

Extracted from Manfred Brod: 'Dissent and Dissenters in Early Modern Berkshire' (DPhil thesis, Oxford, 2002).

Chap 5:
Shooting for Jerusalem: John Pendarves¹

There is little doubt that John Pendarves played a major role in the spread of dissent in Berkshire and beyond in the mid-seventeenth century, but, perhaps in part because of his early death, there is a lack of the sort of biographical information that is available for other religious leaders of his type. What we know about him derives from a number of scattered references, many of them critical, and a body of writings that almost all date from the last year of his life and are not necessarily representative of his interests. It may be because of his millenarian beliefs, unwelcome at the time to the Particular Baptist leadership, that neither any serious hagiography nor any funeral sermons have come down to us. Two questions must arise in any account of his life and career. One is the extent to which we can accept Anthony Wood's assessment of him as a careerist motivated primarily by hopes of fame and fortune rather than by purely religious considerations. Wood, of course, is habitually biased against radicals such as Pendarves, but he will have had the advantage of speaking with people who had known him and his remarks are likely to have a basis in his local reputation.² The other, discussed much more recently by Barrie White and Geoffrey Nuttall, is whether he was or was not a fifth monarchist, a proponent of armed rebellion against the Cromwellian regime in order to replace it with the thousand-year reign of King Jesus.³

Pendarves was born in 1622 in Crowan, Cornwall.⁴ The Pendarves were county gentry, and a Samuel Pendarves had recently held the shrievalty, but John's father, also named John, seems to have been of a minor branch of the family. The younger John, with a brother, Ralph, entered Exeter College, Oxford, in 1637 as servitors: they would work their way through college as servants to wealthier students. Exeter College in the time of John Prideaux was something of a safe haven for puritans amid the turmoil of the Laudian reaction; Pendarves graduated B.A. on 3 March 1641/2, and took his name off the college books on 14 July, which may be taken as a statement of opposition to the royalist enthusiasm of the university.⁵

¹ For an assessment of Pendarves's significance in Baptist history, see B.R. White, 'John Pendarves, the Calvinistic Baptists and the Fifth Monarchy', *BQ* 25 (1973-4) 251-71.

² *Athenae*, pp. 419-421.

³ White, 'John Pendarves'; G.F. Nuttall, 'Abingdon Revisited, 1656-1675', *BQ* 36 (1996) 96-103.

⁴ *Alumni*, p. 1140.

⁵ DNB sub Pendarves; 'most of the sober and religious gospellers have left the university' – letter of 3 September 1642, Portland Mss, HMC 13th Report, Appendix vol.2 p. 58.

What Pendarves did for the next two years is unknown; he may well have marched and preached with the parliamentary armies; but when Abingdon was taken from the royalists in May 1644 he became vicar of St. Helens, the larger and by tradition the more radical of the two churches in the town. The living was vacant by the death of the previous incumbent, and there is no reason to regard him as having been intruded or his ministry to have been in any way unpopular.⁶

There is little specific evidence of his activities during the rest of the decade. He was plainly a satisfactory parish minister, since sums of money were awarded him by the town council and later by the Committee for Plundered Ministers.⁷ He will have been exposed to radical ideas by June 1647, if not earlier; it was in that month that Rainsborough's mutinous troopers reached Abingdon and were caught up by their commander, who brought them back to obedience by acceding to their demand not to be sent to Jersey.⁸ Pendarves was named their chaplain.⁹ Even earlier, Pendarves must have known Colonel Pickering, the Independent preacher, and Henry Pinell, his antinomian chaplain. Wood tells us that he ran through the gamut of the radical religious ideas on offer, and he was later accused of having been a Familist in his time.¹⁰ It was probably about then that he developed beliefs in independency and separatism: that each congregation had the right to determine its own membership and policies, and that the established church, now becoming dominated by presbyterianism, was anti-christian and must be abandoned. Pendarves seems to have become convinced of the need for believers' baptism as an entry rite to true religion, and adopted the rigorist position that had been promulgated in 1644 when the London Particular Baptists published their manifesto, with William Kiffin as the leading signatory.¹¹ By about 1648, there were Baptist congregations both in Abingdon and Wantage. It may be that they had followed what Patrick Collinson sees as the customary route to gathered churches, starting as informal study groups where serious believers met to discuss the most recent sermons and exchange religious experiences, and coming only slowly to a separatist position.¹² But the history of religious turmoil in Abingdon and the evidence of an authority structure, with lay preachers under

⁶ A.E. Preston, *St. Nicholas, Abingdon, and other papers* (Oxford, 1929), pp. 116-7.

⁷ *idem*; Bodl. Accounts of the Committee for Plundered Ministers, Bod. Mss 323 f.9, 325, f.4 and 5, 326 f.10, 327 f.19; Lambeth Palace, Committee for Augmentations of Livings, Mss COMM VIa/1 f.5r; W.A. Shaw, *A History of the English Church during the Civil Wars and under the Commonwealth 1640-1660* (2 vols, 1900), ii p. 561.

⁸ *CJ*, v pp. 193, 195; C.H. Firth and G. Davies, *Regimental History of Cromwell's Army*, (2 vols, 1940), ii p. 420.

⁹ Ann Laurence, *Parliamentary Army Chaplains 1642-1651* (London, 1990), pp. 51, 58.

¹⁰ *Athenae*, pp. 419-421; Christopher Fowler, *Daemonium Meredianum* (1655), p.10; his critic John Atherton also charges Pendarves with beliefs he is most unlikely to have held, 'you raise the dead, you cleanse lepers and cast out devils etc' – *The Pastor turn'd Pope* (1654), introductory letter, unpag.

