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Rise of the Particular Baptists in London, 1633-1644.

THIS document has been entitled by many Americans the Kiffin Manuscript, because Crosby twice refers it to William Kiffin, at pages 101 and 148. But Crosby gives no voucher for this authorship, whether of handwriting or of any oral information; and as he used the document 37 years after Kiffin's death, it is better to disuse a title which begs a question, and to look at the internal evidence.

The story relates to the same church as before, that which Jacob founded and had Lathorp for its second pastor; but it narrates further developments. After a brief statement of the events in 1633 and 1638, it shows how the church divided amicably, and how 53 members in the two companies decided to adopt Dipping as the only scriptural form of baptism. An epilogue touches another church with a different origin, which however associated itself with these in issuing a Confession during 1644.

Kiffin's name occurs once near the beginning, and again as one who signed the Confession. There is no avowed "me" in the text.

Probably all the facts narrated lay within Kiffin's knowledge. He seems to have published his first pamphlet in 1645, another in 1649, another in 1660, besides more substantial works in 1681 and 1692. Also he left a manuscript autobiography, written in 1670 and 1693, which was edited by Ivimey in 1833. There is some probability that such a man might pen a few pages as to the biography of his own church, and its cousins.

Taking the autobiography and carefully neglecting all Ivimey's additions, we get the following skeleton:— Born in 1616, he was apprenticed in London during 1629, and two years later was roused to an interest in Puritan preachers, such as John Davenport and John Goodwin of Coleman Street; but was perplexed at Davenport and Hooker going abroad and not staying at the post of duty. About the age of 22 [that is, about 1638, a date

unaccountably misquoted in America], he joined an Independent congregation, and married a member of it. [From the family tomb we know her name was Hannah, and she was born about 1616.] He was mobbed once when leaving worship at Towerhill. Having talked and studied the subject, he was baptized [i.e. dipped, for this is what the word meant to him in 1670]; no details of time place or circumstance being given. In 1640 he was arrested at Southwark, and put in the White Lion prison; but as the prosecutor got into trouble with the House of Lords, was released. Then came a serious illness. In 1643 he went to Holland and started a trade in woollen cloth which laid the foundation of his fortunes.

Comparison with the story below, shows only one discrepancy, as to the date of his imprisonment. We know from a pamphlet published by Daniel Featley, an ex-official of the High Commission, that on 17th October 1642 Kiffin was free, and well enough to debate with him in Southwark, where Featley held a benefice. It rather startles us to find the acknowledgment:— "For the 39 Articles I know not what they are, I never saw them that I remember:" and he made a slip in putting Jacob more than 2000 years before Christ. Featley reproached him with being an illiterate Artificer. But Kiffin was well able to discuss two points, the baptism of infants, and the right of laymen to preach, as to which some amusing evidence is quoted in the notes to the next document.

The date of Kiffin's baptism is interesting. In 1670 he said that he was arrested in 1640 but was released because Justice Mallett the prosecutor was himself imprisoned by Parliament. But his date here is wrong, the state papers show that it was in August 1642 that Mallett was arrested. This rectification makes his autobiography fall into line with his statement in 1681 that he had practised Strict Communion "for these forty years," the context implying that he had never wavered on this point. Hence we get the true sequence:— 1638 joined a congregation which on one occasion was mobbed at Tower Hill, i.e. 21 April, 1640. Discussed baptism, and was immersed about 1641. Imprisoned at the White Lion in Southwark, and released after July 1642. Debated with Featley in Southwark during October 1642. Seriously ill. Went to Holland 1643.

The Tower Hill incident is another undesigned coincidence between the autobiography and the Jessey Records. It shows also that Kiffin was a member of the Jessey church, as the Knowles debate implies. It is remarkable that he was not among the 53 baptized by Blunt and Blaiklock, perhaps he came to a

speedier decision than did the people here mentioned, and perhaps the question of an administrator gave him no concern.

But there is not enough evidence to show that Kiffin wrote this paper. And when we reflect that he apparently did not share the scruples of these 53, or at least that he was baptized on another occasion, we wonder if he was sufficiently interested to record their names, in a way that almost implies that the transaction seemed important to the narrator. Moreover Stinton was in contact with Kiffin between 1697 and 1701, and he never suggests that Kiffin was the author, it was left for Crosby a generation later first to suggest it, and then a few pages later to treat his suggestion as a fact.

