

**Thinking with Jews: Jews and Judaism and the Struggle for Orthodoxy
in Late Medieval and Reformation England**

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To my beloved wife, Eliza, who has supported me throughout the years
with her gentle and quiet spirit and her unending faith

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Introduction

In 1536, royal servant and humanist Thomas Starkey described the religious climate of England in *A preface to the Kynges hyghnes*.¹ Starkey laments that there has been disobedience, diversity of religious opinions and a “great breche of christian vnitie.”² More to the point, Starkey asks his readers how can English Christians become unified when one side “estemeth an nother to be an heretike, or at leeste a scysmatyke” and the other side “iudgeth an nother to be a foolyshe Pharisee, or a superstitious papyste.”³ For Starkey, both sides of the religious divide have been corrupted by either superstition on the part of traditional religion or arrogant opinion on the part of evangelicals. And those two sides have a “corrupt iugement one of an other, by the reson wherof, eche one in hart iudgeth other to be, eyther pharisee or heretyke, papist or schismatike, to the which iugement consequently is annexed diuision. . . a manifest dissolution and an open bracke therof by dissention.”⁴

Starkey attempts to occupy a vantage point from which he can address the faults of both the traditional church and its evangelical dissenters. For example, he argues that although the staunch defense of ceremonies for everyone goes well beyond the reach of ecclesiastical authorities, since the rites and practices of the Christian religion have varied from time to time and place to place, the criticism of those ceremonies by evangelicals is even more wrong because it leads to a general “contempt of religion” and “the ruine of al christen pollicie” which are actually “maynteyned by rytes & customes ecclesiastical. . .” If reformers had their way and stripped the Christian religion of all ceremonies, rites and

¹ Thomas Starkey, *A preface to the Kynges hyghnes* (London, 1536; STC 23236).

² *Ibid.*, sig. A2v-A3r.

³ *Ibid.*, sig. D2r.

⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. G3v.

practices, Starkey argues that religion itself would “by littell and lytell vtterly vanyshe away.”⁵ But he describes the polemic from both sides to be of “false and blynde perswasion” and he repeats the terms used in the discourse, as sort of a refrain: “some of vs are called of the newe fashion, and somme of the olde, somme phariseys, and some schismatykes, and some also playne heretikes.”⁶

Starkey then explains how the rhetoric does not accurately portray either side of the religious divide and promotes a solution that reflects his king’s wishes. While reformers eschew the pride of Rome, the defenders of traditional religion wrongly label them as heretics or perhaps the lesser charge of schismatics. Starkey, however, makes a suggestive declaration, which more or less implies coercion, that most members of the *newe facion* only want “the alteration of certayne ceremonies and customes of the churche, to the encrease of all virtue and of true religion” in deference to both God and king as quiet and obedient subjects. Likewise, adherents to traditional religion who “styffely stycke in the olde ceremonies” are “iudged of other to be superstitious and pharisaicall, folyshe and papisticall” have been misjudged as well. But if the king brings about changes to certain practices in the church Starkey expects those who adhere to traditional religion “wyll euer be gladde as true and loyall subiectes, to all suche to be obedient” to accept those reforms. As an olive branch he defends those adherents too: those “who stande in the olde, they are not be blamed as pharisees, but rather deserue prayse, therin declaring their duetie & obedience...”⁷ Starkey, undoubtedly reflecting his king’s primary concern, emphasizes obedience to the king as the unifying principle for a nation seemingly polarized by religious disagreement.

⁵ Ibid., sig. G3v-G4r.

⁶ Ibid., sig. H1v-H2r.

⁷ Ibid., sig. H2r-v.

Starkey's *Preface* reveals two fundamental aspects that relate to this thesis: rhetoric that involves images of Jews and Judaism and the employment of that rhetoric by both defenders of the church and its dissidents in the struggle over what constitutes Christian orthodoxy. Here we have English reformers maligning defenders of traditional religion with a term one encounters in the New Testament or devotional literature that refers to the principal Jewish opponents of Christ, the Pharisees. Apparently the term became pervasive enough that Starkey uses it six times as part of a refrain, all in the context of how reformers characterize adherents of traditional religion.⁸ But he does not address why this term is used by reformers other than by implying that it is a term of abuse on par with other terms of abuse: papist, schismatic and heretic. As for the struggle for orthodoxy, Starkey does not discuss in detail the fundamental issues that divide defenders of the church and evangelical reformers other than he points to a sharp disagreement over certain church practices, or what he calls 'ceremonies.' Reformers, and defenders of traditional religion for that matter, would likely raise issue with the way Starkey minimizes what both sides consider foundational beliefs and doctrines: the nature of the church, the issue of religious authority, truth versus error and the fundamental meaning of faith and its relationship with works.

Starkey's *Preface* provides a glimpse of what constitutes the chapters to follow. This thesis examines religious discourse between defenders of the traditional church and its dissidents in late medieval and Reformation England, from around the turn of the fifteenth century up to approximately 1560. I argue that during this period of religious upheaval both defenders and dissidents associated one another with images of Jews and Judaism, which negatively characterized opponents and were used by sectarians to

⁸ In one of these six instances, Starkey uses the derivative *pharisaicall*.

demarcate true religion from error as opposing sides struggled over the meaning of Christian orthodoxy. After the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290, images of Jews and Judaism remained as part of the fabric of late medieval Christianity even if an actual physical Jewish presence disappeared. In fact, Christians in late medieval and Reformation England encountered Jews and Judaism quite frequently from a variety of sources, to include among others the scriptures, devotional literature, liturgy, sermons, architecture and late medieval drama.

For most Christians in England these sources provided authentic representations of Jews and Judaism using a variety of terms or identifiers. In addition to the generic *Jew*, *the Jews* or *Jewish*, one might encounter the scribes and Pharisees or other sects of Jews such as the Sadducees and Essenes, hostile Jewish figures such as Annas, Caiaphas, Herod or the infamous Judas, places of worship such as the synagogue and various ideas about Judaism itself, especially the Sabbath and the term the *oolde lawe*. Occasionally one might even encounter Christian authors mentioning the Talmud or phylacteries. For most Christians in late medieval and Reformation England, these terms specifically intimated Jews and Judaism.

Sectarians who employed images of Jews and Judaism to characterize their religious opponents did so because the vast majority of Christian audiences in late medieval and Reformation England were not only aware of the Jews but held negative and hostile views about them. Christian sources of the period depict the Jews as the enemies of Christ, criminals who tortured and murdered him out of malice, the persecutors of Christians, an accursed people destined to wander without temple or nation and perfidious and stiff-necked outsiders who only convert through the power of miracle.

Simply put, both defenders of the church and its dissidents not only expressed Christian hostility towards Jews and Judaism themselves but exploited that hostility among late medieval and Reformation audiences through various mediums of discourse; the purpose was to associate religious opponents with figures who were well-known and nearly universally condemned, primarily because of the crucifixion. As John Bossy notes, most late medieval Christians could understand that the “Jews were the original enemies of Christ” who crucified Christ out of malice; anti-Jewish sentiment and calls for vengeance thus increased as Christ’s human suffering became a fixture in the Christian imagination through liturgies that stressed the Passion.⁹

Historians of late medieval and Reformation England, however, generally do not talk about Jews and Judaism to any substantial degree. Eamon Duffy mentions Jews and Judaism a few times in *The Stripping of the Altars* but provides very little analysis regarding late medieval attitudes, conceptions and feelings about Jews other than they were considered the “classic medieval representative of culpable unbelief” and “the ultimate outsider.”¹⁰ That view does not adequately reflect the mostly negative attitudes about Jews. Of course, a lot of historians of late medieval and Reformation England have ignored the subject entirely and for good reason: after all, England was devoid of Jews from 1290 to the mid-seventeenth century. However, I argue that English Christians *thought* with Jews all the time, primarily about opposing Christian viewpoints as they struggled to define orthodoxy. Recent scholarship points out that Jews and Judaism

⁹ John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 83-84.

¹⁰ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*, 2d ed. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 105. Duffy gives an example of one miracle story involving a Christian and a Jew in a church, with the Jew witnessing what he believes is an act of cannibalism during the Mass. “His friend explains that this vision is in fact a sign of God’s wrath against the Jews who crucified his Son; had he been a faithful Christian, he would have only seen the Host.” The Jewish character converts as a result.

served as a reference point for Christians to understand their own religion and to construct Christian identity, which is critical among sectarians trying to determine the nature of true religion and its false counterpart.¹¹

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 1 examines images of Jews and Judaism from a variety of late medieval source material including but not limited to examples of late medieval drama, John Mirk's homiletic collection *Festial*, Nicholas Love's devotional text the *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* and the *Book of Margery Kempe*. Through these sources and others I attempt to present several different images of Jews and Judaism. Most of those images reflect the negative attitudes and assumptions of late medieval Christians.

Chapter 2 discusses lollard rhetoric against the late medieval church, its representatives and its practices using various images of Jews and Judaism, including the scribes and Pharisees, Caiaphas the Jewish high priest who condemned Christ to death and the synagogue.

Chapter 3 examines how the traditional church thinks with Jews about lollard heretics, namely through sermon material, Reginald Pecock's *Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy* and most significantly the late medieval miracle play the Croxton

¹¹ See Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms, 1350-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2, 5; Lisa Lampert, *Gender and Jewish Difference from Paul to Shakespeare* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 169. Bale argues that "Christian culture, in the medieval Latin West, insistently discussed Judaism" because Jewish theology and Jewish history had a "fundamental role" within Christianity. Furthermore, he identifies the role of the Jew as "dependent and contingent on the greater narrative in which he (or less frequently she) is placed" and that the Jew "is often a crucial, sometimes fundamental, reference point for the doctrine and interpretation of the greater ('non-Jewish') text." Lisa Lampert also makes a similar argument. She writes that the figure of the Jew "had a type of presence" that "was a fundamental component of Christian ideologies in England and was shaping component representations of Christians and Christianity, both explicitly and implicitly... This shadow figure is the hermeneutical Jew, a tool of Christian self-definition."

Play of the Sacrament, perhaps one of the most creative attempts to defend Eucharistic orthodoxy using images of Jews and Judaism.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus on William Tyndale among the evangelicals and John Fisher and Thomas More among the defenders of traditional religion, all of whom utilize images of Jews and Judaism to clarify their definitions of true religion. Tyndale, the most important evangelical voice during the Henrician period develops a whole new theory about how the corruption of the traditional church can be, to a large extent, traced back to Jews and Judaism. Fisher and More, the most important voices defending traditional religion of the period, attempt to refute men like Luther and Tyndale, and More seems forced to think with Jews in quite novel ways.

Chapter 6 examines the rhetoric of important evangelical figures such as Robert Barnes and George Joye and to a lesser extent John Frith. I also examine evangelical discourse during the reign of Edward VI and after, especially that of Thomas Cranmer. All of these evangelical writers follow a similar pattern established by Tyndale and utilize images of Jews and Judaism to condemn defenders of the traditional church and bring into sharp contrast their own notions of orthodoxy.

Chapter 7 exclusively examines a whole array of works by ex-Carmelite friar, polemicist and playwright John Bale. Bale not only popularizes ways to associate his opponents with images of Jews and Judaism but he in many respects surpasses his predecessors in creativity.

Chapter 8 examines defenders of traditional religion as they attempt to fend off evangelical attacks with a campaign of their own in the mid-1540s and develops a line of attack using images of Jews derived from John 6.

At the conclusion of the thesis I offer an Epilogue that unravels a peculiar sermon by John Foxe that involves a Jewish convert named Nathaniel and how even a sermon about Jewish conversion still retains a polemical edge that condemns popery.

Chapter 1

Images of Jews and Judaism in Late Medieval and Reformation England

After the expulsion of virtually all Jews from England in 1290, who were by that time overtaxed, persecuted and impoverished, only a few references about actual Jews can be found in late medieval and Reformation sources, most of them living surreptitious lives in or around London predominantly during the Tudor period.¹ One may contrast those surreptitious Jews with the tenants of the *Domus Conversorum*, established in 1232 by Henry III which housed a small number of Jewish converts to Christianity on a sporadic basis until at least 1608.² But the small number of Jews in England, however, does not suggest that English Christians did not frequently encounter Jews and Judaism. Sources reveal that Christians in England inherited, created or re-fashioned images of Jews for a variety of purposes which formed an integral part of the fabric of late medieval Christianity.

Jews occupied a central place as adversarial figures in some of the most significant Christian narratives, namely Christ's arrest, trial and passion. John Bossy rightly identifies the late medieval Christian view regarding the Jews as "the original enemies of Christ" who brought upon themselves the vengeance of the Christian world for the crime of deicide, and as Christ's human life became more vivid for Christians, "the more lurid the colours in which was painted the inexhaustible malice of the Jews."³

Hagiography, sermon cycles, literature and drama depict episodes of Jewish violence

¹ David S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England, 1485-1850* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 1-48; Lucien Wolf, "The Jews in Tudor England," in *Essays in Jewish History*, ed. Cecil Roth (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1934), 73-90; Cecil Roth, *A History of the Jews in England*, 3d. Edition, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 132-148.

² William Page, ed., *A History of the County of London: Volume 1, London Within the Bars, Westminster and Southwark* (London, 1909), 551-554.

³ John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 84.

towards Christ and Christians. Anthony Bale points out that late medieval Christians in England produced these images in such works as the *Arma Christi*, a heraldic roll that depicts the instruments of Christ's passion, which include a Jew spitting in the face of Christ along with other instruments at the crucifixion: a pole with a sponge attached on the end soaked with gall given to Christ while on the cross, a lance which pierced Christ's side, the ladder used to take Christ down from the cross after he died and the tongs used to remove the nails.⁴ Richard Rolle's widely influential *Meditations on the Passion* reflects on the sufferings of Christ: "that pain that wicked Jews, so cruel and so violent, at the mount of Calvary without any mercy tormented thee with."⁵ The late medieval poems "An ABC Poem on the Passion of Christ" and "The Virgin's Complaint, *Filius Regis Mortuus est*" identify Jewish culpability for Christ's torture and crucifixion; the latter includes the figure of Mary asking for judgment upon the Jews from heaven.⁶ These images emerged around feasts such as Corpus Christi in which stage actors re-enacted scenes connected to Christ's passion. In the play the "Harrowing of Hell" for example, Anima Christi identifies himself as the soul of Christ but that his body "is dead – the Jewes it slew -/ That hangeth yet on the rood."⁷ A subsequent passion scene recounts the episode in which the character Centurion acknowledges Jesus' identity as God's Son, which incites Nicodemus to excoriate the Jews:

Alas! Jewes, what have you wrought?
 Ah! You wicked wightes, what was your thought?
 Why have you bobbed and thus beaten out

⁴ Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book*, 145-168.

⁵ Richard Rolle, *English Writings*, ed. Hope Emily Allen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931), 24.

⁶ Frederick J. Furnivall, ed. *Political, Religious, and Love Poems: from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth MS. No. 306 and Other Sources* (London: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1903), 233-237, 271-278. 'Filius Regis Mortuus est' trans. 'the Son of the king is dead', i.e. Christ.

