiting of fellow servants, and Persecution for Conscience sake. And this is a [deterrent] to some from coming to [gather] among you and being [fearful] now they are for Infant Baptisme: and it is a Tr[ial] unto some Godly Merchants here, that wish well to you, that say, this wilbe greatly to your damage, every way.

Now touching this last, having some ground to judge ther is some such thing, I have been often pressed in my spirit to write to you about it. That if this be so, and if upon some further consideration and Discovery, it shal appear unto you, that this thing is not ye good and ye acceptable, and will of God: but offensive rather, and displeasing to him; yet with al due Reverence unto the Civill Magistrates as being Fathers, and in zeal towards God, above all and in faithfulness to these, as being Brethren, you may endeavour their Conviction also, & reformation there of, with what Reparation shalbe found meet. And having oft considered about this, what I might doe for your furtherance herein, you being so neer and Dear to me in our Lord Jesus, (because you are so neer and Dear unto him:) I remembred this Ensueing EXAMEN, being a Treatise I had lately seen, though it be not in print, the Author being my much Honoured friend and Brother: which of conceived might some way conduce thereto, if ye Author would grant me the Favour, that I might get a Copy of his EXAMEN transcribed to send it over to you; and requesting it of him, he kindly and willingly yelded to my [request] and hath sent his [letter] herewith—all, to all the Elders of the Churches in New England.¹¹ This Treatise is an Examen, a thorough sifting of the strength; force and soundnes of what has been alledged concerning this subject, in 4 Parts, ye sume of which is: 1 About the Antiquity of Infant Baptisme. 2 Whether the opposing of this, be a Novelty, and the miscariages of Divers opposers of Piedobaptisme, be a good argument against it. 3 Of the Arguments that are produced for it. 4 Of the Answers given to what is alledged against it. Each of these [parts] are here examined to some purpose. Not only with respect to al these Heads (which are all handled by my much Honoured Friend & Brother Mr Marshall, in his sermon upon that subject, wherein he hath alledged the speciall Material things about these 4 Heads, that are usually brought in that kind, it being preached after the Author had given up several Arguments of Doubting) against Piedobaptisme, to the Committee of the Assembly, that was chosen out to give satisfaction

about this point: and was preached before the Assembly, (being such a judicious Auditor, and then by him published:) but with all examining all the special passages alledged about it by Mr Thomas Goodwin¹² (my ancient & Honoured friend & Brother,) Mr Blake,¹³ Mr R. Vines on Eph. 4.14—or any other that have published anything about this subject of late.¹⁴

The ecclesiological convictions of John Tombes (1603?-1676) have often posed problems for historians of the period. W. T. Whitley, for example, considered Tombes "far the most learned Baptist of the age", but one "who had never fallen into line with the Baptist churches and ministers". Christopher Hill has noted that although Tombes was doctrinally a Baptist, "historians of the sect" have been reluctant to claim him. While Dr. Hill may have inaccurately represented the way in which most Baptist historians have regarded Tombes, nevertheless, such statements make it clear that Tombes was not a typical Baptist minister of the 1640s and 1650s, if indeed such a stereotype existed.¹⁵

In the first place, Tombes' educational background set him apart from most of his Baptist contemporaries. From 1618 to 1630 Tombes was at Oxford, first as a student, and then as a catechism tutor of some reputation at Magdalen Hall. Moreover, from 1624 to 1630 he was lecturer at St. Martin's Church, Carfax. Later, Tombes wrote that as early as 1627 he had begun to doubt that Genesis 17:7 and I Corinthians 7:14 established a scriptural precedent for infant baptism. He continued the practice, however, because he believed there was a biblical relationship between circumcision and infant baptism.¹⁶ Secondly, Tombes held livings from 1630 until his ejection in 1662.¹⁷ In November 1630 he became vicar of Leominster, Herefordshire, remaining there until 1643. In May 1641 Tombes wrote to Sir Robert Harley, an M.P. for Herefordshire with broad puritan sympathies, stating that he no longer wore the surplice or used the sign of the cross in baptism. Nathaniel Fiennes appointed Tombes vicar of All Saints, Bristol, early in 1643. After a disputation with a Baptist in Bristol where he attempted to defend the text of I Corinthians 7:14, Tombes recorded that "I resolved with my selfe to consider that matter more full". Because of the war Tombes and his family fled Bristol in July 1643 with the intention of going to London "to conferre with my Brethren of the Assembly, and by the advantage of Books in London to make further search into the point". Tombes arrived in London on 22nd September 1643, and became rector of St. Gabriel, Fenchurch. By January 1644 Tombes had made up his mind about antipedobaptism and presented his views against infant baptism "in a meeting of Ministers in the City of London".¹⁸