The name of Jessey has been suggested as the author; and although Stinton did not put it forward while prefixing it to two other papers given him from the same source, it is worth examining. Despite certain discrepancies which must be scrutinized closely, the events under dates 1633 and 1638 tally in this paper with those in the "Jessey Records;" and this paper reads as if it had been intended to carry further the story already given. Jessey's name occurs once. As he was not baptized till 1645, the theory that he penned this paper in 1644 will satisfy all conditions that are obvious. But the evidence is of that kind that supports the guess of Apollos as author of the epistle to the Hebrews—a late guess, with slight coincidences. All that it seems safe to say is that Jessey might have written this, while there were many obscurer men who were equally able to do so. From any member of his Mixed Communion church, the paper might emanate, and might pass into the hands of Adams.

But if we take the first document, and place the intrusive section of 1620-1638 at the end, we get there two distinct topics; First the troubles from outside, 1616 to 1641; Second the discussions within, 1620 to 1638. This second document then opens out a third topic, to which the second leads up; the adoption of immersion and the evolution of the Seven Churches. We shall see that our third document completes an orderly story by a fourth topic; the abandonment of infant baptism within Jessey's church. When we note how these papers are consecutive (as soon as we rectify one dated displacement), we are more inclined to attribute them to one author, namely, Henry Jessey.

Authorship is less important than accuracy. It will be found in the notes that the story here dovetails almost perfectly, both with the records in document one, and with known facts. It also explains to some extent why the Seven Churches clung together as Seven for several years; not only might they linger affection-

ately on the coincidence with the Revelation, not only did they agree largely in doctrine, but they all sprang from one movement, five of them were directly descended from the church of 1616, and the other two were early connected with it.

The phraseology of the anonymous *Life of Jessey*, published in 1671, more than suggests that these papers were used in the compilation.

There is a piece of evidence bearing on this church published in November 1644. Its title runs:— *To Sions Virgins: Or, A Short Forme of Catechisme of the Doctrine of Baptisme, in use in these times that are so full of Questions. By an Ancient Member of that long agoe gathered Congregation, whereof Mr. Henry Jacob was an Instrument of gathering it, and the Pastour worthy of double honour, Mr. John Lathroppe succeeding him, now pastor in New England: and the beloved Congregation, through God's mercies sees her Teachers, waiting when God shall give more Liberty and Pastours according to his own heart, praying the Lord of the harvest to thrust forth Labourers into his harvest.*

Now by 1644 the church had divided into two, one section under Barbon, one under Jessey. But the title suggests that the catechism was written when there was no pastor, when there was not sufficient liberty to have one.

Yet as soon as we look at the contents, we find that two distinct topics are matters of eager discussion in this circle, the act of baptism, and its subjects. The author's position is that the minister is to dip his hand, and to pour clean water, sprinkle and wash the sinner, and so it is fully baptized. And this he defends at length, so that we can see the matter was burning, and all the details had been up for discussion. Then he claims that all the children of Sion's citizens have a right to baptism, because they are of the kingdom; this position also he defends at length. Then he returns to the topic of dipping, which was in the forefront, and after arguing against it, he concludes that it is vain to baptize again; let them take heed that teach, these new truths as they call them, these new forms, or newly taken up.

Such topics in 1637 within this church are more advanced than any other evidence would imply, and agree far better with the date of publication, November 1644, a month after the Confession that stipulated for dipping. Of course it is possible that a catechism written in 1637 was edited to suit a more advanced stage in 1644. But on the whole the later date seems to fit all the circumstances; only the title shows that the proceedings of Jessey, who by that time had abandoned pouring, and had been beaten in open debate by Knowles and Kiffin, as we shall presently

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see, had so far excited the ire of this ancient member, that he omitted all reference to him, and almost implied that Jessey was to be recognized as only a Teacher, not a Pastor after her own heart.