¹¹ Edward Bean Underhill (ed), *Confessions of Faith...of the Baptist Churches of England...* (1854), pp.11-73.

¹² P. Collinson, 'The English Conventicle' in W. J. Sheils and D. Wood (eds.), *Voluntary Religion*, *Studies in Church History* 23 (1986), pp. 223-259 esp. 240-245.

Pendarves's supervision, argues otherwise.¹³ The impression is that Pendarves, in the mid-1640s, found an already existent group on the radical wing of the godly at St Helens, and his joining with them may have reflected a compromise on both sides. The time he chose for his formal separation, the end of 1649, meant that there would be no reason to think his long-term prospects compromised; Kiffin had made his submission to the Army and its still-obedient parliament soon after the king's execution, and the Baptists enjoyed the patronage of such high-placed men as Thomas Harrison and Charles Fleetwood. One of Atherton's accusations was that Pendarves had been in negotiation for a Christ Church canonry, which is perfectly credible.¹⁴ As late as 1653, Pendarves was still respectable enough to preach to Abingdon civic notables in St Helens, apparently in the presence of members of his Baptist congregation.¹⁵

By a quirk of available evidence, more is known of Pendarves's financial affairs in the later 1640s than of his religious activities. As an army chaplain, he will have been entitled to 6s 8d per day, or about £120 per year, but it is not clear either how long he kept this position or whether, as a part-timer, he received the full rate, or anything at all.¹⁶ The living of St Helens was valued variously at £20 or £30 per year, but after the Civil War collection of even such small sums became more than uncertain.¹⁷ The Committee for Plundered Ministers was willing to augment Pendarves's income by another £50.¹⁸ However, funds were short; the properties from which the income was to be paid proved in some cases to be themselves under sequestration, and Pendarves's attorney, William Stanbridge, had to return repeatedly to get variations of the original order and ensure that arrears were paid.¹⁹ A set of accounts submitted in 1659 show him to have received an overall total of £127 10s from the rents and sales of bishops' lands.²⁰ If this reckoning is complete, Pendarves would have been in arrears for the period terminating in December 1649 to the extent of almost £50. After this date, his income in respect of St Helens was transferred to the benefit of his successor there, John Tickell. In October 1647, Pendarves had also been intruded as minister at

¹³ Above, pp. 76-79, 88.

¹⁴ Atherton, *Pastor*, p. 16. Matthews mentions six intruded canons at Christ Church who were ejected at the Restoration; one was Henry Langley, and at least one, George Porter, was an Independent rather than a Presbyterian – *CR.*, *passim*.

¹⁵ Atherton, *Pastor*, pp. 10, 22.

¹⁶ Charles Firth, *Cromwell's Army* (1902), p. 325.

¹⁷ Bodl, Trustees for Plundered Ministers, Mss Bodl 325 ff.4, 5

¹⁸ Lambeth Palace Library: Augmentations of Livings, COMM VIa/1 f.5r; By way of comparison, Christopher Fowler, minister of St Mary's in Reading, in 1651 was receiving £160 per year – C. Fowler, *Daemonium Meridianum* Part 2 (1656), p. 33. After the restoration, £80 might be seen as a suitable stipend for a minister, whether conforming or not – Gerald R. Cragg, *Puritanism in the period of the Great Persecution* (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 179-80. It should be noted that ministers also received an income from miscellaneous fees and gratuities – PRO, Presentment of the jurors to the commissioners for the survey of Helens and Nicholas in Abingdon, (17 Feb 1657), C.94/4/3a.

¹⁹ See Note 8 above.

²⁰ W.A. Shaw, *English Church*, ii 561.

Wantage.²¹ Wantage was a Windsor peculiar, and he was to take over a sum of £50 from the sequestered properties of the dean and canons which had been earmarked to support a minister in Maidenhead.²² It is uncertain when he resigned from this living, but by the early 1650s, at the latest, he appears to have been restricting his activities to the Abingdon Baptist Church which was by then in full operation.

The move was undoubtedly to his financial disadvantage. He had, from 1648, the proceeds of a lectureship in Abingdon and Marcham set up under the will of Richard Wigglesworth, a London fish dealer, originally of Marcham. This was worth £30 a year.²³ Otherwise, so far as is known, he had only the voluntary contributions of his flock, and, when he wished to go on a preaching tour to the West Country in or about 1652, had to rely on a member of his congregation to underwrite £10 towards the cost of a horse which would carry both him and his wife.²⁴ Wood's suggestion that Pendarves was a mercenary man is not easy to justify. However, the need for Pendarves and his family to have a standard of living not too far below that which would be thought suitable to their status does seem to have been allowed to distort the organisation of his church, forcing Baptists from far afield to attend worship in Abingdon rather than form their own very local congregations as separatist principles would have prescribed. On 12 December 1656, three months after Pendarves's death, John Jones of Longworth led ninety-nine members of the Abingdon church away to form a new one based in his own home village, and a year later Charles Ambrose of Barcote took twenty-three of these on to a new centre at Faringdon.²⁵ A rather similar situation prevailed at Wantage, where the young minister Robert Keate had to be supported and the churchbook shows believers coming in regularly from villages in a wide radius about the town.²⁶

In 1645 or 1646, Pendarves married Thomasine Newcomen of Dartmouth.²⁷ She was of a prominent Devon family, with interests in tin mines and in the exploitation of

²¹ WR, p. 71.