⁷ R. T. Davies, *The Corpus Christi Play of the English Middle Ages* (Totwa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972), 315.

All his blessed blood?⁸

In addition to the crime of deicide, the legacy of host desecration continued in the imaginations of late medieval Christians as well. The miracle play known as the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* from East Anglia involves five Jewish characters subjecting the Eucharist to a violent ritual in order to test the veracity of transubstantiation in the sacrament of the altar.⁹

Late medieval and Reformation Christians also reflected on the theme of God's judgment against the Jews. The explicit violence in the late medieval alliterative poem *The Siege of Jerusalem* epitomizes God's judgment upon the Jews through the Christianized Roman conquerors Vespasian and Titus for "the hard wounds,/ the binding and the beating that he on body had."¹⁰ And that imagery of Jerusalem's destruction continued well into the Reformation period as reformers appropriated the theme for their audiences. In 1552, for example, Hugh Latimer preached an apocalyptic sermon entitled "The Day of Judgment" inspired by a passage from Luke 21. Latimer relates the history of the Jews in Late Antiquity, their failed attempt to rebuild the temple and how the Roman Emperor Titus destroyed Jerusalem because the Jews "would not believe the sayings of our Saviour Christ..."¹¹ He further expounded on the prophetic words of Jesus in Luke 21, which

...signified that the Jews never shall come together again, to inhabit Jerusalem and [Judea], and to bear rule there, as they have done: for by this word 'it shall be trodden under feet,' is signified as much as, it shall be inhabited by, it shall be under the dominion of, the Gentiles... Wherefore? – Because they were stiff-

⁸ R. T. Davies, *The Corpus Christi Play of the English Middle Ages* (Totwa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972), 317; *bobbed*, struck with derision.

⁹ I will discuss the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* in Chapter 3.

¹⁰ Ralph Hanna and David Lawton, eds., *The Siege of Jerusalem* (Oxford: Early English Text Society, 2003), 33.

¹¹ Hugh Latimer, *Select Sermons and Letters of Dr. Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester and Martyr, 1555*, ed. Wm. M. Engles (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1842), 253.

necked, so that they would not be ruled by God's most holy word, but despised it, and lived according to their own fantasies and vanities: like we do now-a-days the most part of us.¹²

Latimer explained that the “wrath of God hangeth upon their heads, because of their wickedness, wherewith they have provoked God” and that the Jews were “cursed in the sight of God, so that they should not inhabit that city any more.”¹³ He proclaimed that “the people [the Jews] were God's people, but when they would not come unto him...he cast them away, and utterly destroyed their dominions and kingdoms, and made them slaves and bondmen for ever.”¹⁴ But Latimer wanted his English audience not to miss the lesson: “And doubtless this is written for our instruction and warning” he said, that English Christians would receive the same *reward* as the Jews did if “we despise God's word...[and] live rather according to our fantasies and appetites...”¹⁵

Traces and memories of Jews and Judaism still lingered in certain places in England too. The cult at Bury St. Edmunds for Little Robert of Bury, allegedly murdered by Jews in 1181, continued at least until 1520 and inspired the late medieval poet John Lydgate to compose some verses in his honor.¹⁶ The female figures of *ecclesia* and *synagoga*, common among the cathedrals on the Continent, also adorned the cathedrals of Canterbury, Lincoln, Peterborough and Rochester and represented the triumph of the church over the synagogue: *ecclesia* stands erect, facing the figure of Christ with scepter in hand and crowned with glory while *synagoga* looks away from Christ, often with her

¹² Ibid., 256.

¹³ Ibid., 256.

¹⁴ Ibid., 258.

¹⁵ Ibid., 258.

¹⁶ Lisa Lampert, “The Once and Future Jew: The Croxton ‘Play of the Sacrament,’ Little Robert of Bury and Historical Memory,” *Jewish History*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (2001), 236-240. See also Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book*, 107-143.

eyes obscured or even blindfolded, holding tablets of the Ten Commandments and a broken staff.¹⁷

The figure of *synagoga* in contrast to *ecclesia* also reminds us that we must also look beyond the simple identifier “Jew” and consider the vast repertoire of other images that emerge from Christian texts, namely Jewish figures derived from the New Testament: Caiaphas, Annas, Judas, the Pharisees, doctors of the law and scribes.¹⁸ These figures played prominent roles in the life of Christ, whether acted on stage or part of a devotional work or a homily. Richard Rolle’s *Meditations* encourages readers to thank Jesus for “the pains and of the shame that thou suffered before the bishops and masters of the law” and how he “suffered before Anne and Cayphas,” as well as before Pilate and Herod.¹⁹ For example, an English primer of 1534 encourages proper prayer inspired by the passage in Luke 18 that penitents reflect the attitude of the publican and not the Pharisee “whiche prayed not but rather prayesd hym selfe, & despised his neighbour.” As the life of Christ unfolds in the primer, Jewish characters emerge: Judas, Caiaphas and Annas all appear as the narrative recounts the conspiracy to bring down Christ and their roles in his subsequent arrest, trial and crucifixion.²⁰ We also find references to the synagogue, the law of Moses or *the olde lawe*, and the Sabbath; the latter term occupies a significant portion of the anonymous work *Dives and Pauper*, a late medieval devotional treatise and dialogue on the Decalogue. In Book I, for example, the writer discusses the seventh day and why and how Christians observe the eighth day:

¹⁷ Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms, 1350-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1.

¹⁸ The usual ME renderings for Caiaphas include ‘Cayphas’ or ‘Cayface.’

¹⁹ Richard Rolle, ed. Allen, 20, 31.

²⁰ *A prymer in Englyshe with certeyn prayers and godly meditations, very necessary for all people that vnderstonde not the Latyne tongue. Cum priuilegio regali* (London: John Byddell, 1534; STC 15986), sig. A5r, G2r-v.

Therefor be Goddis ri[g]thful [judgment] the Iewis Sabat on the Satirday turnyde [t]hem to sorwe and [distress] & [much] travayl, and our Sonday turnyd us into gret rests and to joye & blysse...so is now the Sonday [hallowed]...that holy chirche hadde on the Satirday be malice of the Iewys into reste & blysse on the Sonday.²¹

From these examples one finds a wide variety of images of Jews and Judaism. In the remainder of this chapter I will examine four late medieval texts that feature common, related Christian images of Jews and Judaism which construct or enhance biblical and hagiographical narratives, reinforce piety and devotion, and celebrate Christ's triumph over his enemies, namely John Mirk's sermon cycle known as the *Festial*, Nicholas Love's devotional text *Incipit Speculum vitae Christi*, several different works of late medieval drama and the *Book of Margery Kempe*. Before I begin that task, however, I would like to complicate the picture.

As I have shown, late medieval Christians often regarded Jews and Judaism in negative terms, tied with crucifixion, condemnation, diminution and judgment. But not all references to Jews and Judaism involved calls for vengeance, proclaimed Christian triumph over Judaism or always conveyed an explicit adversarial tone. Walter Hilton's *Scala Perfectionis*, primarily concerned with Christian devotion and a call for spiritual authenticity, includes a few references about Jews but without the calls for judgment that we find in, for example, the poem *Filius Regis Mortuus est*.²² One reference instructs a Christian audience to respond properly to a vision of Christ's passion when given by the Holy Spirit. The vision includes Jesus "taken by the Jews and bound like a thief, beaten

²¹ Priscilla Heath Barnum, ed., *Dives and Pauper, Vol. I, Part I* (Oxford: The Early English Text Society, 1976), 267-268. As for authorship, see pages xx-xxxi of Vol. II of the EETS series. Barnum addresses the anonymous authorship of the work and how it has been erroneously attributed to the Carmelite friar, Henry Parker.

²² Walter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, ed. and trans. John P. H. Clark and Rosemary Dorward (New York: Paulist Press, 1991).

and despised, scourged and condemned to death” as well as carrying and being nailed to the cross. Hilton encourages his audience, however, to internalize Christ’s agony and suffering in order to elicit a proper devotional response: one should feel compassion and pity for Jesus and to “mourn and weep and cry with all the powers of your body and of your soul” in “wondering at the goodness and love, patience and humility of our Lord Jesus, that he would suffer so much pain for such a sinful wretch as you are.”²³ The Jews in the vision serve as Christ’s torturers but Hilton wants his audience to fixate on the figure of Christ and his sufferings, not his perpetrators. And yet a vision of the passion of Christ, even in a devotional context such as Hilton’s, must necessarily include the role of Jewish figures, even if ancillary to the true object of devotion.

Hilton’s focus on Christian devotion and spiritual authenticity even results in a surprising re-interpretation of the Jews’ call for Christ’s crucifixion as he advises his audience who struggle in their spiritual lives regarding the “image of sin.” Hilton asks, “Then what are you to do with this image [of sin]? I answer you with a word that the Jews spoke to Pilate about Christ: *Tolle, Tolle, crucifige eum!* Take this body of sin and put it upon the cross.”²⁴ Hilton actually turns the call for Christ’s crucifixion by the Jews, regarded by late medieval Christians as a moment of ultimate betrayal, villainy and malice into a didactic lesson to confront sin in their own lives: fleshly appetites, pride, wrath, envy, covetousness, gluttony and lechery. The image of the Jew remains adversarial but Hilton dampens the hostility by transforming their words of condemnation into words of affirmation.

²³ Ibid., 106-107.

²⁴ Ibid., 155-156. “Away with (or take) him, away with him, crucify him!”

But other references to Jews reveal an author who dared not over-spiritualize the eternal consequences of Jewish unbelief. And Hilton includes infidels as well. On the issue of who can be reformed through the virtue of the passion of Christ, Jews and infidels do not benefit from the passion because “Jews do not believe that Jesus, the son of the Virgin Mary, is the Son of the God of heaven” and infidels “do not believe that the supreme Wisdom of God was willing to become son of man, and in humanity suffer the pains of death.” Furthermore, the Jews “held the preaching of the cross and the passion of Christ as nothing but slander and blasphemy, and the infidels hold it as nothing but illusion and folly.” Therefore, Jews and Saracens will suffer under God’s judgment because “these men are greatly and grievously in error” and do not accept Christ, which refutes those who argue that the “Jews and Saracens can be saved by keeping their own law.”²⁵ But even here Hilton shifts the discussion to false Christians and he reserves the worst fate for this type of Christian. They also do not benefit from the virtue of Christ’s passion. While they believe in the divinity of Christ as God’s Son and the sufficiency of his passion to save the soul, they “live and die in mortal sin” because they have an “informed and dead faith, for they do not love him” and “are not reformed to the likeness of God, but go to the pains of hell eternally, as Jews and Saracens do – and into much more pain than they do, in that they had the faith and did not keep it.” Although Jews, Saracens and false Christians all share the same eternal fate, false Christians will suffer more since “that was a greater trespass than if they had never had it.”²⁶ We should remember, however, that an equivalency in terms of eternal fates among Jews, Saracens

²⁵ Ibid., 197; 303n7: “The view which Hilton rejects is expressed by William Langland in *Piers Plowman*, B Text, Passus 12, lines 284ff., as noted by Gerard Sitwell in his edition of the *Scale*. It may also be found in some academic theologians of the fourteenth century.”

²⁶ Ibid., 196-197. Hilton seems to use the term ‘infidel’ and ‘Saracen’ interchangeably.

and false Christians should not lead us to lump these groups into one homogenous group of outsiders. Late medieval Christians certainly considered each group a threat in specific ways, especially false Christians or heretics which I will discuss in Chapter 3, but they did not cast blame on Saracens or false Christians for the torture and murder of Christ that brought about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and the curses associated with Jewish unbelief: perpetual guilt, degradation, wandering, mistrust, accusation and expulsion. The image of the Jew still held the position of the “original enemies of Christ” in late medieval England.

I

John Mirk’s popular sermon cycle, the *Festial*, like other homiletic sources, reveals and/or reinforces late medieval Christian impressions and attitudes about Jews.²⁷ The *Festial* contains sixty-four sermons and several contemporaneous homilies, and follows the liturgical cycle from Advent to the Dedication of a Church. Although Mirk borrows much of his content from Jacobus de Voragine’s popular medieval hagiographical work *Legenda Aurea*, he makes several additions and contextualizes it for an English audience. The *Festial* reinforces several dimensions about faith one would consider important to late medieval Christians; a number of hagiographical and biblically-related stories emphasize the truth and triumphalism of Christianity over its enemies and the importance of Christian devotion. Approximately one-third of the sermon material includes references to Jews and Judaism; some emphasize Jewish conversion via miracle and some include the adversarial nature of the Jew overcome by the power of God.

²⁷ John Mirk, *Festial*, MS Cotton Claudius A. II. EETS 334, ed. Susan Powell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Several sermons contain the element of Jewish conversion, usually brought about by miracle. The sermon designated for Saint Nicholas' Day – *De sancto Nicholao episcopo* – emphasizes the saint's meek living, heavenly calling and his great compassion.²⁸ Two episodes that occur after the saint's death involve Jewish figures. The first tells the story of a Christian man who “borewed a certeyn summe of gold at a Iewe” and as a pledge offers the Jew only “Seynt Nycholas.” It seems here that this was not an image of the saint but rather a pledge in the saint's name, for the Christian “mon swere vpon þe auter of Seynt Nycholas þat he [Nicholas] wolde trewly paye hym aȝayn.” When it came time to settle the account, a disagreement arises because the Jew claims that the Christian man did not pay him, although the Christian man claims otherwise “and sayde he hadde payed hym vch peny.” To rectify the situation, the Christian man hollows out a staff and makes the Jew swear by it that it would be filled with the payment in gold. They depart from one another and the Christian man begins to make his way home. Along the way he becomes sleepy and lays down to rest in the middle of a road and a cart runs over him, kills him and breaks his staff, revealing the gold the Christian man had promised through Saint Nicholas. The Jew feels sorry that the Christian man had died and that he did fulfill the agreement after all, and prays to Saint Nicholas to raise him to life on the promise that “he wold be crystenet and leuen *on* crysten feyth.” Saint Nicholas answers his prayer and “þen þe Iewe was crystenet by euedens of þys miracle.”

The second story involves a Jew who makes an image of Saint Nicholas because he believes the saint will protect his goods from theft.²⁹ He leaves his shop to go on a

²⁸ Mirk, *Festial*, 12-17.

²⁹ See Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 186. Duffy includes this story to highlight “the notion of the saint as a human figure, both potentially vengeful and susceptible to pressure and the bonds of obligation and even coercion.”

journey and returns to discover that his goods have been stolen. The Jew becomes enraged at the saint and “toke a scorge and beet þis ymage of Seynt Nicholas, as hyt hadde be Seynt Nycholas himself.” He promises to beat the image every day until his goods are restored. Despite this assault, the saint works on behalf of the Jew and appears to the thief, admonishes him and the thief returns the stolen goods. The Jew then discovers that his goods have returned and “anon he tok folþe and wes aftur a trewe cryston mon.”