Tombes was encouraged by Henry Scudder, the Presbyterian rector of Collingbourne Ducis, Wiltshire, and a member of the Westminster Assembly, to approach the Assembly with his arguments; these were drafted in February and March 1644, in the form of nine Latin arguments, and presented by Scudder to Lawrence Whitaker, M.P. for Okehampton, Devon, and chairman of the Grand Committee for

Religion. In July Tombes added "three more reasons of doubting" which he stated were delivered to Anthony Tuckney, chairman of the the committee for doctrinal formularies.¹⁹ Soon after, John White, M.P. for Southwark and chairman of the Committee for Plundered Ministers, disputed the issue of baptism with Tombes and asked him to develop his views more fully in a treatise.²⁰ The Assembly's refusal to consider his arguments, coupled with the appearance of Marshall's sermon in August 1644, caused Tombes to write the manuscript draft of the *Examen*, which was completed on 11th November and delivered to Marshall on 9th December.²¹

Meanwhile, Tombes had been removed from St. Gabriel's for refusing to baptize infants. Tombes had a "friendly conference" with Marshall on 30th December 1644, to discuss their differences, and apparently on Marshall's recommendation Tombes was made Master of the Temple at the end of January 1645. The conference, Tombes believed, had put the two men on excellent terms and he vowed to make "a speciall momento in my booke of speciall passages of my life, to blesse God that day for the conference I had with Master Marshall in peace and amity".²² Tombes had promised not to preach on baptism at the Temple, instead turning his attentions toward anti-nomianism, and was not required to perform baptism. It was only when the Assembly persisted in its refusal to consider Tombes' papers that he elected to publish the *Examen* on 15th December 1645. Stephen Marshall was directed by the Assembly to respond to the *Examen*. He stated that Tombes' accusations against the Assembly were "but a pompous dumb shew" because he should have known "that the worke of Committees, is but to prepare matter for the Assembly" and that they did not have power to answer any outside questions put to them; "but I dare speak it in the name of the whole Assembly", Marshall added, "that they would be glad were you admitted to dispute all your grounds among them". Moreover, Marshall was aware of the writings that Jessey and Tombes had sent to New England, and had received letters from certain New England "friends" that displayed dismay at Tombes' "scorne" of Thomas Goodwin, Richard Vines, and Marshall.²³ The prompt defences of infant baptism by Marshall, John Gere, Nathaniel Homes, William Hussey, Thomas Blake, and Henry Lawrence, undoubtedly contributed to Tombes' removal from the Temple.

By 1647 Tombes had been appointed to a perpetual curacy at Bewdley, Worcestershire, his birth-place, and a chapelry in the parish of Ribbesford. At Bewdley, Tombes regularly attended Richard Baxter's Thursday lecture at Kidderminster; Baxter reported after his famous debate with Tombes on 1st January 1650, that the Bewdley curate had gathered a Baptist church "which never increased to above Twenty two that I could learn".²⁴ Later that year, possibly because of his dispute with Baxter, Tombes moved to Ledbury where he became Master of St. Catherine's Hospital. In 1654 he returned to the vicarage at Leominster. After his ejection from there in 1662 he became a

lay communicant in the Church of England and stated that his quarrel with the established Church had not extended "any farther than by going out of the church whilst that office [baptism] was performed, and returning in again when it was ended".²⁵

In his doctrine of baptism, Tombes was a Calvinist who preferred the open-membership practices represented by Jessey, Vavator Powell, John Bunyan, and the Broadmead, Bristol, congregation, rather than the closed-membership principles of men like Hanserd Knollys and William Kiffin, or the Arminianism of General Baptists. In his view of church government, Tombes has often been labelled a Presbyterian. In an age when lines of distinction between ecclesiological categories were not always present, Tombes may well have been a Presbyterian, but the evidence supporting this is slim and inconclusive. Although there are no traces of Tombes having participated in the classical structure, John Batchelor, who licensed the *Examen*, stated that Tombes was "(as I heare) a godly man, and of the Presbyterian judgement". In his writings, Tombes gave no explicit indication of any preference concerning church government and it is possible that he, like many others, was called a Presbyterian by contemporaries because he fitted neither Independent nor Episcopalian categories in all respects. In 1672, however, Tombes' home in Salisbury was licensed as a Presbyterian meeting-place.²⁶