²² Bodl., Accounts of the Committee for Plundered Ministers, Bod. Mss 326 f.16, 327 f.17; Lambeth Palace, Committee for Augmentations of Livings, Mss COMM VIa/1 f.5v.

²³ Preston, *St Nicholas*, pp. 116-7. HMSO, *Endowed Charities of the County of Berks* (1912), Vol 1 Pt 1, p. 37; Pt 2, pp. 1095-1112.

²⁴ Atherton, *Pastor*, p. 20

²⁵ Angus Library, Regents Park College, Oxford, Longworth Churchbook.

²⁶ Wantage Baptist Church, Wantage Churchbook. Since some of the worshippers lived as much as fifteen miles away, they probably came to the central gathering only occasionally, to partake of the Lord's Supper.

²⁷ The dating is based on the fact that their first known child was born in Abingdon on 15 January 1646/7. This child apparently survived, and a second was born 14 Feb 47/8. TP evidently did not breast-feed. A third child died 5 Sept 50, and a fourth 27 July 51. There was then a live child 16 Dec 53, but a sixth child died 5 August 54. This child could therefore not have been one who died at birth; possibly there was an unrecorded birth in 1652. The registers for the period are pretty disordered, though it is not evident that they are very deficient – Abingdon St Helens Registers, (by courtesy of the Archivist, Mrs Anne Smithson).

Ireland; she was also some four years his senior.²⁸ They had six children between 1647 and 1654; at least three died in infancy.²⁹ There is nothing to suggest the marriage was less than happy, but she caused him embarrassment on several occasions. Two are recounted with some glee by his critic John Atherton: when he had ruled against the propriety of anointing in case of sickness, it was objected that his wife had had recourse to the treatment; and when he had prevailed on his congregation to help finance the preaching trip to the West Country, Thomasine was reported as telling her friends that the unstated purpose was to enable her to visit her family.³⁰ But the most serious occasions came in 1649, and arose from Thomasine's association with the future Ranter Abiezer Coppe and the political prophetess Elizabeth Poole. She intercepted a letter to her husband from William Kiffin instructing him to anathematise Poole from the pulpit. In a spirited reply to Kiffin, which Poole duly published, she objects that such an action would split the congregation, and states that she will prevent it by keeping the letter from her husband. She demands that future correspondence on the subject be sent to her, not to him.³¹ The reactions of Kiffin and of Pendarves to such insubordination have not come down to us, but the Abingdon Association of Baptist Churches would later be more than averagely restrictive of the rights of women to participate in church activities.³²

Something of the atmosphere of Pendarves's conventicle can be gained from a pamphlet by the disgruntled ex-member, John Atherton, *The Pastor turn'd Pope*. Atherton had abandoned the Baptists in 1651, having been convinced by John Tickell to re-join the established church; but had been formally excommunicated by Pendarves and 'delivered to Satan'. It was the latter detail that aroused his religious fears and indignation. Atherton's account is obviously biased, but rings true in its picture of a rigid authoritarian organisation, dominated by Pendarves and a few subordinate preachers, where doubt was seen as disloyalty and sanctioned by consignment to supernatural punishment. Atherton was one of those people more often read about in the abstract than met as an identifiable individual, a protestant layman capable of reading the bible for himself and drawing his own conclusions from it, and he certainly seems to have been a difficult and annoying man to deal with. But it may be accepted that he was treated with deliberate discourtesy, refused hearings or granted them only in haste and at times and places inconvenient to him, publicly snubbed, and on one occasion fobbed off by Pendarves with a pamphlet 'by Mr Cotton of New England' rather than a specific answer.³³ The Baptists, of course,

²⁸ International Genealogical Index (microform).

²⁹ Abingdon St Helens Registers, (by courtesy of the Archivist, Mrs Anne Smithson).

³⁰ Atherton, *Pastor*, p.20.

³¹ Thomasine Pendarves, Letter to William Kiffin, reprinted in Elizabeth Poole, *An Alarum of War*, (1649). See below, Chap 7.

³² B.R. White (ed), *Association Records of the Particular Baptists of England, Wales and Ireland to 1660* (n.d.), pp. 184-5. Cf the practices in other regions: pp. 28, 55.

³³ It was John Cotton's insistence on his right to excommunicate Roger Williams that had led the latter to found Rhode Island. Williams was in England in 1651 to defend his principles and

justified their autocracy on the basis that believers' baptism implied an enduring dedication to the only true church, that doubters should not be tarried for, and that those left behind were in any case among those predestined for damnation.³⁴

Pendarves was always an enthusiastic controversialist, and what Wood slightly refers to as his 'hedge-preaching' was a serious business of taking God's word into the country villages where religious sophistication was probably not far behind that in the towns, but where the chances of hearing a different view from that of the incumbent publicly preached were perhaps slim. Such occasions were by no means impromptu nor literally under hedges, and the parallel sometimes drawn with the medieval preaching orders seems beside the point. At Childrey in 1654, the vicar, Edward Poccocke, a prominent scholar whose religious and political views had caused him to be exiled from Oxford, found himself in trouble with the Ejectors, among other things for allegedly having denied Pendarves and, at another time, his lieutenant Richard Steed, access to his pulpit.³⁵ The proposed visits had been arranged by Thomas Bush, one of his parishioners, then a Baptist of Keate's church at Wantage but who would later turn Quaker.³⁶ A cynic might point out that some of the complainants had disputes with their vicar which owed nothing to religious objections.³⁷ Other such occasions, however, seem to have involved regular contests where preachers of different persuasions contended for the hearts and minds of their auditory. Wood makes a feature of one at Watlington church in 1652, where the opponent was the moderate Jasper Mayne, and Pendarves was accused of bringing a rowdy claue of supporters with him.³⁸ Another occasion was at Ilsley in 1649, which seems to have been set up by the villagers as a three-cornered contest. Pendarves and John Tickell appear to have gone down together, but were surprised at their arrival to find John Pordage, the Behmenist from Bradfield, already preaching. What they heard from him was enough for Tickell to report him to the Committee for Plundered Ministers as a heretic, and Pendarves found himself obliged to give evidence at the hearings which

territory against the theocratic claims of Massachusetts – see William Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution* (New York, 1955), pp. 151-159.