Both of these stories conform to a simple pattern: Jewish unbelief, a wrong arises against the Jew, a miracle, then conversion. These stories promote the image of Saint Nicholas as a mighty intercessor for the lay Christian and a model of faithful Christian behavior. The presence of Jews in these stories accentuates Saint Nicholas as an intercessor. He works on behalf of those most resistant, even those violent towards him, so that *even Jews* become convinced in the saint’s intercessory power. Saint Nicholas has the power to triumph over such individuals and therefore Jewish unbelief ends where miracle begins. For the Christian that power can work on their behalf as well.

Saint Paul represents the epitome of Jewish conversion, celebrated during the feast *De conuersione sancti Pauli apostolic*.³⁰ The conversion of Paul in the *Festial* centers on an explicit contrast between Judaism and Christianity and how grace can conquer even the most hostile of men. Mirk contrasts Paul the Christian with Saul the Jew, the latter correlated with King Saul in the Old Testament: just as King Saul “pursewed þe holy Daid for to haue slayn hym, right so þys Saul pursewed Cryst and hys dyscypulus and hys seruandes to bring hem to þe deth.” The sermon explains Saul’s justification for his mission to persecute Christians:

³⁰ Mirk, *Festial*, 51-55.

Wherefore, whyl Cryst zode on erþe, he wold nere comen to hym to heren hys thechyng. But al son as he was styed into heuen, þen anon, for he was lered and cowþe þe Iewes law, he bygan to zeynstonde Crystus discypulus, spytyng azeynes ham and pursewyng ham in al þat [he] myght, in ful entent for te haue destroyed Crystus lawe.³¹

Furthermore, Saul's wickedness surpasses that of "hys felowes" – that is, the Jews – and the narrative reminds the audience of Saul's involvement with Saint Stephen's martyrdom. The remainder of the sermon recounts Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus and how he becomes Paul the Christian. The message admonishes an audience to amend one's life like Paul did, through the sacrament of penance, while a person "hath space and tyme of amendyng" or suffer eternal damnation. Christ graciously and triumphantly overcomes Jewish hostility through a blinding light and Paul's conversion from Jew to Christian demonstrates that even a murderous Jew can be "schewod þe swetnesse of hys grace."

Towards the end of the sermon cycle the *Festial* includes several more sermons that illustrate Jewish conversion, namely the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, the Nativity of Mary and Holy Cross Day. In the first Marian sermon, *De assumptione beate Marie virginis sermo*, a Jewish man sends his son to school among Christian children.³² On Easter the children attend mass and the Jewish boy goes with them "for felowschep." But to the Jewish boy's astonishment he witnesses the risen Virgin herself giving the Host to his classmates and moved by the miracle receives it himself. When his father finds out his son received the Eucharist he becomes enraged and places him in an oven. Miraculously,

³¹ Ibid., 51. I have further clarified some archaisms in the Middle English: "Wherefore, whyl Cryst went on erþe, he wold not come to hym to hear hys thechyng. But as son as he was styed into heuen, þen at once, for he was learned and knew þe Iewes law, he bygan to oppose Crystus discypulus, spytyng azeynes them and pursewyng them in al þat [he] myght, in ful entent for te haue destroyed Crystus lawe."

³² Ibid., 205-206.

the child does not die because the Virgin who appeared to him in church earlier that day rescues him.

The Virgin also rescues a Jew in London in the sermon for *De natiuitate beate Marie*.³³ A Jew comes to London, thieves subsequently take him hostage and the Virgin rescues him. The Jew converts through a series of visions of heaven and hell. The figure of Mary simultaneously offers condemnation and grace to the Jew and says “I am Mary, þat þou and alle þine nacion despysuth and seyne þat I bare neure Godys Sone of my body. But neurþelesse I am now icomyn to bring þe oute of þine errory þat þou arte ine.” This statement illustrates the typical late medieval Christian view about Jewish error regarding Mary as the bearer of God’s Son. This theme about the doctrine of virgin birth appears in an earlier sermon *De purificacione beate Marie*; Mary’s purification addresses Jewish accusations of lechery by “stoppon the Iewes mowþes, lest þey haddon sayde þat heo dude not þe lawe and so caht a gret sklandur aþeynes hom tym aftur commyng.”³⁴ The rescue and conversion of the Jew at the end of the Nativity of Mary and her intervention to save a Jewish child from an oven signal to a Christian audience of the power and grace of the Virgin. She bears the truth and preserves souls as a triumphal Christian witness despite Jewish hostility and error. The final Marian sermon from the cycle, *De annunciacione beate Marie uirginis*, features another Jewish conversion story.³⁵

The sermon marking the Annunciation of the Virgin recalls the Gospel account of Gabriel visiting Mary to announce that she will be the mother of Christ. The sermon recounts the biblical narrative and then the preacher explains the reason why Mary had to

³³ Ibid., 221-225.

³⁴ Ibid., 56.

³⁵ Ibid., 93-97.

marry Joseph: to avoid accusations of lechery by the Jews. The sermon reaffirms the belief in the conception of Christ via the Virgin Mary through a story about a Christian, a Jew and a lily. The Christian explains to the Jew that when a lily brings forth a white flower it proves that Christ came from Mary through a miraculous birth. The Jew responds, “Whan I see a lyly spryng oute of þis pottle, I wil leue þat, and ere note.” A miracle ensues in a predictable manner: a lily does grow out of the pot, the Jew converts and then he speaks to Mary “Lady, now I leve þat þou conseyued of þe Holy Goste Ihesus Criste, Goddys Sone of heven, and þou klene maydon beforon and aftur.” Through the conversion of a Jew and through his own words the sermon affirms the central Christian doctrines of the Virgin birth and the perpetual virginity of Mary. The interaction between Mary and the Jews reinforces Mary’s image as a powerful and efficacious intercessor: she rescues, dispenses grace upon, convinces and triumphs over the very figures who tortured and crucified her son.

The image of holy blood also has the power to convince Jews of the truth of the Christian message. The sermon *De exaltacione sancta crucis sermo*, Holy Rood Day, a sermon Mirk “rede in *Legenda Aurea*” likewise contains a story of Jewish conversion.³⁶ A Jew enters a church and his great envy for Christ leads him to cut the throat of the Christ figure with a sword. To his astonishment the figure bleeds profusely and splatters him with blood. Bewildered and frightened he flees and eventually encounters a Christian man on a road. The Christian asks him who he has killed and the Jew tells him of the incident and cries for Christ’s mercy and converts. The miracle of blood and Christ’s sacrifice, symbolized by the Rood, overcomes Jewish *envye* and triumphs in the face of Jewish violence. In this particular sermon, Jewish violence leads to conversion and

³⁶ Ibid., 225-228.

restoration. Another set of sermons in the cycle, however, lacks Jewish conversion and instead contains adversarial content involving Jews and Judaism. These sermons comprise a majority of the *Festial's* images of Jews and Judaism.

The sermon marked for Saint Stephen's Day, for example, contains adversarial content involving Jews.³⁷ *De sancto Stephano* describes Saint Stephen as the first martyr after Christ's ascension. Many Jews from "dyuerse contreys" resent Stephen and eventually stone him to death. Stephen responds to his murderers with prayer; the prayerful response characterizes Christian holiness in that even while Jews attack him Stephen "prayed more devowtly for hys dedly enemys þen he dede for himself."

Jewish violence towards Christians or the persecution of Christians occupies a host of other sermons from the cycle. In *De sancto Iohanne euangelista*, the feast of Saint John the Evangelist, the figure of Saint John contends against Jewish idolatry.³⁸ When John "sagh a temple of Iewes ful of mawmentry, he prayed 'to' God for te destryen hyt." This incited the bishop of the temple, Arostodinus, to pursue John and try to kill him; the narrative ends with a man being raised from the dead and Arostodinus converts.

Dominica in Sexagesima sermo includes a reference to Saint Paul's suffering at the hands of the Jews as recorded in 2 Corinthians 11.19-30, among other tribulations.³⁹ In the sermon marking the fifty days to Easter, *Dominica in Quinquagesima sermo*, the end of the sermon includes the biblical account of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac and the sermon explains the connection between Isaac and Christ.⁴⁰ This connects the Jews to Christ's passion: "Þan [by] Habraham 3e schul vndurstande þe Fadur of heuen, and be Ysaac, hys

³⁷ Ibid., 28-31.

³⁸ Ibid., 31-35; *mawmentry*, idolatry.

³⁹ Ibid., 67.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 70-74.

Sone Ihesu Criste, þe wheche he spared note for no loue þat he hadde to hym bot suffred þe Iewes to leggen [wode] vpon hym, þat was þe cros vpon hys schuldur, and ledon hym to þe hulle of Caluarye...” The sermon reminds an audience to anticipate the Easter season as well as to instruct them of Old Testament narratives that point directly to Christ’s death.

There are a number of sermons that describe Jewish antagonism and hostility towards Christian figures too. *De festo sancti Math[ie]* describes the devil who appears to “þe byschoppe of þe Iues” and incites him to kill the Apostle Mathias as he went out to preach. In the sermon of the Feast of Mary Magdalene Jews also attempt to drown Mary, Martha and Lazarus in the sea while in both *De festo sancti Iacobi apostolic* and *De die Pentecostes sermo* Jews attempt to kill disciples of Christ.⁴¹ The sermon that marks Saint Margaret’s Day emphasizes a demonic dimension to Jewish antagonism.⁴² In *De festo sancta Margarete sermo ualde vtilis*, Margaret speaks with a demon, a son of Lucifer, and it replies, “And of my werkys, I tell þe þat be my techyng þe Iewes slown Cryste on þe crosse and hys apostelys and alle hys dysciplus aftur.” Here the sermon reveals what inspires Jewish hostility towards Christ and Christians; Christ’s triumph over the Jews signals to late medieval Christians a triumph not only over a violent and resistant group of unbelievers but of Christ over Satan.

We now turn to sermons relating the Passion narrative of Christ. The Good Friday sermon, *Sermo dicendus ad parachianos in Parasceue domini: hoc modo*, places responsibility upon Pontius Pilate for the death of Christ in accordance with the Nicene Creed, an interesting assertion given that in numerous other sermons the guilt of Christ’s

⁴¹ Ibid., 75-77; 146-150; 184-188; 189-193.

⁴² Ibid., 181-184.

death falls upon the Jews.⁴³ The sermon then instructs an audience to offer prayers on this day for the conversion of all except those who have already been damned to hell:

Pan in þeis orison[es] Holy Chirche prayes for alle maner folke: for Iewes and Sarsynes, for heretykkes, for sismatus, but for cursyd men Holy Churche preyeth noȝte, for wil a man or woman standuth acursud he is dampnud before God and schal be dampned for euer, bot he repent and aske mercy.

But the sermon marks the Jews differently from other groups outside the Church. The sermon instructs parishioners how to pray during the service, specifically a parishioner's posture. Parishioners offer seven prayers kneeling down, for various outsiders; parishioners, however, stand in prayer for the Jews so as to not identify with those who kneeled down before Christ and mocked him:

Pan aftur þe passion þere sew[en] orisons with knelyng at vche orison, [except] at þe orisone þat is sayde for þe Iewes: at hit Holy Chirch kneluth notte, for þe Iewes os þis day þries scorned oure Lorde knelynge.

This practice refers to the Gospel account when Roman soldiers scourge Christ, clothe him with purple, place a crown of thorns upon his head and then kneel before him as a form of mockery. However, the *Festial* and numerous other texts of the period identify these torturers of Jesus as Jews.

Whereas the Good Friday sermon places much of the responsibility of the death of Christ on Pontius Pilate, other sermons emphasize Jewish responsibility. In the sermon for Holy Rood Day, or *De inuencione sancta cruces sermo ad parochianos: hoc modo*, Jews make the cross for Christ's crucifixion:

Pan þis treo be Goddys ordenaunce plunged vp and swam on þe watur. And for þe Iewes haddon none noþur tre redy to makon þe crosse off, ffor grete haste þei takun þat treo and makud his a crosse and so hengud Cryste þereone.⁴⁴

⁴³ Ibid., 105-109.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 126-130.

The sermon then recounts the story of Saint Helen and her search for the true cross. She threatens to burn the Jews if they do not reveal to her its location. An earthquake miraculously reveals the location of the true cross among a number of buried crosses. After this narrative a Jewish conversion story ends the homily. The scene changes from Jerusalem to a city called Byretus where a Christian rents out a house owned by a Jew. When Jews find out that the Christian owns a cross, they attack him, saying, “þis is þe ymage of þat Ihesu þat oure faders deden to deth. Wherefore os þei dedyn to hys body, do we to þis ymage.” Then they take the image and subject it to the passion sequence: they blindfold, beat and scourge the image, place a crown of thorns upon its head, and finally pierce its heart. Miraculously blood and water spew pour out of the Christ figure. The Jews recognize the power and healing properties of the blood and convert. The sermon duplicates the passion narrative in other contexts, far from Calvary and the environs of Jerusalem, but the perpetrators remain the same. The re-crucifixion of Christ or the allusion of Christ’s crucifixion at the hands of the Jews provides a rationale for the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews. That image emerges in the sermon marking the Feasts of Saint Philip and Saint James.

In De festiuitate apostolorum Philippi and Iacobi sermo breuis ad parachianos: hoc modo, after the Jews murder Saint James the sermon begins a *narracio* that describes what happened to Jerusalem because of this deed and the death of Christ:

And þe Iewes were dryuen [into] diuerse cuntrayes and cites and dispartullud so þat sython here kyngdam hath bene distroyud, and heo weron and zitte bene hyndlynges off alle pepulls. . . . Zitte wyl I telle 3ow more of þe distuccone of þe cite off Ierusalem for to schewon 3ow how vengabul God is on hem þat bene leue for to schedon criston clode as þai weron.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Ibid., 123-125.

The content of the sermon echoes the images found in *The Siege of Jerusalem*. God's vengeance brings about the destruction of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews; both Pontius Pilate and the Jews share in the guilt of Christ's death. Vespasian, however, newly converted to Christianity, seems to direct much of responsibility towards the Jews believing that "Ihesus off Nazareth þat Iewes hath slayne" can heal him.

In the discussion above, I have examined several sermons that feature instances of Jewish conversion to Christianity and illustrate an adversarial relationship between Jews and Christian individuals, Christian imagery or Christian claims to truth. Jews and Judaism as constructed by late medieval Christians served the purpose of strengthening the truth claims of Christianity through a triumphal portrayal of Christian figures through miracles. But the presence of Jews and Judaism in some form appearing in nearly one-third of the sermons in this cycle raises an important question. Why are Jews and Judaism mentioned so frequently?

The presence of the Jew in a sermon might evoke emotional responses in a number of ways, especially to an audience accustomed to a particular role for the Jew: the torturers and tormenters of Christ, his disciples, the Virgin Mary or perhaps those Christians in the audience listening to the sermon who envision the Jew still lurking around England. Miracles become the necessary ingredient for the conversion of the Jew due to Jewish stubbornness and hostility towards Christ and his Church; thus these sermons encourage the belief that the most hardened of hearts can enjoy God's grace. Jews serve both as objects of conversion as recipients of grace and the perpetual adversaries of Christ and his Church; the Church's liturgy during Good Friday differentiates the Jews from all other groups outside the faith. Jews and Judaism,

according to Mirk's *Festial*, form an integral part of the practices and doctrines of late medieval Christianity. They serve as a necessary contrast that can be deployed in sermon material to emphasize in a powerful way the truth of Christianity against error, the power of Jewish conversion through a miracle, and the triumph of Christ over his enemies.