*Numb: 2

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An Old MSS, giving some Acco^{tt} of those Baptists who first formed themselves into distinct Congregations, or Churches in London. found among certain Paper given me by Mr Adams

Sundry of y^e Church whereof Mr Jacob & Mr John Lathorp had been Pastors, being dissatisfied 1633
1633wth y^e Churches owning of English Parishes to be true Churches desired dismissal & Joyned together among themselves, as Mr Henry Parker, Mr Tho. Shepard,¹ Mr Sam^l Eaton, Marke Luker,² 1633
[Crosby uses very freely, I. 148, also III. 41.]

¹ There are two or three men of this name at this period. The minister of Cambridge in Massachusetts is of course not the man; place, date, doctrine and social rank all distinguish him clearly. And probably the carpenter of St. Andrews in London, who on 16 May 1637 was in some kind of trouble with the High Commission, is not the man. For three other facts about a third man fit well with these notices:—On 15 October 1635 Thomas Sheppard of St. Olave's in Bermondsey, a leather-dresser, was brought before the High Commission as a Separatist. About 1639 he was still a prisoner in the Marshalsea. In 1644 he was colleague with Thomas Munden, mentioned further in this document, signing the Baptist Confession, where his name appears as Skippard. In 1646 he was replaced by George Tipping, who two years before had been Spilsbury's colleague. He has left no other trace in literature.

² The name of Lucar at this period reminds us that Cyril Lucar, patriarch first of Alexandria and then of Constantinople, was in friendly relations with James I. and Charles I., having been bred a Calvinist. It was in gratitude for their kindness that he sent the famous Alexandrian manuscript of the Septuagint and the New Testament, now lodged at the British Museum. The name sets us wondering whether our Mark Lucar was connected with his family. When we turn to the Harleian Society's Visitation of London in 1568 by Clarenceux, augmented after 1613 by William Camden, we find the Lucar family prominent enough to bear arms, but apparently only of brief residence, for the pedigree begins with Emanuel Lucar of London, Esquire, who married Elizabeth the daughter of Paule Withipole, by whom he had children: Emanuel, Henry, Mary, Jane. Then he married Joane the daughter of Thomas Turnbull, by whom he had: Ciprian, Martha, Mary, Mark, and John. This is apparently our Mark. The names have a slightly Hellenistic flavour. Now the Greeks have never abandoned immersion as the only act of baptism; and if Mark Lucar had any Greek blood in him, and Greek relations coming to see him, there was an easy means of the attention being drawn to this detail. He is well known in America as an original member of the First Baptist church at Newport, Rhode Island, formed in 1644.

& others with whom Joyned Mr W^m Kiffin.³
 1638. Mr Tho: Wilson, Mr Pen, & H. Pen, &
 1638³ more being convinced that Baptism was not for 1638
 Infants, but professed Beleivers joyned with Mr
 Jo: Spilsbury y^e Churches favour being desired
 therein.

³ Kiffin avowedly joined this group under other circumstances; from his autobiography we learn it was in 1638, though apparently after Eaton's death they were able to join Jessey. The two lists of 1633 may be compared.

Records.	Old Manuscript.
Henry Parker and wife.	Henry Parker.
Widow Fearné.	
Mr. Wilson.	
Marke Luker.	Marke Luker.
Mary Milburn.	
John Milburn.	
Arnold	
[Green], Hatmaker.	
Thomas Allen.	Thomas Shepard.
[Eaton afterwards]	Samuel Eaton.
	&c.

The High Commission records show that Eaton was a member in 1632, and we infer from these two entries that he was dismissed during 1633, but after 12 September. Other information as to these people is collected in the reconstituted church roll further on.

A similar comparison of the 1638 lists gives:—

Peti. Fener	Mr. Pen
Henry Pen.	H. Pen.
Thomas Wilson.	Thomas Wilson.
William Battý.	and
Mrs. Allen.	three
Mrs. Norwood.	more.

"Peti. Fener" is clearly wrong; whether "Mr. Pen" is right is more than doubtful. When Mr. Gould of Norwich copied the same autograph of Stinton which Keymer copied, he read here Peti. Ferrer; see "Open Communion" cxxii. But when we turn to the High Commission records, we find that on 5 May 1636 Dr. Featley was to try and persuade John Fener to conform; on 21 and 25 January 1636-7 John Fenner was asked to abjure, he being mentioned in Anabaptist company; on 1 February 1637-8 John Fenner was still in the Gate-house as a Separatist. On the whole, John Fenner seems the best reading, which may best explain all the variants. That Stinton did not try and harmonize, speaks well for his fidelity.