³⁴ John Pendarves, 'To the Reader', in Anon, *The Prophets Malachi and Isaiah prophecying* (1656), p. 28.

³⁵ - Twell, *Life of Dr Edward Poccocke* (1816), p. 159.

³⁶ *ibid*, p.166

³⁷ Bush and Richard Brookes were both Baptists who turned Quaker (Wantage Churchbook, p.4; Berks R.O. D/A2 c.110 ff.232, 236), but one of the other accusers was a member of the Hoare family which had a long-standing objection to providing due 'entertainment' for Dr Poccocke – see Testimony of Charles Fettiplace, April 1669, in Berks R.O. D/A2 c.110 f.234.

³⁸ *Athenae* iii pp. 419-421; William Ley, *A Buckler for the Church of England against ... Mr. Pendarvis..* (Oxford, 1656), pp. 23-24. For general comments on such contests, see Wm. Orme, *Remarkable Passages in the Life of William Kiffin* (1823), p. 101: '...those public disputes, or polemical battles, which were then frequently held. In these contests of words, the skill and prowess of the combatants were exerted to the utmost. Judges declared the laws of the combat, and regulated the onset and the defence. - The people applauded or hooted, as they happened to be moved, and the battle was generally a drawn one, in which both sides claimed the victory'; also pp. 103, 126. For other contests in Berkshire, Fowler, *Daemonium Meridianum Part 2*, pp. 20, 24, 52.

ended in his exoneration; to his credit, or as a matter of policy, he refused to be involved in the later trial before the Ejectors when Pordage was condemned.³⁹

Like other religious leaders of his day, Pendarves needed to divide his time between the promulgation of religious principles and the organisation of his sect. His great administrative achievement was the Abingdon Association of Particular Baptist churches, which at the time of his death had twelve member-churches and covered an area stretching from Andover in the south-west into Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire in the north-east, an ellipse some sixty miles long by about ten miles wide at its greatest extent. Later, the north-easterly congregations would break away and found their own association. The overall Particular Baptist organisation was a three-tier structure; the regional associations were under the general tutelage of one or other of the London congregations for matters of dogma or general policy, while themselves striving to maintain uniformity among their constituent churches.⁴⁰ But it was also open to individual clergy to maintain links between associations and this Pendarves did, routinely during the last years of his life visiting the meetings of the West Country association and joining with its members in their correspondence and literary productions.⁴¹ At one point there was even some talk of his removal from Abingdon to become minister in Kilmington, but nothing came of it.⁴²

In his religion, Pendarves was by no means an innovator. If his Watlington sermon was ever printed, as Wood claims, no copy seems to have survived; but it can probably be taken that his pamphlet of 1656, *Arrowes against Babylon*, was essentially a reply to that of his opponent, published as *A Sermon against Schisme*. Mayne, sceptical, urbane and even witty, seems quite out of place in seventeenth century religious controversy. He argued that separatism was unnecessary and entered into more as a matter of personal ambition than for serious religious reasons. The established church was like a net that could hold all manner of fish. The exaggerated language that separatists used against the church – whore of Babylon, haunt of devils, etc – might properly be used against Rome but was quite out of place in England. *Arrowes* merely reiterated the abusive language in twenty-three formal question-begging 'quaeries', and used the trope that the established church was a daughter of Rome, younger and more seductive: the whore in a fashionable new dress. *Arrowes*, in its turn, gave rise to opposing pamphlets, notably by Pendarves's two successors in St Helens and Wantage, John Tickell and William Ley respectively, taking up Mayne's

³⁹ Below, Chap. 8; *State Trials*, Vol 5, cols 550, 588-9; Fowler, *Daemonium Meridianum*, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁰ B.R. White, 'The Organisation of the Particular Baptists, 1644-1660', *J. Eccles. History* 17 (1966) 209-226.

⁴¹ White, *Association Records*, pp. 72-80, 103.

⁴² Kilmington Churchbook, cited by B.R. White in G & Z, pp. 20-1.

points but with less literary grace. Perhaps consciously, they followed Atherton in charging Pendarves with arrogance and authoritarianism.⁴³

Bound in with *Arrowes* were two further pamphlets on standard puritan themes: one was on the need for modesty in clothing and personal adornment, and the other against the Quakers.⁴⁴ At about the same time, Pendarves had been a co-signatory of a letter sent by the Western Association to Baptists in Ireland, warning them against their alleged propensity to 'great vanity and pride in apparel'.⁴⁵ The publication of anti-Quaker *quaeres* was so fashionable that Denis Hollister accused Pendarves (wrongly, it would seem) of having plagiarised the ones he used.⁴⁶ The Quakers were accused, as they often were, of ignorance, of a hidden agenda which was justification by works and jesuitry, of having let themselves be seduced by 'Satan, in his best dress'. The apparent obsession with clothes was made the target of heavy humour by no less a Quaker than James Nayler, then still one of the leaders of the sect, in a turgid answer to Pendarves's questions.⁴⁷