II

Nicholas Love's meditative work *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* follows the life of Christ from his birth to his resurrection and Jews frequently appear in the narrative.⁴⁶ Love translated the fourteenth-century *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, probably written by Johannes de Caulibus, but he made several additions to assist Archbishop Arundel's campaign against Wycliffite heresy in the early fifteenth century.⁴⁷ I will discuss these polemical aspects of the work in Chapter 3; in this chapter I will focus on Love's narrative and how he constructs images of Jews. Love's influence on Christian devotion emerge in several other works of the period. Michael Sargent points out that *The Mirror* had a major influence on the production of the *N-Town* cycle plays and others have agreed that images from *The Mirror* undoubtedly appear in *The Book of Margery Kempe*.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Sargent argues that Love's *Mirror* "was the most important literary version of the life of Christ in English before modern times" and its numerous extant copies suggest that widely read.⁴⁹

Love organizes the *Mirror* by days of the week and each day includes chapters with specific meditations that narrate the life of Christ. Much of the content encourages

⁴⁶ Nicholas Love, *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ: A Reading Text*, ed. Michael G. Sargent (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2004).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, xv-xxi.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, xiv, note 10; see also Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 237. Duffy points out that Kempe's visions of the Passion were inspired by imagery from the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, which shares the same material as Love's *Mirror*.

⁴⁹ Love, *Mirror*, ix.

authentic devotional responses to the meditations of the narrative. Monday's Capitulum vii, for example, explains that the circumcision of Christ was the day that Jesus "began to shede his precieuse blode for oure sake" and "began [soon] to suffer for us...[and] to bere payne in his swete tendire body for oure sin." Thus, Love encourages his audience to respond with compassion like Mary his mother and "wepe with him, for he wept this day [very] sore..."⁵⁰ But Love also adds doctrinal content to the meditation and explains the concept of spiritual, or virtuous circumcision since now "in tyme of grace ceaseth this circumcision of the olde law, & we have instead baptism ordained by criste, that is the sacrament of more grace, & less peyn."⁵¹

When Jesus begins to gather his disciples and teach in Capitulum xvi, we find references to the synagogue and the Sabbath. Love relates the scene from the Gospel of Luke whereon the "sabbate day" Jesus "come in to the sinagoge as he was [accustomed] to do with othere as in the chirch of Jues" and proceeds to read from Isaiah.

Unsurprisingly, the Jews in the synagogue marvel at his eloquent teaching.⁵² Although Love accentuates Christ as the premier teacher that communicates grace, the main devotional aspect of the narrative relates to how Jesus calls his disciples and not the reaction of the Jews. He encourages his audience to meditate on how Christ drew the disciples to himself "for he loved them [very] tenderly knowing what he wolde make of them."⁵³ But we do obtain a sense of how late medieval Christians imagined Jesus interacting with Jews and how terms such as "sabbate" and "sinagoge" refer specifically to Jews and Judaism.

⁵⁰ Love, *The Mirror*, 42.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 77. It should be noted here that Love fails to include the scene where the Jews throw Jesus out of the synagogue as recorded in the Gospel of Luke.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 78.

Love takes the opportunity to address certain virtues and vices in Capitulum xxiv which describes the scene from the Gospels in which Jesus allows his disciples to pluck grain on the Sabbath to the consternation of the Pharisees who “seiden þat it was vnleueful on þe sabbat day.”⁵⁴ The Pharisees’ concern over proper Sabbath observance does not concern Love other than he explains how Christ refutes his detractors using the example of David and priests from the Old Testament. In any case Christ “was lord & auctour of the þe lawe.” Instead, Love emphasizes the virtue of patience in light of hunger and poverty and abstinence as an antidote for the sin of gluttony. But for our purposes, a devotional reader would connect the Sabbath and Sabbath observance with the Pharisees and the Law of Moses.

Capitulum xxviii provides us with an example of how several interrelated terms refer to Jews and Judaism. The title of the chapter, “How the pharisees & other token occasion of sklandre of the wordes & the dedes of Jesu” refers to a series of confrontations between Jesus and his Jewish detractors. Love reminds his audience that they could suffer slander in this life even if one’s words and deeds “be never so good and true” because it happened to Christ. One occasion of slander probably derives from Mark 7 where the “Pharisees askeden him, *Why that these disciples washe not their hands when thei went to meal, & in that they kept not their custome after the teching of their eldere*” nor “their tradiciones & bodily observances?” Jesus answers them that washing hands and bodily cleanliness do not make one clean and that “vices that come out of the hert defoylene.” The Pharisees “were gretly sclandrede & stired ageynus him, bot he toke none heed thereof, for they were blinde in soule through malice.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Ibid., 96.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 109.

Jesus also “wrought miracles upon the sabbate days, that were [God’s] halidayes to the Jues, as bene the sonedays now to cristene men, & that he dide to [confuse] and reprove of the Jues, that kepten streitly the lawe in bodily observances, & not in [spiritual] understanding as his wille was.” The Jews react with slander against him and conspire to kill him, for they did not consider a man to be on “goddus [side] that kept not the sabbate day.”

The final occasion relates an episode when Jesus “taucht in the sinagoge gostly doctrine & seide, that he was the brede of life that came from heuene” as well as a reference to the Gospel of John and its Eucharistic implications: how it behooves men “to ete his flesh & drinke his blode” and “haue euerlastyng life.” The Jews grudge against Jesus for his teaching, but they miss the spiritual understanding of his words.⁵⁶ Love’s devotional lesson calls Christians to do good despite accusations against them, just as Christ did in the face of Jewish slander. Furthermore, Love implies that Christians should not imitate the Pharisees and be concerned with observances at the expense of virtues like charity, meekness, patience and prayer.⁵⁷

In this section of the *Mirror*, Love connects the Pharisees, Jews, the Sabbath and the synagoge as interrelated components of Jews and Judaism oppositional to Jesus, his disciples and Christian teaching. Both “pharisees” and “Jues” defend their traditions, the latter in a synagoge on the Sabbath. These images serve as identifiers of Jews and Judaism as a whole but each has a certain place within the Christian imagination. Love repeats these markers in Capitulum xxxii as well, on the occasion when Christ casts out beggars and sellers from the temple with a scourge, much to the consternation of “þe

⁵⁶ Ibid., 110.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 110-111.

pharisees & scribes & oþer of þe Jewes.”⁵⁸ We find in Love’s *Mirror*, then, a series of images of Jews and Judaism, well beyond the simple identifier of *Jew* and all in common as oppositional to Christ and Christianity.

The conspiracy, arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus features an array of Jewish figures associated with that narrative. Capitulum xlii relates how the “the princes of the Jues with grete instance continually asked & made all the multitude with hem to crie & aske that he sholde be crucfiede.” It pleases Jewish leaders that Pilate acquiesces to their demands and “the princes & the Pharisees & the aldermenne” are “ioyful & glade, that thei had their entent fulfilled.”⁵⁹ As to the question of who actually tortures Christ, the context clearly identifies the Jews because the passage begins with “Thei have not in mynde the grete benefices & the wonderfull dedes that he hath shewede them.” After this statement the text describes how Jesus suffers torture and pain from men who did not withdraw “fro their malice” and laugh and mock him in his suffering. The devotional meditation brings the audience to consider Christ’s torment and envision how he suffered scorn and abuse from those around him. From “the bishop Anne & now to Caiphas, nowe to Pilate & and nowe to Heroude...” Jesus’ opponents “stande stiffely ageynus him alone, the princes & the pharisees & the scribes, with thousandes of peple, crying alle with one voice that he be crucfiede.”⁶⁰ With the exception of Pilate all of Christ’s tormenters are Jews. These images of Jews and Judaism from Love’s *Mirror*, especially those of the crucifixion but others as well, had a major influence on other late medieval texts such as late medieval drama.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 115.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 170.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 173.

III

The dramas of the *N-town Cycle* share many of the images of Jews and Judaism with other works of the period, namely the *Mirror*. The *N-Town* cycle refers to a series of late medieval plays written and performed in East Anglia that followed a liturgical pattern and brought to life biblical narratives for popular audiences.⁶¹ These plays depict several Jewish figures opposed to Christ to include Pharisees, scribes, Annas, Caiaphas and Doctors of the Law. Most of the opposition against Christ involves adherence to the law of Moses as a reaction to Christ's teaching, although during the Passion sequences Jewish malice becomes a significant motive.

In Play 24 which tells the Gospel episode of the woman taken in adultery, Phariseus and Scriba hear Christ's teaching about mercy, and Scriba reacts:

Alas, alas oure lawe is lorn!
A fals ypocryte, Jesu be name,
Pat of a sheppherdis dowtyr was born,
Wyl breke oure lawe and make it lame!

Phariseus and Scriba plot together how they are going to ruin Jesus' reputation when Accusator approaches them about a young queen who commits adultery. Both Phariseus and Scriba agree that they can entrap Jesus by asking him his judgment upon the woman. If Jesus condemns her, they can accuse him as a false and "unstable" preacher. If Jesus calls for mercy, Scriba remarks that it will be against the law of Moses which calls for her death by stoning. Scriba concludes that

Ageyn Moses if pat he drawe,
Pat sinful woman with grace to helpe,
He xal nevyr skape out of oure awe,
But he xal dye lyke a dogge helpe!

⁶¹ Stephen Spector, ed., *The N-Town Play, Vol. I*, Early English Text Society, s.s. 11, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

They bring the woman and accuse her of adultery, calling for her death while Jesus writes on the ground. Phariseus repeats what the law requires after the woman pleads for her life:

Ageyn þe lawe þu dedyst offens;
Perfore of grace speke þu no more.
As Moyses gevyth in lawe sentens,
þu xalt be stonyd to deth þerfore.

Scriba finally asks Jesus what should happen to the woman but up to that point Jesus has remained silent; the stage directions read ‘*Jesus nichil respondit, sed semper scribyt in terra.*’ Finally Jesus answers in four simple lines:

Loke which of 3ow þat nevyr synne wrought,
But is of lyff clenere þan she,
Cast at here stonys and spare here nowght,
Clene out of synne if þat 3e be.

Almost immediately, Phariseus, Accusator and Scriba, collectively confused and realizing that Jesus has written on the ground all of their sins walk away from the scene and speak soliloquies of confession and shame regarding their own unworthiness. The woman remains alone with Jesus and he grants her forgiveness, saying “And wyl no more to synne, I þe charge.”

For most of the play, the drama follows Phariseus, Scriba and Accusator and their disdain and strategy to bring down Christ. For Phariseus and Scriba their strict adherence to the law of Moses reveals to the audience their identity as Jews, which Christ circumvents by his grace. Their sudden display of shame and confusion demonstrates to a late medieval audience the wisdom, power and grace of Christ’s words. The play emphasizes the contrast between the Jewish characters who aim to condemn according to their adherence to Judaism and Jesus who grants mercy as part of Christianity’s virtue.

Only the woman receives mercy since the three Jewish accusers of the woman flee away in shame.

In Play 26 known as “The Conspiracy,” Cayphas, Annas and the Doctors of the Law all identify as Jews in one way or another. The stage directions describe Annas as dressed ‘*aftyr a busshop of þe hold lawe in a scarlet gowne*’ and ‘*a mytere on his hed after þe hold lawe.*’⁶² Annas opens the play with an introduction about himself for the audience and the central problem he has with Jesus:

As a prelate am I properyd to provyde pes,
And of Jewys jewge, þe lawe to fortefye.
I, Annas, be my powere xal comawnde, dowteles:
þe lawys of Moyses no man xal denye!...
Now, serys, for a prose, heryth myn intent:
There is on Jesus of Nazareth þat oure lawys doth excede.
Yf he procede thus, we xal us all repent,
For oure lawys he destroy dayly with his dede.

Primus Doctor recommends Annas seek out Cayphas for counsel on how to stop Jesus, for if he continues his preaching “Oure lawys xal be destroyd...” Secundus Doctor concurs with his fellow Doctor and also recommends that Annas enlist the help of Rewfyn and Leyon who serve as “temperal [judges] þat knowyth þe perayl.” Annas agrees and determines that Christ will “no lenger oure pepyl begyle.”

Cayphas describes himself as a primate charged with destroying “all errouris þat in oure lawys make varywans” and that of the “lawe of Moyses I haue a chef governawns...” Both Cayphas and Annas meet “with [t]here clerkys and þe Pharaseus” and conspire to bring down Christ, who, in the words of Rewfyn, has become an “eretyk and a tretour bolde.” All of these characters conspire in a defense of the law of Moses

⁶² The two Doctors in the scene do not necessarily identify as Jews in appearance; they wear fur hoods and on their heads fur caps with large tassels. But their words reveal their identity as Jews as the play progresses. The Messenger, however, who serves Annas is not a Jewish character, since he stands ‘*beforn [him] as a Sarazyn.*’

against Christ's teaching and agree that Caesar holds the designation as the king of the Jews, not Christ. Jewish accusation and conspiracy against Christ, however, evolve into violence as the passion sequences begin.

The passion narrative occupies the central drama of Plays 29-32. Jews transform from accuser and conspirators to adversaries and torturers. In Play 29, lines 118-192, Annas, Cayphas and three Doctors of the Law interrogate Jesus. Cayphas asks Jesus about his disciples and "what is þi doctrine þat þu does preche?" Jesus answers to ask the people who have heard him in the temple. Suddenly Primus Judeus on the scaffold nearby speaks thus:

What, þu fela, to whom spekyst þu?
Xalt þu so speke to a buschop?
þu xalt haue on þe cheke, I make avow,
And zet þerto a knob!

The stage directions that accompany the dialogue read, '*Here he xal smyte Jesus on þe cheke*' which signals the first incident of Jewish violence against Jesus in the Passion narrative. The unwarranted strike by Primus Judeus for Jesus' simple response creates tension and anticipates what follows later. After a discussion between Jesus, Annas, Cayphas and the three Doctors, Cayphas accuses Jesus of blasphemy, the people shout "All we seye he is worthy to dey!" and Annas orders Jesus to be scourged in lines 179-180. The stage directions then read, '*Here þei xal bete Jesus about þe hed and þe body, and spyttyn in his face, and pullyn hym down, and settyn hym on a stol, and castyn a cloth ouyr his face...*' Then four Jews proceed to spin Jesus around and strike him on top of the

head, testing to see whether he could tell them who struck him since the cloth over his head acts as a blindfold.⁶³

In Play 30, Jesus is taken before Rex Herowde along with Annas, Cayphas, two Doctors and three Jews. When Jesus remains silent Rex Herowde becomes incensed and orders the Jews to “bete his body with scorgys bare,/ And asay to make hym for to speke.” The stage directions read, ‘*Here þei pulle of Jesus clothis and betyn hymn with whyppys...And quan þei han betyn hym tyl he is all blody...*’ The Jews proceed to scourge Jesus and Play 30 ends with a decision by Rex Herowde to send Jesus to Pylat.