A third comparison is useful. The Jessey Records say that these six were of the same judgment with Eaton; this manuscript says that they were convinced baptism was not for infants, but for professed believers. This confirms the supposition that Eaton did not quit at the same time with Lucar, and that the ground of his separation was slightly different. We infer that many in Spilsbury's church shared Eaton's views in 1638.

1640
 3^d Mo: The Church became two by mutall con-
 1640sent just half being wth Mr P. Barebone,⁴ & y^e [Neal
 other halfe with Mr H. Jessey⁵ Mr Richard Blunt uses, III. 126.
 wth him being convinced of Baptism y^t also it ought Crosby
 to be by dipping y^e Body into y^e Water, resembling uses, I. 102.
 Burial & rising again. 2 Col: 2. 12. Rom: 6. 4. Gould
 had sober conferance about⁶ in y^e Church, & then quotes, cxliii.]
 wth some of the forenamed who also ware so con-
 vinced:⁷ And after Prayer & conferance about
 their so enjoying it, none having then so so prac-

⁴ Praise-god Barbon was a leather-seller dwelling at the Lock and Key, in Fleet Street. On 19 December he "had a conventicle of Brownists in his house," about which a pamphlet was published. He followed a different line from Jessey, and in March 1642, shortly after the baptism here detailed, he preached "a discourse tending to prove the baptisme in or under the defection of Antichrist to be the ordinance of Jesus Christ." This called out an answer, written as Dr. Christian has shown, by R. Barrow, to be seen at the Angus Library; and this on 14 April 1643 elicited a reply from Barbon to show not only that Baptism was the ordinance of God, but that the baptism of infants was lawful. Perhaps he did not carry with him all his church, for on 30 August 1654 several of his members signed a declaration "concerning the Kingly Interest of Christ &c." whose promoters were chiefly Baptist. This was called out by the ending of that Nominated Parliament on whose roll Barbon's name stood first. In any case, he and his church pass over the horizon of these papers here, for the discussions soon after May 1640 raised a totally new point with which he had no sympathy.

⁵ The story clusters round the group that adhered to Jessey. While the punctuation is ambiguous, we are probably to understand a period after Jessey's name, as indeed Gould read, and interpret the next clause as that "Mr. Richard Blunt, who was with him, being convinced &c."

From the Life of Jessey we know that this division of the church was on 18 May 1640, and that each half renewed its covenant.

Of Richard Blunt we lose sight in 1646, when Edwards tells us, in his *Gangræna* III. 113, that by 5 June the church of Blunt, Emmes, and Wrighter had gone to pieces. As he did not sign even the Confession of 1644, his church may have broken up even by then.

⁶ Mr. Gould of Norwich, transcribing the same manuscript of Stinton, copies these references as "Col. ii, 12: Rom. vi. 4:" see his "Open Communion and the Baptists of Norwich," cxliii. Crosby at I. 102, prints "2 Colos. ii. 12. and Rom. vi. 4." Here is another instance where Gould and his employee differ in minute details. A minute comparison of the whole paragraph shows other variations in every line, such as in Gould's transcript:—Sober Conferance about it; and instead of &; none having then so practised: all the variations being of the most trivial description, and not affecting the sense.

⁷ Blunt and his friends based their view on the interpretation of Scripture. But some of the 1633 and 1638 groups had also come to the same conclusion: they may have been led by considering the plain direction of the Prayer Book, or by the continuous usage of the Greeks, or by the same scriptural consideration. In any case, by 1640 the question was rife outside Jessey's own church.

tised in England to professed Believers,⁸ & hearing that some in y^e Nether Lands had so practised⁹ they agreed & sent over Mr Rich. Blunt (who understood Dutch) wth Letters of Comendation, who was kindly accepted there, & returned wth Letters from them Jo: Batte a Teacher there,¹⁰ & from that Church to such as sent him.¹¹

*They proceed on therein, viz, Those Persons y^t were persuaded Baptism should be by dipping y^e Body had mett in two Companies, & did intend so to meet after this, all these agreed to proceed alike together.¹² And then Manifesting (not by any formal Words or Covenant) w^{ch} word was scrupled by some of them, but by mutual desires & agreement each Testified:¹³ Those two Companyes did set apart one to Baptize the rest; So it was solemnly performed by them.