There are two items of significance that emerge from the letters concerning the relationship between Tombes and Jessey. First, the co-operation of the two men in the first half of 1645 establishes their direct relation to one another at a time far earlier than previously known. Both men were signatories of a letter, dated 2nd October 1653, to the Baptist church at Hexham urging correspondence between the various churches. Jessey signed for his church, then meeting at Swan Alley, London, and Tombes signed on behalf of the Baptist congregation gathered at Lintile, Herefordshire; an additional group of seven churches in Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire added signatories. Tombes was undoubtedly a strong influence in the area and may have been instrumental in the gathering of these congregations.²⁷ Jessey and Tombes were also named Triers by Cromwell's government in 1654. Secondly, Jessey's letter suggests that Tombes was an important influence in his pilgrimage to accepting antipedobaptist principles. It is not clear whether there was ever a close personal friendship between the two men, but Jessey implicitly acknowledged his debt to Tombes and his well-reasoned *Examen*:

For myne owne part, though some Passages I must further chaw, before I swallow them, (viz. about the Covenant, & the opening of 1 Cor. 7.14. &c.) I persevered & saw, as I apprehended, a more solid judicious Book of this subject, than this is. Wherein, granting all true Consequences from Evident [MS. mutilated], & Hope to beleivers touching their childrens happy estate, above what others may have; he keeps close to the Word, to Gospel Institutions (which we commend against popish Episcopacy, &

other Traditions, not with standing their Antiquity; and though the Ancients affirmed that they were of Apostolical Institution as some of them say of Paedobaptisme.) Now this Examen, being at last, by much paines & some cost transcribed, and by the Author revised, I send it to you, as a token of my loving and dear respects to you. . . .

Jessey's primary purpose in sending the *Examen* to New England was to provide a rational argument from Scripture for antipedobaptism and toleration: "the strength of grounds about it is so fully sifted and examined, as I think hath not been exceeded by any hitherto since that great Defection under the Great Whoor". In an important autobiographical section of the letter, Jessey endeavoured to bolster the rational argument of Tombes by relating his own experience in coming to an antipedobaptist conviction:

And if upon your serch you stil judge otherwise, that then you may endeavor further to enforme me, [that] yet I can be here, after nere a yeeeres time, of serch about it, [propounding it (scored)] being first convinced about it with power in my Morning thoughts about it next after a day of Humbling ye soules before our God, and desiring to know the meaning of his rod, in that so sad affliction, when about 16 precious soules left us, & sate mourning about their Baptisme & could not be comforted about it. And entreating of him, that if Infants should not be Baptized, or if our Baptisme was not Christs, or our Church state not sound, (those 16 questioning the former, & some of them the last;) that he would shew it to us, for we saw it not.²⁸

That evening we enquired each of other, whether any of us judged otherwise then we had done about our Church state. And not one judged otherwise herein; though we all judged our selves very ignorant & dark in many things that we should be clear in, & otherwise also very unworthy of such a Title as a Church & spouse of Christ. Here upon a Message was concluded [from] our Church to those our Friends. . . . The very next morning was such a conviction against Paedobaptisme, upon my spirit, whilst I was pondering about it upon my bed, as I never had before; yea, such as I had no power against from such places of Scripture, & such grounds thence. . . and as I could never have resolution to the contrary thence to this day.²⁹ Neither by the Elders nor others in the City, nor by those our friends in the Assembly, to whom I first sent, and then went, & have often friendly & lovingly discussed together, yet without satisfaction to my spirit in that point.³⁰