The western Baptists with whom Pendarves became closely associated in his last years were strongly millenarian, and it may be from them that he picked up the millenarianism that featured in some of his last writings. In discussion as to whether he was or was not a fifth monarchist, Barrie White inclined to the belief that he was not, and Geoffrey Nuttall to the opposite opinion.⁴⁸ Basic fifth monarchy belief in the imminence of the coming of King Jesus to rule the earth for a thousand years was widespread, perhaps almost universal, among puritans, and might also, at least in principle, entail a willingness to rise in bloody revolt to enable him to do so. The problem here is that, for fairly obvious reasons, surviving published writings rarely advocate revolt in unambiguous terms. By the mid-1650s, their common theme was that the Protectorate government was guilty of apostacy; it would be swept away to make room for King Jesus, and it would be the Saints who would do the sweeping. But most writers stepped back from calling specifically for the Saints to begin what they termed 'the work of the Stone'.⁴⁹ The pamphlets that did so were mostly anonymous, they bore no printer's or publisher's name, and tended to be atrociously printed even by the low standards of the time; this was plainly underground literature, of which what has survived, thanks to Thomason, is probably only a small proportion

⁴³ Ley, *A Buckler*, esp. p.17; John Tickell, *Church-rules proposed the Church in Abingdon* (Oxford, 1956), esp. p.18.

⁴⁴ John Pendarves, *Arrowes against Babylon .. Whereunto are added Endeavours for Reformation in Saints Apparell, with some Quaeries for the people called Quakers* (1656).

⁴⁵ White, *Association Records*, pp. 72-75.

⁴⁶ D. Hollister, *The Skirts of the Whore Discovered* (1656). Title page and p. 25.

⁴⁷ J. Nayler, *An Answer to some Queries put out by one John Pendarves, in a Book called Arrowes against Babylon &c* (1656).

⁴⁸ White, 'John Pendarves'; Nuttall, 'Abingdon Revisited, 1656-1675'.

⁴⁹ Daniel 2:34-5

of what was produced.⁵⁰ An exception was John Tillinghast, with whom Pendarves's name was associated, at least by the prophetess Anna Trapnel, perhaps because he died about a year earlier than Pendarves in very similar circumstances. In two remarkable sermons on Matt 16:3, Tillinghast castigated those who were waiting for a clear sign for action, insisting that the signs were all around and that the blindness of those who would not see them was itself an additional sign. It was necessary for the Saints to get power into their own hands 'before the day of Christ's appearance'. His own numerological calculations, regarded as a breakthrough in some quarters, had proved that 1656 would be a year of some, though uncertain, apocalyptic significance.⁵¹ The sermons would probably never have been printed but for the author's sudden death, when they were published by a fellow-millenarian then in jail, Christopher Feake, with a relatively anodyne introduction. The authorities may, of course, have taken a narrower view of permissible political discourse than did their opponents, and on a number of occasions Cromwell himself is known to have argued that the millenarians he imprisoned were being punished for political activities rather than mystical beliefs.⁵² But the appearance is that in such cases it was sermons similar to those of Tillinghast, reported on by government agents, and not published writings from commercial printing houses, which precipitated the arrests.⁵³ The only one of Pendarves's sermons in print, also like those of Tillinghast published posthumously, shows no overt political significance.⁵⁴

Whatever ideas the millenarians of the time promulgated in their sermons and speeches, most of their writings are in explicit opposition to those of Tillinghast. Even in a personal letter, albeit to a man he could not fully trust, Pendarves found it necessary to state that he was 'not wedded to Tylinghast in all things'.⁵⁵ The Saints should purify themselves, be ready and vigilant, but await God's clear call before acting. John Canne of Hull published a long refutation of Tillinghast; to him, plotting is 'a thing detested', and 'when that time shall come, (as we hope it is not far off) he will come with power enough; we need not to take any thought about it'. It was for the sake of the Saints 'waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ' that he had published his book. Even a tract justifying the Saints in carrying arms in their own defence emphasizes that the authors and their allies do not see 'a call to be shedding the blood of any, or even the most vile and wicked, at present'.⁵⁶ This was not mere

⁵⁰ *The Banner of Truth Displayed* (1656); *A Witness to the Saints in England and Wales* (1657); *Some considerations by way of a proposal and conclusions* (1657).

⁵¹ 'Signes of the Times' in C. Feake, (ed), *Mr. Tillinghasts eight last sermons* (1655), pp. 45-98; Anon, *The Banner of Truth Displayed* (1656), p. 47.

⁵² C. Feake, *Mr Tillinghast*, Introduction; Anon. *The Faithfull Narrative...on behalf of the lord's prisoners in the Name of the Lord Jehovah (Jesus Christ) King of Saints and Nations* (1654), pp. 3, 13.

⁵³ Feake, *Mr. Tillinghasts eight last sermons*, Introduction.

⁵⁴ J. Pendarves, *The fear of God* (ed. J. Cox), (1656).

⁵⁵ Folger Library, Washington, Letter to Colonel Robert Bennet, 21 March 1656, X.d. 483.