The scene before Pylat in Play 31 ends with Pylat’s judgment that Jesus must be crucified and he instructs the Jews to strip off his clothes, bind him and scourge him “þat al men may se.” Earlier in the play Pylat tries to free Jesus but because he was unsuccessful he washes his hands of any guilt. Primus Doctor responds by saying “þe blod hym mut ben on vs,/ And on oure chyldyr aftyr vs” (lines 159-160). The stage directions describe the Jews placing a crown of thorns upon Jesus’ head, ridiculing and mocking him and placing the cross upon him. Primus Judeus responds to Pylat’s orders to crucify Jesus with “Doth gladly, oure kyng,/ For þis is 3oure fyrst begynnyng.”

Play 32 enacts the procession to Calvary and the crucifixion. Line 49 begins the scene of the crucifixion where stage directions read ‘*Pan xul þei pulle Jesu out of his clothis and leyn them togedyr; and þer þei xul pullyn hym down and leyn hym along þe cros, and aftyr þat naylyn þeron.*’ In a long, dramatic scene the four Jews crucify Jesus and raise up the cross for all to see. Jesus, hanging on the cross entreats the “Fadyr

⁶³ Douglas Sugano, editor, *The N-Town Plays*, (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007), <http://www.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/teams/sdnt29frm.htm> and then see note for lines 185-192, which reads “As in Towneley Play 21, this *newe game* (line 188) of wheeling (spinning the blindfolded Jesus around) and *pylle* (plucking or hitting, line 190) also consists of Jesus’ guessing who hit him in order for them ‘to test’ his prophetic powers (197–198, notes 89–93).”

Almythy” to forgive the Jews who have crucified him “For thei wete notwh what þei do.”

But the Jews responds to Jesus’ entreaty with contempt. For example, Primus Judeus responds:

3a! Vath! Vath! Now here is he
þat bad us destroye oure tempyl on a day,
And withinne days thre
He xulde reysyn’t a3en in good aray.

The *N-town Cycle* embodies and enacts a standard late medieval conception of the Jew as the torturer and murderer of Christ and a permanent role as his adversary. In some sequences the play portrays Jews acting in a sadistic manner: with gladness (line 211) they crucify Christ and proceed to mock him while on the cross; when offered forgiveness by Christ they respond with contempt.

In addition to Jewish violence of the *N-town Cycle* plays we find depictions of Jews in other religious drama such as the *Digby Plays*.⁶⁴ In a similar fashion to the *Festial*, the *N-town Cycle* and *Love’s Mirror*, the *Digby Plays* feature Jewish opposition to Christian protagonists, references to the Passion and Jewish culpability for deicide and Judaism as a religion contrary to Christ. For example, in the “Conversion of St. Paul,” Saulus describes the Jewish synagogues in lines 584-585 as “templys of Jues þat be very hedyous,/ Agayns almighty Cryst, þat Kyng so precious.” At the end of the play, Angelus warns Holy Saule that the “pryncys of Jues” intend to kill Saulus and that he must flee. The play “Mary Magdalen” reminds the audience about Christ’s crucifixion in lines 1336-1337 in which Mavdlyn says “A, now I remember my Lord þat put was ded/ Wyth þe Jewys, wythowttn glytt or treson!” And in similar fashion the play “Killing of the

⁶⁴ Donald C. Baker, John L. Murphy and Louis B. Hall Jr., eds., *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and E Museo 160*, Early English Text Society, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 20, 22, 69, 114, 161, 165. On page xiii of the introduction, there is evidence that the plays originated in Norfolk or Suffolk and were most likely touring productions.

Children” reminds the audience of Jewish culpability for Christ’s execution as well.

Lines 533-536, spoken by Symeon, read:

Nowe may I be glad in my inward mende,
For I haue seyn Jhesu with my bodily eye,
Wiche on a cros shalle bey al menkende,
Slayn by Jwes at þe Mount of Calvery.

We also find the encounter between the Virgin Mary and the Jews. In “Christ’s Burial” Marie Virgyn vilifies the Jews for their role in Christ’s death and she pronounces a curse upon them in lines 646-653:

But, alese, your tormentes so manyfold
Hase abated your visage so gloriose!
Cruell Jewes, what mad yow so bold
To commit þis crym most vngraciose,
Which to yourself is most noyose?
Now shalle alle the cursinges of your lawe
Opon yow falle most myschevose,
And be knawen of vagabundes ouer-awe!

Marie Virgyn worries about the Jews killing her as well and she beseeches her son’s goodness and grace (lines 767-768). The Virgin Mary’s pronouncement of the crucifixion as a crime and that the curses found in the ‘lawe’ will now fall upon the Jews, perhaps referring to those described in Deuteronomy 28, explains why the Jews will be known as vagabonds everywhere.

The *Chester Cycle* is another collection of plays that includes some plays not found in the *N-Town Cycle*; these too characterize Jews and Judaism in oppositional terms to Christ.⁶⁵ In Play XIII entitled “The Blind Man,” Jesus heals Caecus of blindness by anointing his eyes with clay. When Caecus tells the Pharisees of the miracle Primus Pharaseus remarks

⁶⁵ *The Chester Mystery Cycle*, eds. R. M. Lumiansky and David Mills (London: EETS, Oxford University Press, 1974), 230-242.

This man, the trueth if I should saye,
is not of God – my head I laye –
which doth violate the sabaoth daye.
I judge him to be madd.

The Pharisees summon the parents of Caecus to appear before them. The Mater and the Pater discuss whether they should but in the end agree to do so “or ells they would without delay/ course us and take our good.” They testify to the miracle brought about by Jesus and Caecus testifies a second time, but the Pharisees harshly dismiss their testimony. Secundus Pharaseus excoriates Caecus:

O cursed caytyffe, yll moote thow thee!
Would thou have us his diciples to bee?
No, no! Moyses disciples binne wee,
for God with him did speake.

Christ enters the scene and several exchanges occur between he and the Pharisees. Secundus Pharaseus threatens to stone Jesus but then relents; both Pharisees agree that Jesus “Both in word and thought/ there thou lyes falselye.” Jesus leaves before they can stone him and Primus Pharaseus promises to tell Cayphas about the matter. This episode connects the Pharisees with their concern for the Sabbath and depicts them as angry opponents to Christ and in collaboration with the figure of Cayphas.

These examples reinforce the notion that popular audiences encountered Jews and Judaism quite regularly throughout the liturgical cycle. English Christians of the period knew the identity of Jewish figures like Caiaphas and Annas, what the synagogue represented and witnessed the torture and murder of Christ live on stage at the hands of Jewish figures. And drama had an emotional content wherein the audience and even the actors could internalize. As Edward N. Calisch points out, audience reaction to religious drama was quite emotional:

The scenes depicting the life and passion of Jesus were given with startling realism. They moved their spectators, and the actors themselves, to the profoundest depths of feeling. At times the actors fainted on stage because of the intensity of emotion, and spectators lost their reason.⁶⁶

Jews and Judaism had central roles in the depiction of a variety of dramatic re-creations of Christ and saints. They even show, however, in a devotional work about merchant-class woman named Margery Kempe, which reveals the internal spirituality of an unconventional but orthodox Christian woman.

IV

The *Book of Margery Kempe*, a fifteenth-century spiritual biography, reveals the interiority of a merchant-class woman named Margery Kempe from King's Lynn in Norfolk.⁶⁷ She was born around 1373, married, had fourteen children and died sometime after 1438. The narrative follows Margery's travels to various places in England as well as her pilgrimages to Rome, Jerusalem and throughout Europe, though several details of the book are not necessarily chronological.⁶⁸ The *Book* was composed by two different writers probably in 1436 and 1438 from Margery's memory, although likely redacted by her biographers. It reveals striking characteristics about Margery: an intense interior spirituality, mystic visions and unconventional outward piety; these characteristics lead to conflict with people and ecclesiastical authorities and result in several ecclesiastical examinations.

⁶⁶ Edward N. Calisch, *The Jew in English Literature: As Author and as Subject*, (Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1909), 55.

⁶⁷ *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. Sanford B. Meech with prefatory note by Hope E. Allen (London: Early English Text Society by Oxford University Press, 1940). All subsequent citations will be from this text unless otherwise noted.

⁶⁸ Anthony Goodman, *Margery Kempe and Her World* (London: Longman, 2002), 14.

The *Book* mentions Jews some fourteen times and in what I have determined to be three main contexts, two of which I will discuss here. The first context, and least surprising, concerns Margery's vision of the passion sequence in chapters 79-80. She envisions the Jews laying "hands upon him full violently" and

immediately the said creature beheld with her ghostly eye the Jews putting a cloth before our Lord's eye, beating him and buffeting him in the head and bobbing him before his sweet mouth, crying full cruelly unto him, 'Tell us now who smote you'...the Jews fared so foul and so venomously with her blissful Lord. And they would not spare to pull his blissful ears and draw the hair of his beard.⁶⁹

The sequence continues with the Jews tying Jesus to a pillar and scourging him, then crucifying him and how the Jews "spoke violently" to the Virgin Mary, who replies: "Alas, you cruel Jews, why fare you so with my sweet son and did he you never any harm?... You cursed Jews, why slay you my Lord Jesus Christ? Slay me rather and let him go." Many scholars agree that passion sequences in devotional literature inspired Margery's visions. For example, Duffy convincingly argues that Margery's "visionary experiences" represent "little more than literal-minded paraphrases of the relevant sections...of works read to her by the spiritual directors she found in such abundance in fifteenth-century East Anglia" which include works by Nicholas Love and Richard Rolle.⁷⁰

But I also find that these images can be connected to religious drama. For example, the description of Jews blindfolding Jesus and beating him on the head in order to solicit his prophetic gifts and identify his assailant reminds us of the trial sequence before Annas and Cayphas found in the *N-town Cycle*. And Margery's frequent weeping,

⁶⁹ Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. and trans. Lynn Staley (New York: Norton & Company, 2001), 137-142.

⁷⁰ Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 237. Duffy cites Clarissa Atkinson's *Mystic and Pilgrim: The Book and the World of Margery Kempe* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1983), 144-147.

during this episode especially, seems to be a typical response of an audience of a religious play that depicted the passion sequence as Calisch remind us.

In addition to the Margery's vision of the Passion, Margery imagines Jews in another episode. She makes a comparison between the Jews who mocked Christ and people who are speaking evilly against her. At Norwich in chapter 44, certain people conclude that her intensive crying must mean "þat sche had a deuyl wythinne hir which cawsyd þat crying" and that she took it patiently because "þe Iewys seyde meche wers of hys owyn persone þan men dede of hir."⁷¹ Since Margery connects her trials to the narrative of Jesus, she endures the ridicule with patience, just as Jesus endured with patience his Jewish adversaries.

The second context concerns two passages that describe Margery's heart-felt pleas to God for the conversion of Jews, along with "Saracens and heathen people" and "all false heretics."⁷² Mirk's *Festial*, as I have noted, includes prayers of this nature as part of late medieval liturgical practice. But Margery weeps profusely in her prayers, an emotional investment most likely less common than many of her contemporaries. On Good Fridays, Margery weeps an hour "for the sin of the people," another hour for souls in Purgatory, another for those in poverty or distress, and another hour "for Jews, Saracens, and all false heretics that God for his great goodness should put away their blindness so that they might, through his grace, be turned to the faith of Holy Church and be children of salvation." In the end of the *Book* Jesus thanks Margery "for the charity that you have in your prayer when you pray for all Jews and Saracens and heathen people" and "for the holy tears and weepings that you have wept for them" for their

⁷¹ *The Book of Margery Kempe*, 105.

⁷² *The Book of Margery Kempe*, Lynn Staley, 104; 149. These occur in chapters 57 and 84.

conversion. But her prayers still retain a certain equivalency between Jews, Saracens and false Christians: all will share the same eternal fate. Margery displays her interior tensions between heart-felt and genuine love for the redemption of outsiders and the Church's position that these outsiders will be consigned to eternal damnation without conversion.

Most of Margery Kempe's *Book* concerns her pilgrimages, her visions and her interactions with Christ. Her inclusion of Jews is unremarkable in that given her exposure to devotional literature and likely drama as well the inclusion of images of Jews seems rather typical. What sets Margery apart from many of her contemporaries is her unconventional piety; the inclusion of Jews in her narrative is highly conventional.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have examined a number of works that feature Jews and Judaism. From the sermons of John Mirk's *Festial*, the writings of Nicholas Love's *Mirror*, late medieval drama and Margery Kempe's spiritual biography, late medieval Christians imagined Jews and Judaism as part of Christian devotion that illustrates the power of God or the saints, contextualizes the life of Christ or mystically communes with Christ through vision and prayer. The disappearance of Jews in England after the expulsion in 1290 did not mean Jews and Judaism disappeared from English Christianity. Late medieval Christians became familiar with Jewish figures like Caiaphas, Annas, Pharisees and Doctors of the Law who led the Jews to betray and crucify Christ, as well as different aspects of Judaism: circumcision, the Sabbath, the law of Moses and the synagogue. Furthermore, late medieval Christians understood that Jews and Judaism represented opposition to Christ and the church. Sources portray Jewish figures who contend and

conspire against, persecute, torture and crucify Christ, and who show equal hostility to Christian saints. Jews convert through miracle, a testament to the triumph of Christ over his enemies, even those most hardened by the sin of unbelief. Christ supersedes the law of Moses with grace, a law for which Jews defend vigorously and which eventually provides a rationale to depose of Christ and his ministry.

These images, however, emerge in contexts other than like the ones found here, especially during instances of religious tension between the church and its dissenters. They become images in which to measure the beliefs and practices of religious opponents. In subsequent chapters, I will demonstrate how both defenders of traditional religion and its dissenters during in late medieval and Reformation England utilized images of Jews and Judaism to define the boundaries of orthodoxy, bolster their own claims as legitimate proponents of orthodoxy and define their opponents as something other than the true representatives of Christ and the church. I aim to reveal how Christians fought over specific theological, doctrinal and devotional dimensions of faith and practice to promote their versions of true religion amidst a contested religious climate.

Chapter 2

Wycliffite Dissidents, Images of Jews and the Struggle for Orthodoxy in Late Medieval England

The religious descendants of John Wyclif commonly known as the lollards thought with Jews about their religious opponents.¹ Images of Jews and Judaism, among them scribes, Pharisees, Caiaphas, Herod, Judas, the synagogue or simply *the Jews* appear fairly frequently in lollard discourse. Simply put, some lollards firmly believed that the church and its clergy could best be described or characterized by images of Jews and Judaism, primarily drawn from the New Testament.