As he had done in earlier letters to New England, Jessey provided a report of the current political situation in England and its effect on the gathered churches. He described the forming of an Eastern Association,³¹ and noted that the war was particularly hard on dissenters "in the west and North of England". Moreover, several Independent churches were "in many outward streits" as a result of royalist pre-

sence in their villages and towns, most notably "six or 7 Churches being Dispersed from Wales, one fro[m] Bristol & 2 or 3 are from the west. . ." Which were the six or seven Welsh churches? One congregation, Llanvaches, joined with the gathered church at Bristol early in the war, and together the two groups fled to London in September 1643.³² In William Erbury's *Testimony* (1658) there is evidence of a church at Cardiff to which he had ministered; it is not certain, however, whether the congregation existed as early as 1645.³³ Other Welsh churches during this period are more difficult to identify and document. For example, Joshua Thomas claimed to have seen documents in the eighteenth century that proved the existence of a Baptist church at Olchon (Welsh-speaking but in Herefordshire) in 1633, pre-dating Llanvaches by six years. Without hard evidence, however, the question of Olchon's antiquity as an organized church is doubtful. It is possible that Vavator Powell's evangelistic activity in Radnorshire between 1640 and 1642 had led to the formation of Independent congregations, and it is not improbable that Walter Cradock might have gathered a church at Wrexham during his stay there.³⁴ Llanvaches, however, is the only Welsh gathered church that can actually be documented as having been "Dispersed". At the same time, there is no reason to doubt Jessey's estimate of the number of churches, even though they cannot be positively identified. The letter, therefore, offers valuable insight into the probable minimum number of Welsh congregations prior to 1645. The letter concluded:

This I mention the more in what your prayers for us all in the entreating of the same Generall: entreating the same in some particular maner for the sender here of to you: That ye Lord would graciously vouchsafe to him more of the sweet knowledge of Himselfe, his son, his Love, his Covenant, and of some Gospel Ordinances & Mysteries; (wherein he is sensible oft times of much ignorance, and is often much abased there fore: yet oft comforted in this, that the LORD, & the Lamb wilbe his Light,) & make him a wise and Faithful dispenser thereof. Who must count himselfe many wayes engaged to be a frequent Remembrancer of you before our God and Father, in our Gracious Mediator: as being [one], in and through him. Your dearly [faithful] though [troubled] [bro]-ther, Fellow soldier & fellow se[rvant], Ready to serve you in love, to his power in the Lord, as he may in his place.

Tower hil, near the Bulwark
at the Crossguns yard,
ye 22th of ye 3rd Month: June
(England 1645)

Hen: Jesse, (al: Jacie.)

(The Months beginning at ye New Moones. Nu. 10.10.)

Later good Tidings are herewith sent unto you al.

The letter of John Tombes is as follows: ³⁵

To all the Elders of the Churches of Christ in New-England, and to each in particular, By name to the pastor and Teacher of the

Church of God at Boston³⁶ there, these present

Reverend Brethren,

Understanding that there is some disquiet in your Churches about paedobaptisme, and being moved by some (that honour you much in the Lord Jesus, and desire your comfortable account at the day of Christ), that I would yield that a copy my Examen of Mr Marshall his sermon of infant baptisme might be transcribed to bee sent to you. I have consented thereto, and doe commend it to your examination in like manner as you may perceive by the reading of it, as I did to Mr Marshall not doubting, but you wil as in God's presense and accountable to Christ Jesus, weigh the thing remembring that of our Lord Christ. Jo: 7.24. Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgement. To the blessing of him who is your God and our God, your Judge, and our Judge, to leave you, and the flocke of God over which the holy Ghost hath made you overseers, and rest,

from my study
at the Temple
in London
May 25, 1645

Your Brother, and fellow-
Servant in the worke of
Christ
John Tombes

NOTES

¹ I wish to express my appreciation to Mr. Marcus A. McCorison, Director and Librarian, and Mr. William L. Joyce, Curator of Manuscripts, of the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts, U.S.A., for permission to publish the letters contained in the "Baptist Papers 1644-1645", vol. I, fols. 1-6.

² *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, ed. Matthew Sylvester (London, 1696), I, p. 88.

³ Stephen Marshall, *A Sermon of the Baptizing of Infants. Preached in the Abbey-Church at Westminster* (London, 1644); John Tombes, *An Examen of the Sermon of Mr. Stephen Marshall, About Infant-Baptisme* (London, 1645), the second sub-title page of his *Two Treatises and an Appendix to them Concerning Infant-Baptisme* (London, 1645), with continuous register but separate pagination. For Marshall, see *D.N.B.*

⁴ The MS. is in very poor condition and severely mutilated at points, thus rendering certain words or lines illegible. The editor has supplied words in square brackets wherever the sense permitted so doing. For that reason only the more interesting and complete sections of the Jessey letter are printed here. The Tombes letter is published in its entirety.