⁸ This statement is that by May 1640, the dipping of professed believers was not yet practised—of course, to the knowledge of these people and of the writer about 1644. Nothing is said about dipping infants, which was the legal method, and was still practised in various parts. These people had already adopted the "baptism" of believers, but now were attending to the further question what act was baptism.

⁹ Dipping had been disused on the Continent generally for a long time; but the Collegiants had revived it at Rynsburg since 1619, as had also some Poles and Swiss at an earlier time.

¹⁰ John Batten taught a congregation of Collegiants at Leyden, according to Barclay, who cites no evidence. Dr. Lofton quotes Professor Rauschenbusch finding Jan Batte mentioned in the *Geschiedeniss der Rhynsburgische Vergadering*, as one of the early and prominent teachers. Dr. Christian gives the title of this book as "*Historie Der Rijnsburgsche Vergadering . . . MDCCLXXV*", and confirms Barclay by translating from it a reference to Jan Batten from Leiden as a usual speaker at the meetings before 1618 which resulted in the organization of the Collegiants, who restricted themselves to immersion.

¹¹ The conferences, the journey of Blunt, his own baptism and his return took several months, and the next date is 1641, even towards the end of the year.

¹² The High Commission was abolished during 1641, so that there was practically no check on the increase of Separatism. Again therefore the numbers increased so that a further division was possible, of those who intended to adopt immersion from those who were indifferent on the matter. Of the former there were enough to form two groups, though they acted together on this occasion.

¹³ It is noteworthy that as more scriptural views of baptism obtained, the Old Testament revival of covenanting was objected to.

Mr Blunt Baptized Mr Blacklock y^t was a Teacher amongst them, & Mr Blunt being Baptized, he & Mr Blacklock¹⁴ Baptized y^e rest of their friends that ware so minded, & many being added to them they increased much

[Gould
ends
quotation.]

¹⁵The Names of all 11 Mo. Janu: begin

Richard Blunt	Sam. Blacklock	Tho Shephard	}
Greg. Fishburn	Doro Fishburn	his Wife	
John Cadwell	Eliz. Cadwell	Mary Millisson	
Sam. Eames	Tho. Munden		
Tho. Kilcop	William Willieby,		
Robert Locker	Mary Lock		
John Braunson	John Bull		
Rich. Ellis	Mary Langride		
W ^m Creak	Mary Haman		
Rob ^t Carr	Sarah Williams		
Martin Mainprise	Joane	} Dunckle	
	Ann		
Hen: Woolmare	Eliz. Woolmore		
Rob ^t King	Sarah Norman		
Tho. Waters	Isabel Woolmore		
Henry Creak	Judeth Manning		
Mark Lukar	Mabel Lukar		
Henry Darker	Abigal Bowden		
*Eliz Jessop	Mary Creak		
	Susannah King		

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41 in all

¹⁴ Mr. Blacklock seems to have escaped recent notice, and the present editor believes he is the first to draw attention to the Clarke Papers, published by the Camden Society, wherein we read that on 5 July 1647 Samuel Blacklocks laid an information against the committee of the London militia, and that on 28 December 1648 he was one of sixteen who presented a protest to the generals, others being John Lilburne and Richard Overton, both known in Baptist circles: Lawrence and Luke Blacklock are fairly well known in the publishing trade then, and in colonial emigration.

¹⁵ Many of these people figure in the High Commission Court, as will be seen in the annotated list below. The most important of them are Thomas Kilcop, Mark Lukar, Thomas Munden, Thomas Sheppard, all of whom became Baptist leaders.