⁵⁶ J. Canne, *Truth with Time* (London, 1656), Epistle Dedicatory and p.106; Anon, *A witness to the Saints in England and Wales* (1657), p. 5.

camouflage. When the moment of decision came, the leading millenarians preferred continued expectation to action. The only personality credible as a revolutionary leader, Thomas Harrison, had in 1656 refused to join with Thomas Venner's conspiratorial group in discussions on Vane's *Healing Question*, which advocated a united front of military radicals with the Saints. Venner himself, a wine-cooper with a reputation as a braggart, was hardly a man to inspire confidence. Feake and Livewell Chapman, John Rogers and John Simpson, all found reasons to break with him before his abortive revolt of April 1657.⁵⁷ Some of Pendarves's Baptist colleagues, most notably William Kiffin, worked to damp down revolutionary fervour among their fellow-sectarians.⁵⁸

Discussion of Pendarves as a Fifth Monarchist thus runs into the same ambiguities as similar discussion of Feake and Rogers. *Arrowes against Babylon* is a tirade against the established church with little apparent political significance, but there is a passing allusion to Tillinghast and his signs of the times,⁵⁹ and contemporaries will have been aware of the biblical context of the title:

Call together the archers against Babylon; all ye that bend the bow,
camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her
according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her:
for she hath been proud against the LORD, against the Holy One of
Israel. Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men
of war shall be cut off in that day, saith the LORD.

Nonetheless, Jeremiah 50:29-30 does not figure among the epigraphs on the title page, and the same trope was later turned by Rogers into an argument for expectancy rather than precipitate action: 'beware of running before *orders* come from *Jehovah of Armies*, and prepare for them when they come, yea, to make all their *arrows ready against Babylon...*'.⁶⁰ In 1656, Pendarves joined with four western clergymen, including Henry Forty of Totnes and Abraham Cheare of Plymouth, in signing a pamphlet entitled *Sighs for Sion*. Cheare, the probable author, had seen the inside of a prison cell, and Forty would do so.⁶¹ The ostensible message was that the faithful should not lose heart at the continued delay in Christ's arrival; he would come only when the Saints were ready to receive him, and they should redouble their spiritual efforts, with prayer and fasting and a renunciation of worldly interests. Similar sentiments were being expressed about the same time in the meetings of the Western

⁵⁷ *ThSP* v pp. 755-9; C. Burrage, 'The Fifth Monarchy Insurrections', *EHR* 25 (1910) 722-747 esp 725, 729, 732.

⁵⁸ *ThSP* vii pp. 138-9; Anon, *The Faithfull Narrative...on behalf of the lord's prisoners in the Name of the Lord Jehovah (Jesus Christ) King of Saints and Nations* (1654), esp pp. 37, 41.

⁵⁹ Pendarves, *Arrowes* p.5.

⁶⁰ John Rogers, *Jegar Sahadutha* (1657), p. 148.

⁶¹ Anon, *The Faithful Narrative*, p. 3; E.A. Payne, *The Baptists of Berkshire* (1951), p. 52.

Association.⁶² Similar sentiments, again, occur in Pendarves's last published work, a preface to an anonymous study of the prophets Malachi and Isaiah, which stressed the need for unity among the Saints.⁶³ But *Sighs for Sion* contains some powerfully ambiguous passages, criticising 'that man of Sin, that bloody mystery of iniquity' and looking forward to the destruction of 'Sion's enemies'.⁶⁴ The 'man of Sin', by now, was Cromwell himself.⁶⁵ The anonymous study of the prophets, which White has attributed to Tillinghast, had a second preface by Christopher Feake, describing his own disobedience to government orders in continuing to preach and putting this up as an example for the faithful to follow.⁶⁶

Thus, Pendarves was, at the very least, on the fringes of the fifth monarchy movement, and keeping intellectual company with those who may have been further in than himself. Yet he kept his own record clean. In the period of political excitement that followed the dissolution of the first Protectorate Parliament, when Thomas Harrison and several other millenarians were effectively on trial before Cromwell and his council, Pendarves was one of a group brought in at their request to help them argue their case. What he said has not been recorded, but it neither prevented their imprisonment nor led to his own.⁶⁷ John Tickell accused him of using fifth monarchist language in his sermons at Abingdon, but his example scarcely bears that interpretation.⁶⁸ Pendarves's language was always carefully qualified, emphasizing that the swords he spoke of were spiritual, not carnal. In *Arrowes*, the Saints were to rase Babylon by praying against her and ministers are 'to shoote such arrowes against *Babylon* in preaching, or printing, as God hath put into their Quiver for that purpose.'⁶⁹ His last sermon, preached at Petty France shortly before his fatal illness, was on 'the fear of God' and was impeccably respectable, commenting on, but steadfastly refusing to identify, the Beast.⁷⁰ It may be that his presence in London and his spate of publications indicate hopes of accession to the national leadership of the Particular Baptists, a group headed by William Kiffin which had long since proved its

⁶² White, *Association Records*, pp. 69-95.

⁶³ Anon, *The Prophets Malachi and Isaiah prophecying...* (1656), esp. p. 77.

⁶⁴ A. Cheare *et al*, *Sighs for Sion* (1656), pp. 8-10.

⁶⁵ *ThSP* iii pp.136, 486-7; *CP*, ii p.xxxiii.

⁶⁶ *The Prophets Malachi and Isaiah*, pp. 1-17.

⁶⁷ Letter, Thurloe to Monk, January 1654/5, in *CP*, ii pp. 242-246.