⁵ For Jessey, see *The Life and Death of Mr. Henry Jessey* (n.p., 1671); *D.N.B.*; *Calamy Revised*, ed. A. G. Matthews (Oxford, 1934); and B. R. White, "Henry Jessey in the Great Rebellion", *Reformation, Conformity and Dissent: Essays in honour of Geoffrey Nuttall*, ed. R. Buick Knox (London, 1977), pp. 132-53.

⁶ *Dictionary of American Biography*, 20 vols. (New York, 1928-36), XX, pp. 408-11.

⁷ *Winthrop Papers*, 5 vols., Massachusetts Historical Society (Boston, 1929-47), III, pp. 57-63, 77f., 126f., 142f., 188f., 484-8. Jessey also wrote to the elder Winthrop on 6th March 1648, urging the elders and magistrates to reconsider "your Law touching Anti-Paedobaptism" (*ibid.*, V, pp. 204f.).

⁸ *Ibid.*, V, pp. 23f. Other signatories were George Cokayn, Anthony Palmer, George Griffiths, John Bowe, John Lodiwick, John Collins, John Carey, Simon Moore, Cornelius Thelens, and Thomas Blake.

⁹ A formal platform of New England doctrine and practice was not published until after the Cambridge Synod, *A Platform of Church Discipline*

Gathered Out of the Word of God (Cambridge, Mass., 1649), reprinted in Williston Walker, *The Creeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (New York, 1893), pp. 194-237.

¹⁰ The 1644 law sentencing Baptists to banishment is quoted in full by William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent 1630-1833: the Baptists and the Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), I, p. 23. See also *Winthrop's Journal "History of New England"*, ed. J. K. Hosmer (New York, 1908), II, pp. 259f.

¹¹ The transcript sent to New England, dated 7th December 1644, is preserved in the American Antiquarian Society in two volumes labelled "Baptist Papers 1644-1645".

¹² For Thomas Goodwin, see *D.N.B.* and *Calamy Revised*. For Tombes' criticisms of Goodwin, see *Examen*, pp. 57, 68, 70, 72-5.

¹³ For Thomas Blake, Presbyterian minister at St. Alkmond, Shrewsbury, see *D.N.B.*

¹⁴ At least thirty-four pamphlets addressing the issue of baptism were published between 1640 and June 1645. See *Catalogue of the Pamphlets, Books, Newspapers, and Manuscripts Relating to the Civil War, the Commonwealth, and Restoration, Collected by George Thomason* (London, 1908), II, pp. 468f.; and W. T. Whitley, *A Baptist Bibliography* (London, 1916), I, pp. 10-21.

¹⁵ *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*, I (1908-9), p. 36; Hill, "Occasional Conformity", *Reformation, Conformity and Dissent*, p. 217; "History and Denominational History", *Baptist Quarterly*, XXII (1967-8), p. 70. Dr. Hill's opinion, however, is supported by a statement of the nineteenth-century historian Joseph Ivimey, who wrote that Tombes' life "will be considered as a recorded evidence of inconsistency, and proof of the baneful influence of a bad example" (*A History of the English Baptists* (London, 1811-30), II, p. 592).

¹⁶ Tombes, *An Apology or Plea for the Two Treatises* (London, 1646), p. 6.

¹⁷ The most complete accounts of Tombes' life remain Alexander Gordon's article in *D.N.B.*, the brief sketch in *Calamy Revised*, and Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists* (London, 1738-40), I, pp. 278-97.

¹⁸ Tombes, *An Apology*, pp. 6ff.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 8f. For Scudder and Tuckney, see *D.N.B.*, s.vv., and *Calamy Revised*, s.v. Tuckney.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 9f. For White, see *D.N.B.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 10-13.

²³ Marshall, *A Defence of Infant-Baptism: In Answer to Two Treatises* (London, 1646), pp. 4f., 244. The arguments that Tombes had presented to the Assembly were published in English in the first of the *Two Treatises: An Exercitation about Infant Baptisme; Presented in certaine Papers, to the Chair-man of a Committee of the Assembly of Divines* (London, 1645). Cf. *Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines*, ed. A. F. Mitchell and J. Struthers (Edinburgh, 1874), pp. 172f., 216f.