Although some of the images of Jews and Judaism that appear in lollard discourse have no connection to the traditional church and its clergy, a rhetorical pattern and a polemical strategy emerge. As I have noted in chapter 1, most late medieval Christians in England characterized the Jews often in negative terms with varying degrees of hostility, from stubborn unbelieving outsiders to objects of conversion in miracle stories to the persecutors and murderers of Christ. Lollards were no exception: these negative conceptions influenced and prejudiced the way they interpreted New Testament passages involving any number of figures or symbols of Jews and Judaism. This basic presupposition laid the groundwork for lollard authors to develop a polemical strategy through a simple rhetorical formula: polemical statements that capitalize on and exploit

¹ I have opted for the term *lollard* without capitalization, since recent historiography strongly suggests that the lollard movement was not a unified and necessarily coherent religious minority but rather a dissident movement of scattered individual local communities, especially after the failed Oldcastle uprising in 1414. For a discussion about the recent trends lollard historiography, see J. Patrick Hornbeck II, *What is a Lollard?: Dissent and Belief in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), v-xi, 3-18. For a discussion about lollard communities after 1414, see John A. F. Thomson, *The Later Lollards, 1414-1520*, (London: Oxford University Press, Amen House, 1965); 2. For a challenge to Thomson and an alternative view to more recent trends such as Hornbeck, see Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988). Hudson's central thesis is that despite some variances the lollards had a vision of reform based on ideological coherence from Wyclif's writings, especially as they pertain to theology, ecclesiology and politics.

negative conceptions of Jews and redirect them towards ecclesiastical opponents; a rhetorical pattern that associates and thereby *redefines* the clergy and the church as opponents hostile to Christ and the gospel just like the Jews. For lollard authors, because this polemical strategy draws from images found primarily in the New Testament, it provides a biblically-supported and thereby effective strategy to condemn ecclesiastical opponents since it would surely resonate with lollard audiences who held the scriptures as authoritative. But in a larger sense it provides a biblical rationale for lollard audiences to distinguish between *trewe men* and their corrupt, hypocritical and violent counterparts and opens up a space for lollard authors to promote a vision of orthodoxy of their own.²

In this chapter I examine several lollard vernacular tracts and sermons that reflect this rhetorical pattern and polemical strategy, but I begin with several cases from ecclesiastical records. The examples from ecclesiastical records offer us traces of lollard opinions as recorded by their opponents which taken by themselves may appear to be merely the opinions of a few eccentric individuals. But as I will show in this chapter, these opinions echo lollard ideas found in vernacular tracts and sermons and reflect a rhetorical pattern often promoted by lollard writers and preachers.

I

In 1393, an unknown lollard wrote a letter to Master Nicholas Hereford, the once close associate of John Wyclif but who by 1392 appears to have returned to the good

² *Trewe men*, a term for lollards; see *An Apology for Lollard Doctrines, Attributed to Wicliffe*, ed. James H. Todd (London: John Bower Nichols & Son, 1842), 49: ‘þe trewe man is the temple of Crist’; see also Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 10.

graces of the church.³ The letter appears in the register of John Trefnant, bishop of Hereford.⁴ After the writer calls Hereford “o magister Nicholaitanus” in reference to the wicked Nicolaitans of Revelation 2, a play on words associated with Hereford’s first name *Nicholas*, he chastises him in reference to the scribes and Pharisees. John Foxe provides a reliable translation:

Therefore, when thou didst recite the other day, first, the pharisaical and hypocritical woe (nothing at all to any purpose), thou shouldst have said justly in this sort, both of thyself, and other thy followers and religious Antichrists: ‘Woe be unto us Scribes and Pharisees, which shut up the kingdom of heaven; that is to say, the true knowledge of the holy scriptures before men, by our false glosses and crooked similitudes: and neither we ourselves enter into the same kingdom or knowledge, nor suffer others to enter it.’⁵

The author’s invective against Hereford involves the popular image of the scribes and Pharisees, the Jewish antagonists against Christ popularized among the lollards through tracts, sermons and the New Testament. The letter cites one of the *woes* from Matthew 23 and promotes a vision of lollard orthodoxy: that the scriptures when read and interpreted plainly as the sole source of truth lead one to true Christian faith; this is in sharp contrast to the traditional clergy who distort the scriptures and prevent the people from entering heaven, much like the scribes and Pharisees. The image of the scribes and Pharisees serves as a benchmark not only to distinguish true religion from its false counterpart but characterizes lollard opponents with some of the most inflammatory language a fifteenth

³ Henry Knighton, *Knighton’s Chronicle, 1337-1396*, ed. and trans. G. H. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 283n. 4; J. Patrick Hornbeck II, *What is Lollard?: Dissent and Belief in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 93-94 and n. 117.

⁴ *Registrum Johannis Trefnant, Episcopi Herefordensis*, ed. William W. Capes, Canterbury and York Series 20 (London: The Canterbury and York Society, 1916), 394-396.

⁵ John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments, Volume III*, ed. George Townshend (London: Seeley, Burnside and Seeley, 1844), 188-189; John Trefnant’s register reads the following on fol. 128r: ‘Ideo cum recitabas altera die primum, ye pharisaicum et ypocriticum et nichil ad propositum, dixisses hoc modo debite de teipso et omnibus tuis sequentibus et religiosis Anticristi, ve nobis Scribis et Phariseis, qui claudimus regnum celorum, scilicet veram noticiam scripture sacre, ante homines per nostras glosas fictas et similitudines sinuales et nec nos illam noticiam intramus nec sinimus alios introire scilicet in illam.’

century religious imagination could muster: as pharisaical hypocrites and servants of Antichrist.

It would not be the first instance that a lollard would associate the traditional clergy with the Pharisees. Henry Knighton records the preaching activity of Wyclif's close associate John Purvey back in 1382 who preached that "those who enter a religious order render themselves unable to observe God's commandments" and that friars "ought to be known not by that name, but as Pharisees, and should seek their livelihood not by begging but in some other way by the work of their hands."⁶ In 1393, John Buckingham, bishop of Lincoln, examined several defendants from Northampton accused of heresy.⁷ The trial record indicates fifteen offenses ranging from how priests in mortal sin are deprived of the power to baptize or perform the Eucharist and thereby consecrate the devil instead to the unlawfulness of paying priests for the celebration of divine things.⁸ But among the fifteen offenses appears a statement regarding the danger of becoming like the Pharisees:

Item quod cuilibet christiano sufficiens est dei mandata servare in cubili vel in campo deum secrete adorare, nec in domo materiali publice precibus incumbere, ne phariseis se conformans ypocrita computetur...⁹

The image of the Pharisees as hypocrites appears here for a rationale why a Christian should obey God's commandments in secret and the dangers of going to church and praying publicly like the hypocrites do.

⁶ Knighton, *Chronicle*, 292-293.

⁷ A. K. McHardy, ed., *Royal Writs addressed to John Buckingham, Bishop of Lincoln 1363-1398, Lincoln Register 12B* (Woodbridge: The Canterbury and York Society, 1997).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 142. The trial record reads as follows: "Item si sacerdos sit in mortali peccato caret potestate sacramentum Eucharistie et baptismi consecrandi et idem capellanus diabolus est" and "Item, quod non est licitum sacerdotibus fore stipendiarios pro celebracione divinorum."

⁹ *Ibid.*, 142.

After Oldcastle's failure in 1414 lollards continued to express their opinions about the traditional clergy through images of Jews and Judaism. In 1425, Robert Hoke of Braybroke appeared before Henry Chichele, archbishop of Canterbury on suspicion of heresy.¹⁰ According to his testimony this was the second time he appeared before convocation for unorthodox opinions; the first was back in 1405 in Northampton in which he "made solempne abjuracion of alle errors and heresies in the fourme of the lawe..."¹¹ But apparently this examination and abjuration did not lead to actual penance and so he was brought before ecclesiastical authorities again. The trial record indicates four charges of heresy regarding the sacrament of the altar, confession, temporal possessions and his opinions on religious clergy. Hoke's view of the sacrament of the altar as "more imperfyt in kynde thanne hors breede or rattes breed" almost certainly evoked the ire of his examiners; his belief that "confessions maad to the preest is nat necessarie to hele of mannes soule, but a crafte brought in by the devell" would likewise evoke strong condemnation.¹² But besides these and his opinion that temporal lords should not have ownership of their possessions by the law of God, Hoke attacks the religious clergy: "Also that the pharyseyes that now been as monkes, nences, chanons and freres and alle other privat religions the whiche ben approved by holy cherche been membres of the devel and nat of god almyghty."¹³ For Hoke, the presence of Pharisees in the church cannot mean anything other than the presence of Satan since most lollards recognize from the scriptures that the Pharisees were sharply condemned by Christ.

¹⁰ *The Register of Henry Chichele, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1414-1443*, vol. III, ed. E. F. Jacob (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945), 105-107, 110-112.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹² *Ibid.*, 111.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 111.

The Norwich trial records offer a few glimpses of how lollards thought with other images of Jews besides the Pharisees.¹⁴ In August of 1430, John Skyllan appeared before ecclesiastical authorities. The surviving trial record includes twenty-three separate offenses ranging from denial of transubstantiation, baptism and confirmation to the lawfulness of withholding tithes and offerings and the affirmation that “every good man and good woman is a prest.”¹⁵ Furthermore, the record indicates that Skyllan denies the existence of purgatory, considers all images of saints “be but ydols and the makers of hem be acursed” and appears to argue that it would be more meritorious if all priests would take wives rather than remain celibate.¹⁶ At one point the record reveals Skyllan’s views on the pope and other ecclesiastical authorities, likely his most inflammatory rhetoric against the traditional church. He states that “ther was never pope aftir the decesse of Petir” and that “he that is called pope of Rome is fadir Antecrist, fals and cursed in al his werkyng.”¹⁷ He then condemns the entire church hierarchy “from the hyest to the lowest” who “begyle and decyve the puple, to gete thaym good, to mayntene their pride, their slowthe and thar lecherie withall.”¹⁸

Skyllan’s condemnation of the pope as Antichrist reflects typical lollard rhetoric: of the sixty defendants who faced ecclesiastical authorities in the diocese from 1428-1431 thirteen others besides Skyllan held similar views.¹⁹ Likewise, six of his co-defendants offered similar views on the worldliness and moral corruption of the clergy.²⁰ On the issue of persecution, however, Skyllan distinguishes himself. Many of his co-defendants

¹⁴ Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428-1431* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 146-147.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 148.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 147.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 46, 54, 58, 61, 141-142, 153, 190.

do not overtly condemn ecclesiastical authorities for acts of violence; most simply disregard the censure of ecclesiastical authorities on the grounds that threats from the clergy do not bind the conscience nor should they be feared. Several remind their accusers that Christ will judge them in return or bless those that have been censured.²¹

Skylan, however, condemns the clergy and their violent policies in the harshest of terms:

Also that the cursed Cayfaces, bisshopes, and here proude prestes every yer make newe laws and newe ordinances to kille and brenne alle trewe Cristis puple which wolde teche or preche the trewe lawe of Crist, whiche they hede and kepe cloos from knowing of Goddis puple.²²

The image of Caiaphas, here *Cayfaces* in the plural, would not be lost on Skylan's opponents and certainly not Skylan himself. Here the defendant associates Christian bishops with the Jewish high priest who condemned Christ to death; it goes well beyond the typical anti-clericalism found among the lollard defendants or the laity in general.²³ Given the numerous late medieval sources that depict the Jews as the perpetual enemies of Christ or the villainous outsiders who murdered Christ out of malice, to associate Christian bishops with the specific figure of Caiaphas would be as equally shocking an example of violent polemic as calling the pope *fadir Antecrist*. For Skylan, however, the image of Caiaphas explains why bishops persecute lollards: bishops who kill and burn true Christians resemble the same Caiaphas who condemned Christ to the cross. Skylan likely became familiar with the figure of Caiaphas from the gospels themselves or lollard texts; his opponents would have encountered him in devotional literature and religious

²¹ Ibid., 57, 61, 95, 112, 116, 121, 135, 142, 154.

²² Ibid., 147; see also n.172.

²³ Ibid., 17. Tanner writes that anticlericalism "was a marked characteristic of Lollards generally though it was by no means confined to them." Tanner points out that it appears over issues regarding clerical celibacy, temporal possessions and the association of the clergy (including the pope) with Antichrist.

drama.²⁴ In one remarkable, concise statement Skyllan manages to openly denounce the violent impulses of his persecutors, characterize ecclesiastical authorities in the harshest of terms and reinforce lollard claims that they represent the *true* followers of Christ. But Skyllan was not alone among the Norwich defendants to associate ecclesiastical authorities with the figure of Caiaphas. About a year before a woman named Margery Baxter indicted her bishop in the same way.

In 1428-1429, Margery Baxter of Martham underwent two official appearances before ecclesiastical authorities in Norwich. She seems to have come under the influence of the known heretic William White who was caught and burned earlier in 1428.²⁵ In her initial interrogation of October 1428 she was charged on six counts: only those who keep the commandments of God are Christians, a denial of auricular confession, her low opinion of pilgrimages and images, the immorality of capital punishment, that any good person is a priest and oaths should only be permitted in the case of preserving one's reputation before a judge.²⁶ Baxter seems to then have been incarcerated until her second appearance before authorities in April 1429.²⁷ This allowed examiners to prepare their case and depose witnesses. The record includes some of her unorthodox religious views. In regards to swearing oaths, she stated at some point according to a witness that no oaths should be sworn either by God or any saint with a warning that "if ȝe do the contrarie the be[e] will styngge your tunge and veneme your sowle."²⁸ As for the sacrament of the altar, a scribe records her opinion: "quia illud sacramentum est tantum panis

²⁴ See Matthew 26 and John 18; for examples from late medieval sources, see chapter 1, especially the *N-Town Cycle* plays 26 and 29-32.

²⁵ J. Patrick Hornbeck II with M. Bose and F. Somerset, *A Companion to Lollardy* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2016), 159.

²⁶ Tanner, 42; J. Patrick Hornbeck II, S. Lahey and F. Somerset, eds. and trans., *Wycliffite Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 2013), 328.

²⁷ Aston, *Lollards and Reformers*, 72-73.

²⁸ Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich*, 44.

materialis.”²⁹ Baxter’s view on oaths seems a bit novel; her view the sacrament of the altar seems quite typical among many of her co-defendants. But as the trial record unfolds she seems to become more radical and defiant in her opinions, especially how she characterizes William Alnwick, bishop of Norwich and his promotion of indulgences:

indeed, that vengeance would have come before this time to the said Caiaphas, the bishop of Norwich, and his ministers, who are members of the devil, except that the pope had sent to these parts those false indulgences that these Caiaphases had falsely obtained to induce the people to make processions according to their status and the church, which indulgences lead the simple people into cursed idolatry.³⁰

The trial record then includes one more statement that describes how a “discipulus Cayphe episcopi” struck the mouth of William White to prevent him from proclaiming the will of God.³¹ Baxter’s imagination may have been influenced by images of Christ being struck by the Jews from the gospel accounts or perhaps religious drama; her portrait of the bishop of Norwich as Caiaphas reflects a harsh polemic much like John Skyllan. But Margery Baxter goes even further than Skyllan: she apparently calls the Bishop of Norwich ‘Caiaphas’ to his face.