⁶⁸ '... have you not delivered in *Abingdon* Pulpit, that Babylon must have blood to drink, for she is worthy: that there are extraordinary commands, besides the ordinary Commands of the Word, which must be obeyed; that the ordinary command (*thou shalt not kill*) must give place to the Extraordinary -? what may we next expect?' - Tickell, *Church-Rules*, p.18. The phrase in italics must be supposed to have been interpolated by the author. The notion of 'extraordinary commands' was, however, also cited by another of Pendarves's critics, Christopher Fowler of Reading, in *Daemonium Meridianum*, p. 49, who connects it with the action of Phinehas in Numbers 25:7-8. Pendarves himself criticised the idea that the times required 'extraordinary Ministers' - *The Prophets Malachy and Isaiah*, p. 19.

⁶⁹ *Arrowes*, Introduction and p.4.

⁷⁰ Pendarves, *The fear of God*, p. 7.

moderation and made its peace with the regime. A reputation for millenarian dissidence would have been fatal to his chances.

London in the late summer was a dangerous place, especially for puritans who drank water rather than beer or wine. At the beginning of September 1656, Pendarves fell ill with dysentery and died. He was thirty-four years old, and his death while at the height of his powers necessarily prompted questions among those for whom not a bird could fall except at the express command of the deity. According to some millenarians, 1656 might be the year which would see the appearance of the 'witnesses' of Revelation 11:3-13, marking a new phase in the approach of the kingdom of Jesus. Pendarves's death, perhaps, might have apocalyptic significance. Tillinghast had been dead just about a year. There seems to have been an idea that the two millenarians might have been chosen for some ghostly mission, and would return with an announcement of the second coming.⁷¹ John Canne, although he had disagreed with Tillinghast, chose to attend the funeral.⁷² It was a time of political as well as religious tension: the second Protectorate Parliament was about to meet; opposition M.P.s were being excluded, and Vane had been arrested. The radicals had organised opposition to official candidates wherever they could.⁷³

The story of the transportation of Pendarves's body up-river to Abingdon in a sugar-chest borrowed from Philip Lockton, the local Baptist grocer, has often been retold.⁷⁴ Was this to be equated with the three and a half days that the witnesses were supposed to lie unburied? The authorities were fearful that the funeral, fixed for 30 September, would be used by the opposition as a major demonstration of force and by radicals as an opportunity for plotting. Both of these things happened. The burial, in the new Baptist burial ground in Ock Street, went off smoothly enough, but the following day was one in which the multitude took over the streets and open spaces of the town and indulged in the preaching of inflammatory and seditious sermons. The townsfolk were intimidated and harassed. Some of the demonstrators may have been armed.⁷⁵ 2 October saw the arrival of Major-General Bridge with fifty cavalry troopers, apparently trained in crowd control.⁷⁶ After a tense stand-off in which one demonstrator was slightly wounded when he shook his fist a little too close to the edge of a cavalry sword, the crowd was dispersed.⁷⁷ Five individuals were taken to Windsor

⁷¹ B.R. White, 'Henry Jessey in the Great Rebellion', in R.B. Knox, (ed), *Reformation, Conformity and Dissent (Nuttall Festschrift)* (1977), p. 143.

⁷² Canne had been banished from Hull two months earlier as a security risk. Possibly Abingdon was more inviting than the hedges and holes he claimed (like Elijah) to have been living in – CSPD 1656-7 p.41; John Canne, *The Time of the End* (1657), p. 265.

⁷³ Louise Fargo Brown, *Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men* (Washington, 1911), pp. 109-111.

⁷⁴ *Athenae*, loc. cit.; William Hughes, *Munster and Abingdon* (Oxford, 1657), pp. 85-8.

⁷⁵ Anon, *A witness to the Saints* (1657), p. 5.

⁷⁶ Canne, *Time of the End*, p. 80.

⁷⁷ Anon, *The Complaining Testimony of some of Sion's Children* (1656); William Hughes, *Munster and Abingdon*, pp. 88-94.

Castle for questioning, but only one of them, a Norfolk fifth monarchist called Thomas Ruddock, was held for more than a few days.⁷⁸

We have the names of a dozen local participants and about thirty from London and elsewhere. These are mostly the signatories of a pamphlet complaining of the brutality which which the demonstration was, allegedly, dispersed.⁷⁹ Members of the Particular Baptist leadership are conspicuously absent from the list; they can hardly have been unrepresented at the funeral, but may have left before the disturbances began and, in any case, would not have wanted to put their names to such a document or associate themselves in writing with those who did. The names we have include at least a dozen that can be identified with some confidence as militant fifth monarchists. Five of them would be associated with Thomas Venner in his rising the following April, and they included John Green, one of his inner group of planners, and John Wilson, probably the man whose house would be used as an arms store.⁸⁰ Two, the Londoner John Portman and the Cornishman Francis Langden, were individuals of standing; the former a senior civil servant recently dismissed for his millenarianism, and the latter a J.P. who had been member of the Barebones parliament.⁸¹ Portman, Woodley, and John Jones of London were General Baptists of the Lamb Alley congregation which Venner's group had been infiltrating, and it is not obvious what connection they could have had with Pendarves other than a shared millenarianism.⁸² Yet it does not seem that they had merely gate-crashed the proceedings to use them as a cover for their own purposes. They were also recruiting for their cause. A list captured by Thurloe's men gives names and addresses, along with mysterious numbers arranged in columns, and days of the week. It is obviously a schedule for deliveries, no doubt mainly of propaganda materials, in connection with the rising being planned. Four of the names that appear coincide with those of signatories to *The Complaining Testimony*, and they include two local men, Philip Lockton, the Abingdon grocer, and Richard Quelch, the Oxford watchmaker, neither of whom were previously known as fifth monarchists. Against Quelch's name, uniquely on the list, is the ominous mention 'armes'.⁸³

⁷⁸ CSPD 1656-7 p.130; Anon, *A True Catalogue...of the several Places and...Persons where and by whom Richard Cromwell was proclaimed...* (1659), pp. 12-13.