²⁴ *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, I, p. 96.

²⁵ Quoted in *Calamy Revised*, s.v. Tombes.

²⁶ *Original Records of Early Nonconformity under Persecution and Indulgence*, ed. G. Lyon Turner (London, 1911), I, p. 253.

²⁷ *Records of the Churches of Christ, Gathered at Fenstanton, Warboys, and Hexham 1644-1720*, ed. E. B. Underhill, Hanserd Knollys Society (London, 1854), pp. 341-5; White, "Henry Jessey in the Great Rebellion", pp. 138f.

²⁸ The autobiographical section of the letter is important because it collates closely with the 1712 transcript by Benjamin Stinton entitled "A Repository of Divers Historical Matters relating to the English Antipedobaptists", MS. deposited in the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford. No. 4 of the transcript, "An Account of divers Conferences," is the relevant portion,

attributed by Stinton to Jessey, and has been printed in *T.B.H.S.*, I (1908-9), pp. 239-45. The "Repository" (pp. 27ff.) describes the events surrounding the "16 precious souls" who left the congregation, and lists the names of fourteen persons who left the church in 1644 because they remained "convinced against Pedobaptism, And hence desired to enjoy it where they might, & joynd also some with Br: Knollys, some with Br: Kiffin".

²⁹ The "Repository" (p. 28) describes this evening meeting and Jessey's decision: "After that Mr Jessey was convinced also, the next morning early after that which had been a day of solemn seeking ye Lord in fasting & prayer (that if Infants Baptism were unlawfull, & if we should be further baptized &c. the Lord would not hide it from us, but cause us to know it) First H: Jessey was convinced against Pedobaptism, & then that himselfe should be baptized".

³⁰ Before Jessey's baptism by Knollys on 29th June 1645, Jessey had "many conferences with his honoured & Beloved Mr Nye: Mr Tho: Goodwin, Mr Burroughs, Mr Greenhill, Mr Cradock, Mr Carter &c. & with Mr Jackson, Mr Bolton &c." (*ibid.*). His biographer stated: "In 1644. He held several debates with the Leaders of several Congregations, concerning Pedo Baptism, for he questioned whether it could be proved from Scripture that any others had right to that ordinance of the Sacrament but such as can give account of their Faith in Christ, and their answers not seeming to him satisfactory" (*Life and Death*, p. 83).

³¹ For the associating of the eastern counties in the winter of 1642-3, see Clive Holmes, *The Eastern Association in the English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1974).

³² *The Records of a Church of Christ in Bristol, 1640-1687*, ed. Roger Hayden, Bristol Record Society Publications, XXVII (1974), pp. 97f.

³³ It is possible, however, that a church existed at Cardiff before 1645. In an undated letter, "To the scattered Saints at Cardiffe, and in the Countrey thereabout", Erbury wrote: "Well, gathered Churches we must be, and so we were, till the sword scattered us all into England; there they of Lanvagh continued with their Pastor, &c. Teacher, and Ruling Elder". See *The Testimony of William Erbery left upon Record for the Saints of succeeding Ages* (London, 1658), p. 162f.

³⁴ I am deeply indebted to Dr. R. Tudur Jones for his kind and helpful correspondence concerning the identity of the Welsh churches.

³⁵ Tombes printed this letter to New England in *An Apology*, pp. 13f. and indicated that the published *Examen* was an expanded version of what had been sent to New England. He did not, however, make any reference to Jessey's initiating the endeavour.

³⁶ John Wilson became teacher at Boston in 1630 and then pastor in 1632, an office he held until his death in 1667. John Cotton was teacher from 1633 until his death in 1652.

PHILIP J. ANDERSON.

Thomas Collier — An Unrecorded Tract

IN THE mid-seventeenth-century public disputes were an acceptable activity, and the Baptist leader Thomas Collier was not slow to use such opportunities of publishing truth. One of these disputes, which was of a doctrinal nature and concerned more particularly with Christology, is known from the account of it which Collier put out in 1651. It is entitled *The heads and substance of a discourse first private and afterwards publike held in Axbridge . . . about the 6 March*