In addition to the figure Caiaphas the image of the synagogue also appears in the trial records of Norwich. John Skyllan, a miller from Flixton, argues that prayer inside a church does not matter since “material churches be but of litel availe and owyn to be but of litell reputacion, for every mannys prayer said in the field is as good as the prayer said in the churche.”³² The Latin record, however, includes the phrase “ecclesie materiales

²⁹ Ibid., 45; Hornbeck et al., *Wycliffite Spirituality*, 331, “for this sacrament is only material bread.”

³⁰ Hornbeck et al., *Wycliffite Spirituality*, 331-332; the corresponding Latin text can be found in Tanner, 45-46: “que quidem vindicta venisset in dictum Caypham, Nowicensem episcopum, et eius ministros, qui sunt membra diabolic, ant istud tempus nisi transmisisset as istas partes illas falsas indulgencias quas illi Cayphe impetrarunt falso as inducendum populum ad faciendas processions pro statu ipsorum et Ecclesie, que indulgencia induxit populum simplicem ad ydolatriam maledictam.”

³¹ Tanner, 47; Hornbeck et al., *Wycliffite Spirituality*, 332-333; “the disciple of Caiaphas the bishop.”

³² Tanner, 58.

sunt nisi synagoge” or that “material churches are but synagogues.”³³ John Godesell, a parchment-maker from Ditchingham as recorded in Latin by a scribe makes a similar statement about church buildings as merely synagogues in relation to prayer.³⁴ His wife Sybil makes a similar statement several days later when she appears before ecclesiastical authorities.³⁵

These individuals may have been inspired by passages from the Gospels that describe the synagogue as a hostile place where the disciples of Christ were beaten, scourged or cast out.³⁶ For example, John 16.2 reads, “Thei schulen make 3ou with outen the synagogis, but the our cometh, that ech man that sleeth 3ou, deeme that he doith seruyce to God.”³⁷ Furthermore, since many lollards abstained from auricular confession and denied transubstantiation, including these three individuals, the church building would no longer be a necessary place to practice one’s piety, no longer a place where they felt it necessary to belong. Therefore, to refer to the church building as a synagogue reflects not only the logic of individuals on the fringes of Christian society but also a denial of the church as a legitimate place where Christ dwells. Ecclesiastical examiners, however, were likely not amused by the association since the image of the synagogue meant a place outside of Christ, a place of blindness and defeat in sharp contrast to a triumphal Ecclesia. Other lollards, however, explained why they would refuse to attend church more explicitly.

³³ Ibid., 53; see Tanner, 18-19, 232 regarding the connection to the synagogue. Apparently the scribe’s English does not include the word *synagogue* which clearly appears in the Latin portion of the record.

³⁴ Ibid., 61.

³⁵ Ibid., 67.

³⁶ Several passages may apply here, including Matthew 10.17, 23.34 or John 16.2-3.

³⁷ *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments, with Apocryphal Books, in the Earliest English Versions made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and His Followers*, vol. IV, eds. Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850), 281-282.

Many of the Norwich defendants were detected because of the testimony of one William Wright who was deposed in 1429 by ecclesiastical authorities. In his deposition he identifies those who followed the preaching of the notorious lollard cleric William White, to include William Everden. Everden, according to Wright, sat at his table working on Sunday and reportedly said “that he woud not go to church to show himself a scribe or a pharisee.”³⁸ This explanation sounds similar to the defendants in 1395 examined by John Buckingham. For some lollards, the church was a synagogue and therefore not relevant to their Christian faith. For others like William Everden, the church was a place of hypocrites and avoiding church attendance protects one from becoming a hypocrite like the scribes and Pharisees.

One episcopal record reveals a defendant who employs multiple images of Jews and Judaism. In 1430, William Emayn appeared before John Stafford, bishop of Bath and Wells and offered two objections that relate to the sinfulness of the clergy and those who draft ecclesiastical statutes. The episcopal register records Emayn’s typical lollard invective associating the pope with Antichrist. But Emayn also states that those “in dedly synne be out of the church of Goddes ordinance and [i]n the sinagog of Sathanas” and that

it is not lawful to the king lords spirituel and temporel be calling to hem the comones to kepe and execute such ordinances and statutes but they be founded and grounded in Cristes gospel: and writers of such statutes be like to scribes and

³⁸ Foxe, *Acts and Monuments, Volume III*, 596. For an important discussion on the reliability of Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* regarding the Norwich heresy trials, see Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval England* (London: the Hambledon Press, 1984), 74 and n. 14, 95. Aston argues that Foxe should be seriously considered as a valuable source since the extant episcopal records have several missing folios of trial material, that “comparison of his text with the Latin version leaves one with some respect for his over-all accuracy and detail” and Foxe’s editing “consisted (perhaps largely) in his omissions.” See also Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 40.

pharisees to whom Crist saide Ve vobis scribis et phariseis, Woo to you scribis and pharises.³⁹

Emayn's description of the church as *the sinagog of Sathanas* likely derives from either lollard texts or directly from Revelation 2 and 3.⁴⁰ His insistence on moral purity leads him not only to castigate members of the traditional church but to condemn the entire church itself as no church at all. One could argue that Emayn employs the phrase not as a particular *Jewish* image but merely an inflammatory way, on scriptural grounds, to condemn the very church that has brought him to trial. But given how he describes both temporal and spiritual authorities as resembling the scribes and Pharisees, well-known Jewish opponents of Christ, Emayn's *sinagog of Sathanas* reflects a similar lollard rhetorical pattern found among the defendants at Norwich, especially those who consider the church as a mere *synagoge*.

Later in the fifteenth century some defendants expressed views similar to the lollard rhetorical pattern but were probably not connected to any particular lollard community themselves. In bishop John Chedworth's register, William Ayleward, a smith from Henley caught up in a 1462 anti-heresy campaign offered some peculiar opinions about the pope and the sacrament of the altar that reflects perhaps some heterodox opinions held by some lollards on the fringes.⁴¹ In the record Ayleward affirms that "the blessed sacrament of the auter is a grete devyll of hell and a Sinagoge" and that "the prest can nor make god that made him."⁴² Ayleward also holds the belief that "oure holy fadre

³⁹ *The Register of John Stafford, Bishop of Bath and Wells, 1425-1443*, ed. Thomas Scott Holmes (London: Harrison and Sons, 1915), 78-79.

⁴⁰ Specifically, Revelation 2.9 and 3.9.

⁴¹ Richard G. Davies, "Lollardy and Locality," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, vol. 1 (1991), 211. Davies argues that Ayleward "had no connection at all with his fellow-suspects" charged with heresy in 1462. However, my concern here is the use of similar-sounding rhetoric, which seems to have colored a range of heterodox dissenters, whether in close connection with one another or on the fringes.

⁴² Lincoln PRO: Reg. Chedworth, fol. 61r.

the pope of Rome is a grete best and a devyll of hell and a Synagoge.”⁴³ Although Ayleward does not seem to be connected to any particular lollard community, his rhetoric regarding the pope and the sacrament of the altar, albeit somewhat bewildering, sounds similar to other lollard defendants. He expresses a disdain for both pope and the sacrament of the altar and employs images of Jews and Judaism to reflect that disdain.

These trial records represent mere snapshots of lollard ideas, mostly from laypersons who found themselves in trouble with ecclesiastical authorities. What they do indicate is that images of Jews and Judaism for some defendants best explained their views about the church, church attendance, ecclesiastical authorities and religious clergy. We should not view these statements as mere eccentricities but rather traces of lollard rhetoric extant in vernacular tracts and sermons, both of which appropriate images of Jews and Judaism to demarcate truth from error, holiness from corruption and *trewe men* from those who are false.

II

Lollard vernacular tracts and treatises contain numerous authors who impugn and berate ecclesiastical opponents.⁴⁴ Many of these texts contain images of Jews and Judaism that authors use to expose and condemn clerical behavior and practice; most images derive from New Testament passages but lollard authors reassemble and deploy them to undermine and delegitimize a church to which they no longer really belong. Images of Jews and Judaism require little explanation for lollard audiences: for lollards

⁴³ Ibid., fol. 61r.

⁴⁴ *Select English Works of John Wyclif, Volumes II-III*, ed. Thomas Arnold (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1871); *The English Works of Wyclif Hitherto Unprinted*, 2d ed., EETS no. 74, ed. F. D. Matthew (Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint Co., 1902); for authorship, see Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval England* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), 269-271.

images of Jews and associated Jewish figures and symbols such as scribes, Pharisees, Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, Judas, phylacteries and the synagogue mean something anti-Christian, wicked, corrupt, violent, false, obsolete or hypocritical. Since lollards in particular found confirmation of these negative images from how they understood the New Testament, lollard writers could confidently exploit passages of scripture that contain those images not only to denigrate their opponents with God's truth but provide a scriptural basis to contrast *trew men* from their false counterparts.

In the treatise known as *Vae Octuplex* the author provides an extensive exegesis on Christ's eight *woes* from Matthew 23 and condemns religious clergy through an association with the scribes and Pharisees.⁴⁵ He warns his audience that Christ "biddiþ us be ware wiþ þese false prophetis, þat comen in cloþinge of sheep, and ben wolves of raveyne" who now appear as "men of þes newe ordris, and moost þese freris þat last comen ynne, for þe fend sutillþ evere aþens holy chirche."⁴⁶ The writer then examines the eight *woes* of Christ against the scribes and Pharisees and how those condemnations apply to religious clergy specifically. Just as the scribes and Pharisees "closen þe kingdom of hevne bifore oþir men" these "Farisees entren not into hevne" themselves and prevent others from doing so through fables, vain stories, lies and the distortion of scripture.⁴⁷ Furthermore, these *Farisees* live in hypocrisy and by their example "drawiþh men dounward" to worldliness while "þes scribis helpen þes Farisees, for prelatis and persouns and oþir possessionieres seien in her lyf þat Crist lyvede þus, and so volupteis

⁴⁵ Arnold, *Select English Works of John Wyclif, Volume II*, 379-389. The subtitle of the work is *þe exposicion of þe text of Matheu, þe þre and twentiþe capitle of eizte siþis woo seid to þe scribis and Pharisees, ipocritis*. The author of this treatise remains unknown; a reasonable estimate of the date would be the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 379.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 379.

and rychesse of þe worlde maken þei to be loved, and Cristis lyf dispisid.”⁴⁸ Further denunciations include that friars and other clergy, whom the author refers to as “oure scribis and Farisees” or simply *ypocrites*, fill their stomachs with food, feign prayer, rob men of their children, are more concerned with their own laws than the worship of God, covet worldly fame, display signs of holiness but are full of hypocrisy, and quench the “truþe of Cristis religoun, and so þei sleen Crist in manye of his membris.”⁴⁹ Towards the end of the treatise the writer condemns his opponents because they deform the church “from children of God to þe fendis lymes” and redefine various vices into virtues: “And þus alle vertues ben transposed to viciis” and therefore “so holy Chirche to synagoge of Sapanas.”⁵⁰

The striking contrast here would exhort audiences to maintain their piety and eschew the example set by those clergy to which the author condemns. The explanation that the church has become the *synagogue of Sapanas* would make perfect sense for a lollard audience since the author labors for several pages to associate clergy members with the scribes and Pharisees, the latter figures one would naturally associate with the synagogue. Matthew 23 provides the author a convenient passage to expose and condemn his opponents: not only does it record the words of Christ himself but it includes images of Jews that when applied to church opponents provides a legitimate basis to excoriate the hypocrites that have defiled holy church. *Vae Octuplex* comprises only one of several texts where an author employs images of scribes and Pharisees to condemn the clergy. Another author seeks to accomplish similar goals with his tract *Of the Leaven of Pharisees*.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 379-380.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 380-385.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 387.

Of the Leaven of Pharisees, probably first written in the mid-1380s, perhaps epitomizes how lollard writers associate members of religious orders with the image of the Pharisee.⁵¹ The tract specifically condemns the hypocrisy of members of religious orders but the author does not just focus on friars. He expands his condemnation to priests, lords, merchants and “alle opere men þat failen in charite anemtis god and his lawe.”⁵² The writer exhorts Christ’s faithful to understand and flee hypocrisy which the writer frames as “þe sowrdow of pharisees” and explains that the Pharisees were enemies of Christ and his teaching, a singular sect founded by sinful men who disregarded the scriptures, deceived people by their hypocrisy and covetousness, and were ultimately destroyed by Christ.⁵³ The author warns members of religious orders that if they be “in þese same synnys, as ful of coueitise & ypocrisie, & stryuen agens þe freedom of þe gospel & cristis lif & his apostlis” then “þei ben cursid of god” and therefore to avoid destruction they must be brought into Christ’s order rather than their own.⁵⁴ The writer argues that if religious orders were necessary and profitable they would have been established by Christ or his apostles, but scripture contains no such ordinance for the church and thus one should suspect them of hypocrisy and a whole list of other vices which include “luciferis pride and blasfemye of antecristis ypocrisie.”⁵⁵

To prove his point the author offers his audience a catalogue of moral failures in the second chapter to see “now wheþer oure religious þis day ben ypocritis.”⁵⁶ Among his indictments include pride in worldly goods, boasting through outward signs of holiness

⁵¹ *The English Works of Wyclif Hitherto Unprinted*, ed. F. D. Matthew, 1-27. Matthew notes that a reference to Spencer’s crusade in *Capitulum 3* dates the tract to around 1383.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 22; *charite anemtis*, in regard to.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

which constitutes vainglory, the persecution of *trewē men* who preach the gospel and the commandments, the display of a false sense poverty to mislead almsgivers about their covetousness for worldly goods, a neglect for preaching which occurs only a few times a year to wealthy lords, an emphasis on law instead of scripture, the encouragement of lords to extort their poor tenants, as well as the typical anti-clerical charges of adultery, fornication and “þe cursed synne of Sodom” among themselves.⁵⁷

But for the writer of the tract personal moral failures seem to pale in comparison to how his opponents violate God’s commandments which negatively influences Christians in the church. The religious not only violate the first commandment of the Decalogue but they encourage men to “seke blynde stockys or ymagis” more than they encourage people to obey God’s commandments, offer prayers to “brynge soules out of purgatorie” for payment, use the occasion of holy days to preach lies and fables instead of the gospel, slander *trewē men* who teach scripture and reprove sin, and worst of all consign souls to eternal damnation as “cursed manquelleris” because they hinder “pore prestis to techen men goddis lawe.”⁵⁸ On several occasions he reminds his audience about the true identity of the religious clergy with the phrase *þes pharisees*, specifically in reference to the sordid, immoral actions of friars: they offer medicinal help to women which invariably leads to adultery, they visit wives when their husbands are away and they encourage people to steal from family members or masters and bring the proceeds to them.⁵⁹ He also condemns how they encourage parishioners to give alms to “riche

⁵⁷ Ibid., 5-6.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 7-10.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 10.

possessioners” and “oper ryche pharisees” rather than their “pore nei3bores as crist biddiþ.”⁶⁰

As to whether religious clergy fail in faith, hope and charity, the author maintains that their teaching supersedes what Christ and the apostles taught, namely that the sacrament of the altar remains only as an accident after consecration rather than that “holy writ seiþ þat it is breede and cristis precious body.”⁶¹ They place their hope in their “owne tradicions and singuler obedience” rather than “kepyng of cristis gospel and trewe obedience.”⁶² As for charity, they love the ordinances of men over those of Christ, seek their own worship rather than the worship of God and fail in charity over all other virtues, especially because they permit false divorces. Thus, the religious lead others into sin “and dryuen hem to helle to euerlastynge deþ” in service of Antichrist and the devil, “and þefore comaundiþ crist þat we be war and flee fro þe ypocrisie of pharisees.”⁶³ In light of this war, the writer exhorts his audience to confront this hypocrisy in their midst as the day of God’s judgment draws near even if it results in bodily pain and death, for Christ’s true disciples should not fear men but only God who has the “power to sende boþe bodi and soule to helle with outen ende.”⁶⁴

But the writer extends his indictment well beyond the religious orders. He castigates secular priests, lords, merchants and “alle opere men þat failen in charite anemtis god and his lawe.”⁶⁵ While some priests concern themselves with receiving benefices from lords rather than saying the Mass or matins, others travel great distances

⁶⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁶¹ Ibid., 19.