⁷⁹ *The Complaining Testimony*; see below, Appx 2.

⁸⁰ Burrage, 'The Fifth Monarchy Insurrections', p.735.

⁸¹ B.S. Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (1972), pp. 254, 258.

⁸² Burrage, 'The Fifth Monarchy Insurrections' pp. 731-2.

⁸³ *ThSP*, vi p.185-6. I cannot follow Capp (*op cit*, p.115) when he attributes this undated document to a period early in 1656, when some Fifth Monarchists and a group of radical army and navy officers were discussing Vane's programme. The content suggests a later phase of planning. If, however, Capp is right, then Pendarves is likely to have been more deeply involved in Fifth Monarchist plots than is here proposed. Given the tight control he evidently exercised over his church, it is unlikely that Lockton would act as a Fifth Monarchist agent without his knowledge and approval. But again, it is not impossible that Lockton's name was included without his permission; it may be significant that there is no evidence of any action taken against him by the authorities in 1656 or 1657.

It is possible that Pendarves maintained a great distance between the ideas expressed in his writings and those in his speeches and sermons. This seems certainly to have been the case for other millenarians such as Feake and Rogers, and perhaps all that kept him from joining these men in Cromwellian prisons was his distance from the capital and the reduced danger this represented to public order. But the internal consistency of his writings and the absence of serious accusations of seditious preaching from his critics suggest otherwise. The conclusion, tentative as it has to be, is that Pendarves was a figure at best marginal to the fifth monarchy movement. His world-view, typical of the Saints, was one of polar opposites: a small remnant of the specially chosen facing the snares and temptations of an overwhelming Enemy in the certain knowledge of eventual victory. The life he advocated, and no doubt exemplified, was one from which a consciousness of the deity was never absent: God is to be 'eyed' continuously; we must 'see God in every business wee are employed in'.⁸⁴ God may be appealed to, even insistently: 'make it your business to cry mightily to the Lord, even night and day, to give the Lord no rest, unless he makes Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth'.⁸⁵ But there is no sign of the idea of the radical fifth monarchists that God's wishes are to be anticipated; there is no mention of smiting or of the work of the Stone. When he uses military metaphors, he is writing in a venerable Protestant tradition, and there is no need to take him literally.⁸⁶ Pendarves, like his West-country Baptist friends, feared above all discouragement and luke-warmness, the development of worldly interests ('building CEIL'D houses')⁸⁷, the routinisation of religion, rendering the faithful inapt for God's service when he should need them. He preached separation of the Saints from a corrupt church and an apostacised civil government, and their distinction from the reprobate masses in dress and behaviour; but he is not known ever to have advocated disobedience or physical resistance. He stood on his dignity as a leader and teacher: 'considering my selfe as in the body of Gods people one with you; though not so, in respect of a visible orderly Church, state and worship, wherein the name of God is greatly concerned'.⁸⁸ But there is no evidence that he ever led his flock in the direction of political activism, or that the revolutionaries who convened at his funeral were in any sense associates of his. It was in death that he rendered his greatest service to the fifth monarchist cause, giving the serious conspirators an opportunity for a national meeting to develop and concert their plans. It was mainly this that the authorities, a little belatedly, intervened to curtail; and no doubt they were right to do so.

At least one contemporary saw him differently. The prophetess Anna Trapnel made a speciality of lying on her bed in a state of ecstasy maintained by near-starvation,

⁸⁴ Pendarves, *The fear of God*, p. 19

⁸⁵ Epistle signed by Pendarves, Thomas Collier and Nathaniel Strange, dated from Wells, 11 April 1656. *Assoc. Records*, p.79. The phrase cited was not original – see Christopher Hill, *The Experience of Defeat* (1984), p. 180. The allusion is to Isaiah 62:1.

⁸⁶ Patrick Collinson, *The Birthpangs of Protestant England* (1988), pp. 127-132.

⁸⁷ *The Prophets Malachy and Isaiah*, p.59. The allusion is to Haggai 1:4.

⁸⁸ *Arrowes*,: 'A Word of Exhortation'.

expressing her visions in doggerel verse which shorthand writers struggled to record.⁸⁹ Believers flocked in the hope of hearing something of supernatural importance to themselves. Most of her utterances were delphic, but on 14 October 1657 she produced some verses of unusual clarity on the subject of John Pendarves. He had been, it seemed, a 'lovely' man, who had shunned Sinai – the legalism of the Old Testament, which was becoming something of a Baptist heresy – and had died of his own volition in order to plead at the throne of God for the coming of the millennium. As Trapnel, in life, usually insisted on having the last word, she will be yielded it here:

He died unto yoke-fellow
And unto children dear,
And early in the morning he
Approaches the throne near:
That so for dear *Jerusalem*
He might with face on ground
Go weep, and mourn unto the Lord
Who will by such be found;
He waked early that he might
For poor *Jerusalem* go
Unto the throne, and there he wept
That others did not so...⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Anna Trapnell, *Voice for the King of Saints and Nations* (1658), title page. See also Nigel Smith, *Perfection Proclaimed; Language and Literature in English Radical Religion 1640-1660* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 45-53, 86-95.

⁹⁰ Trapnell, *Voice*, p. 52; see also *ibid*, p.72.