11.* January 9 added¹⁶

John Cattope	George Denham
Nicholas Martin	Tho: Daomunt
Ailie Stanford	Rich Colgrave
Nath Matthon	Eliz Hutchinson
Mary Burch	John Croson
	Sybilla Lees
	John Woolmoore

^o11th month understood as appears above! & this was Jany 9th.

thus 53 in all

Those that ware so minded had comunion ¹⁶⁴⁴ together were become Seven Churches in London.¹⁷

Mr Green wth Cap^t Spencer had begun a Con- ¹⁶³⁹gregation in Crutched Fryers, to whom Paul Hobson joynd who was now wth many of that Church one of ye Seven.¹⁸

These being much spoken against as unsound in ¹⁶⁴⁴ Doctrine as if they ware Armenians, & also against Magistrates &c they joynd together in a Con- fession of their Faith in fifty two Articles w^{ch} gave

Se ye notes at ye end of ye Confession.

¹⁶ These dates are January 1641-2, a fact often overlooked, so that most writers speak of 1641 as the year, whereas modern usage would speak of 1642. Thus the discussion in this circle lasted for twenty months before it issued in action. We must carefully remember that the horizon of this writer is London, and that the question of immersion may have arisen elsewhere quite independently.

¹⁷ As Jessey and his group continued for a while to "baptize" infants, though adopting immersion in 1643, and as they did not insist on immersing all believers, they remained outside the circle of the Seven.

¹⁸ This sentence has been read carelessly by Crosby at I. 149 and by many others. It does not say that the Crutched Friars congregation was Baptist in 1639; it does not say that Hobson joined it then; it does say that "now"—evidently 1644 as the context shows—Hobson and many of that church had formed one of the Seven. There is no evidence that Green ever was immersed. But Green was repeatedly linked with John Spencer the coachman; by 1658 Spencer was a Baptist, and a Captain, objecting to Richard Cromwell's succession as the Clarke Papers show. In 1669 he defiantly preached at Hertford, and in 1672 he took out a license to preach at Cheshunt. It is not clear when he became a captain; in April 1642 he was not an officer in the London regiments. Thomas Gower was third captain in the sixth or orange regiment, and did good service for Baptists wherever he went, though Hobson proved a traitor.

The notice inserted here shows how a congregation descended through Green in 1633 from the Lathorp church, had in 1644 given rise to one of the Seven.

great satisfaction to many, that had been prejudiced.¹⁹

Thus Subscribed in y^e Names of 7 Churches in London.²⁰

W ^m Kiffin	}	Tho: Gun	}	Paul Hobson	}
Tho: Patience		Jo: Mabbet		Tho: Goore	
Geo: Tipping	}	John Web	}	Jo: Phelps	}
John Spilsbury		Tho: Kilcop		Edward Heath	
Tho: Shepard	}		}		}
Tho: Munden					

¹⁹ The Arminian or General Baptists had been in London since 1614 when Helwys and Morton brought them to Spitalfields. They were known to Featley twenty years before 1644, in Southwark. It was therefore important for this new body of Calvinistic Baptists to dissociate itself explicitly both from them and from the Continental Anabaptists. The Westminster Assembly in 1643 was told to revise the 39 Articles, and this apparently gave the hint to the Seven to draw up their own Confession. It was published during October 1644. Thenceforward it did something to allay prejudice, though Featley still warned his readers that there were many others who did not agree with it. The side note refers to Cox's appendix to the edition of 1646; this is probably due to Stinton. Dr. McGlothlin has shown that this appendix, and some significant alterations in the text of the Confession, were to meet the criticisms of Featley, as indeed Samuel Richardson had expressly stated in his Brief Considerations.

²⁰ It is not said that there were any country churches which agreed; probably the Londoners at this time knew of no other Calvinistic Baptist churches. The Jessey church would not agree with the articles on the ordinances, while the churches of Barber and Lamb were strongly against the Calvinism here.

The signatures here may be compared with those in the printed edition of 1644, reproduced exactly by Underhill at page 17. There are several trifling variations of spelling, only the names of Hobson and Heath being accurately copied. One rather remarkable variant is the second group, which really is John Spilsbery, George Tipping, Samuel Richardson. Three signatures are exceptional, and we rather wonder why this group does not figure first, as Spilsbury was certainly prominent before the others. In the third group we get Shepard as against the printed Skippard, which may point to a correction by one who knew the man and the name.