⁶² Ibid., 19.

⁶³ Ibid., 20.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 20-21.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 22.

to lands filled with enemies rather than learn and teach the commandments and care for souls, all the while taking money out of England to Rome where benefices are bought and sold. These “rome runneris” take gold out of England and bring back nothing but “deed leed and heresie and symonye and goddis curse.”⁶⁶ Thus, the true heretics are not the poor priests who despise sin and teach God’s law but “þes coueitous symonyentis” who are “ful of heresie and wolden þat no man spoke aʒenst here cursed lif.”⁶⁷ And the writer exposes their true allegiance and how they gain benefices: “for þei han maad priuily couenaunt with þe deuyl þat hou many benefices þat þei may gete bi lesynges & symonye þe deuyl schal strangle þe soulis at his wille as for hem” in order to enrich themselves.⁶⁸

The author then turns his attention against temporal lords, merchants and the wealthy. Lords fair no better, for their hypocrisy and lack of charity manifests itself in how they wage war for their own private gain; merchants and rich men concern themselves with worldly gain such as rich wives, land and rents, and the use of false “wettes & mesures” to profit themselves, contrary to the holy life to which they have been called.⁶⁹ In the writer’s view, everyone seems to have been infected by hypocrisy since they betray the vow they took at baptism to forsake the devil, his pride and his works of sin. While some amend their lives through penance others remain in a state of sin bound to everlasting hell since their penance falls short of authentic repentance. In reference to John Chrysostom’s admonition that priests must teach the truth of God’s law or be condemned as traitors to God, the writer also calls laymen to maintain the truth of

⁶⁶ Ibid., 22-23.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 23.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 24.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 24-25.

scripture or be condemned for treason before God.⁷⁰ If rich men love wealth more than God, he warns them with the example of Judas who sold the truth for money. He condemns lords for their support of “prechours of lesyngis, fablis & cronyclis for money & worldely frendschipe” rather than “trewe prechoris of þe gospel.”⁷¹

Yet for all the hypocrisy among lords, priests, merchants and others, the writer concludes that the hypocrisy “of phariseis is most cursed & perilous of all opere.”⁷² He rehearses his earlier indictments: hypocrisy, false preaching of errors and heresies, the elevation of human ordinances over God’s law and ordinances, fraudulent begging for alms to fleece the poor, false pardons and vain prayers. Those aspects of hypocrisy lead the writer to make his final argument, that although the religious accuse “poore prestis” to be the “cause of alle þe perturbacion” in the realm, the accusation miscarries: since sin causes disturbances in the realm, poor priests actually bring about peace between God and people through the preaching of holy writ, while the religious “meyntenen synne bi false confessuonys & veyn special preiers & pardons” which lead to dissension and war.⁷³ He then reminds his audience about the spiritual ancestors of the religious during the time of Christ. The religious follow the same “fadir of lesyngis þat stired þe heiȝe prestis & pharisees in cristis tyme to pute on hym & his disciplis þat þei disturbeden þe lond of iude & wolden distroie it, for crist and his disciplis reproueden þe coueitise, ypocrisie & falsenesse of þe heiȝe prestis & false pharisees.”⁷⁴ The writer then explains that the devil “steriþ now false newe pharisees of synguler religion wiþ-oute cristis ordynance, þat ben more sotil in malice & lesyngis and ypocrisie þan þe firste, to stoppe

⁷⁰ Ibid., 25-26.

⁷¹ Ibid., 26.

⁷² Ibid., 26.

⁷³ Ibid., 27.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 27.

pore prestis fro prechyng of þe gospel & reprofyng of synne” and prays that God “kepe cristen men fro ypocrisie & false lesyngis of pharisees and here meynteneris.”⁷⁵

We should conclude that the tract *On the Leaven of Pharisees* represents more than merely eleven chapters of rather mundane anti-clerical polemic. First, although the writer could have simply described monastic clergy as hypocritical, self-serving individuals that persecute lollard preachers and represent everything wrong with the church, he associates them with the Pharisees of the Gospels, who late medieval Christians would associate as Christ’s principle opponents and persecutors from among the Jews. In light of other source material in circulation that includes Pharisees, a polemical strategy becomes clear with his description of the religious as the *newe pharisees*: a lollard audience, well-acquainted with images of Pharisees from reading or hearing the Gospels would immediately recognize the extent of corruption and the danger monastic priests pose not only to poor preachers but to the realm as a whole. Their influence must be resisted at all costs since submission equates to nothing but treason to God. The danger they pose can be readily deduced from the scriptures since the Pharisees were not merely Jewish interlocutors who resisted Christ’s message but agents who helped orchestrate his death. These *newe pharisees* are not just corrupt priests that belong to unauthorized religious sects, but enemies of Christ and the church much like the Pharisees found in the Gospels.

Second, the writer’s polemical strategy emphasizes lollard religious purity and authenticity and therefore legitimacy through the stark contrast he provides between true religion and its wicked, illegitimate counterpart. All of England has been corrupted by the influence of these *newe pharisees*, save the poor priests who exemplify Christ’s true

⁷⁵ Ibid., 27.

followers. The writer advances an ambiguous eschatological vision which features only a sense of God's looming displeasure with England: as God's day of judgment draws near, one must not succumb to the forces of the devil and his *newe pharisees* by falling into hypocrisy, whether lords, priests or commons. As for Christ's faithful one must wage war against these forces without fear even at the cost of one's life. The mark of true faith would require nothing less.

We find a similar polemical strategy in several other Wycliffite vernacular tracts, especially as it relates to the image of the Pharisee. The strategy appears in the tract *How Antichrist and His Clerks Travail to Destroy Holy Writ*.⁷⁶ The writer argues that Christians have been deceived by Satan, Antichrist and disingenuous clerics with errors in order to destroy the truth of the scriptures, a campaign mainly advanced by friars whom he designates as "þes cursed pharisees" who seem more interested in their own glory instead of Christ's "clene religion."⁷⁷ The text known as *Tractatus de Pseudo-freris*, a late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century tract, contains more extensive use of the image of the Pharisees.⁷⁸

In *Tractatus* the author makes associations between friars and Pharisees at several points. He even argues in the beginning chapter that the Pharisees and high priests Christ reproved in the temple "weren more and betere grounded þen ben þe sectis of þise freris."⁷⁹ He argues that friars of religious orders who apparently believe they live above criticism should be confronted, in light of Matthew 23, just as Christ "sharpliche azen þe secte of pharisees, as matheu telliþ in eyhte woes þat crist spak azen hem" even though he

⁷⁶ Ibid., 254-262.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 255.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 296-324.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 296-297.

loved some of them like Paul and Nicodemus.⁸⁰ With a mandate like that, the writer poses the question: since these “newe ordris ben pharisees fro cristen men, whi shulden not men by ensauple of crist speke sharpliche a3en here synne?”⁸¹ The association of these new orders and Pharisees serves not merely as a polemical device; the writer delegitimizes them to the point where criticism of them becomes the duty of those who follow Christ faithfully. Reproof should be expressed through love and truth, but expressed nevertheless, for “wo is vs 3if we ben stille, & speken not a3en here synnes, wenne we witen þat þei synnen openliche a3en bileue, & leden many soulis aftir hem by weye as fendis don.”⁸² The concept of reproof also appears in tracts like *Of Dominion* as it relates to the role of secular law and the clergy: since Christ allowed the Jews to judge him, the writer asks “wheþer þes clerkis ben more hi3e ouere seculeris þan was our lord ihesu crist ouere þes falce iewis?”⁸³

The writer of *Tractatus* also argues that the observances and additional rules for conduct to which friars must submit contradict the freedom of Christ’s law. To make his point he cites verses from Luke 11 and 12, both of which condemn the Pharisees for their hypocrisy and how they burdened people with commandments they themselves were not able to bear, and thus, “bi þe newe lawe ben sectis ofte reproued, & noon drede þise new ordris maken diuerse sectis, & so bi oure lieue þise ordris ben reproued.”⁸⁴ At one point in the tract, the writer defends himself and others against criticisms from friars and their supporters. Apparently, some friars have judged lollard critics for not only their criticism in general but also having unholy intentions. The writer’s defense includes how only God

⁸⁰ Ibid., 296-297.

⁸¹ Ibid., 297.

⁸² Ibid., 297.

⁸³ Ibid., 291.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 299.

can judge intentions and that the criticisms against the friars have basis in scripture. In this way, the writer argues that friars provide further evidence that they “ben disciplis of fals pharisees” because the Pharisees criticized Christ’s deeds and yet ignored Christ’s teaching.⁸⁵

I should note that in a few places writers of the vernacular tracts sometimes look to other non-Christian images with which to associate their opponents. At one point in *Tractatus de Pseudo-freris*, the writer compares friars to Islam, or more accurately the late medieval Christian understanding of Islam, considered a heresy rather than a competing monotheistic religion. Friars represent Christian sects above “cristis secte” and therefore should be despised. The “secte of macamethe,” like the friars, “takiþ meche of cristis secte, but it varieþ in som rewele & in cloþis & in patroun, & so don sectis of oure newe ordris, & of boþe þise prophecieþ poul.”⁸⁶ A related term to Muhammad appears in the tract *Of Prelates* in which the author condemns prelates who compel all curates to arm themselves for actual war. He describes this coercion as “mahoundis obedience” which is in concert with “þe kyngis power to make hem redi wiþ armure to werre iolily aþenst cristene men.”⁸⁷ But on the whole, however, lollards scarcely employ non-Jewish enemies of Christ when compared with images of Jews and Judaism. The primary reason likely has to do with the scriptures themselves: the New Testament and the Gospels just simply do not contain images of non-Jews from which to draw unlike images of Jews and Judaism.

Other images of Jews and Judaism appear in Wycliffite vernacular texts in addition to Pharisees although Pharisees seem to dominate in lollard discourse. In the

⁸⁵ Ibid., 311-312.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 301.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 99-100.

tract *Of Confession*, the writer argues from his interpretation of scripture that a Christian does not need to confess to a priest privately since Christ did not require it nor did the apostles. That requirement only came during the time of Pope Innocent “whenne þe fend was loused” and confession to a priest became a papal decree; scripture records in Acts 2.41, however, that three thousand “turned in oon daye from Iewes fables to cristis lawe, & noon of hem was þus confessed to prestis.”⁸⁸ We see here the notion of scriptural authority over papal bull: in the writer’s view, the church cannot justify compelling Christians to confess to a priest because scripture does not command auricular confession. Although the papacy has ordered auricular confession, it could lead to sexual immorality or the priests who hear confession might be not be “propur prestus.”⁸⁹ Furthermore, the writer asks why benefices would even be needed for confessors since their ability to perform the papal duty should not be dependent on benefices at all. As for confession, in his view it can be done silently to God, for God “askiþ not of iche man to shriue him þus by voice of mouþe.”⁹⁰

We should note here that the author also introduces a contrast between the truth of *cristis lawe* and, by implication, the falsity of *Iewes fables*. The concept of fables appears in several other vernacular lollard tracts that negatively portray their opponents as teaching lies; here, fables refer to Judaism from which they converted. The identification of Jewish fables here might remind some lollard audiences about the falsity of fables in general, something lollard authors address in several other tracts. Fables appear, for example, in the tract *How the Office of the Curates is Ordained of God*: the writer, whose mission seeks to expose how curates fail to live up to their calling from God, condemns

⁸⁸ Ibid., 328.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 331.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 340.

them as false prophets because they teach “fals cronycelis & fablis to colour here worldly lif þerby, & leuen þe trewe gospel of ihū crist.”⁹¹ *Pseudo-freris* contains a similar charge: friars seem more interested in proving their legitimacy as an order through “talis byneþe bileeue” and papal bulls.⁹² *On the Leaven of Pharisees* contains indictments that members of religious orders teach fables, chronicles and lies instead of Christ’s gospel and commandments; the writer of *The Rule and Testament of St. Francis*, an English translation of the rule with commentary, condemns Franciscan friars for teaching “longe talis of fablis, or cronycelis” rather than such topics as the gospel, vices or virtues.⁹³ In the tract entitled *The Order of Priesthood*, the writer makes the same charge.⁹⁴ Lollard authors offer negative opinions of fables, whether fables or *Iewes fables*. But some writers utilize images of Jews and Judaism along with their condemnation of the preaching of fables as part of an overall polemical strategy.

In the tract *Of Prelates*, the writer attacks the notion of fables and those who support the preaching of fables. He condemns prelates who send “newe ypocrites to preche fablis & lesyngis & to flateren men in synne” and allow “goddis traitours” and “sathanas preschours” to teach and preach lies, chronicles and fables; he then charges high ecclesiastical officials with a litany of other errors and failings, including that they forbid *trewe men* from preaching the gospel.⁹⁵ The teaching of fables and forbidding lollards to preach the gospel freely comprise of only a few of the many defects of his opponents. To emphasize those defects further the writer associates his opponents with several images of Jews and Judaism. For example, in *Capitulum 8* he calls his opponents

⁹¹ Ibid., 153.

⁹² Ibid., 310.

⁹³ Ibid., 16, 50.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 175.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 73, 105.

“cayphas bischopis” in reference to ecclesiastical corruption, specifically in the context that refers to a bishop’s loss and subsequent lament for losing his annual ‘sin rent’ because a lower curate reformed himself.⁹⁶ Prelates also act in a worse manner towards Christ than the Jews did according to *Capitulum* 41: while the Jews crucified his body out of spite, prelates spiritually crucify Christ and openly sin against God’s commandments as attested by Chrysostom, Augustine and Bernard; therefore they “hereby dispisen hym more þan diden iewis nailynge crist on bodily cros.”⁹⁷ He also defends lollards against the charge that they slander bishops behind their backs: lollards do not slander but reprove them “bi charite & discrecion” in the same manner as Christ and his apostles “reproueden pharisees & heroude & heretikis in here absence.”⁹⁸ For the author of tract *Of Prelates*, fables, although not specifically in reference to Jews as in *Of Confession*, still reinforce a rhetorical pattern that includes images of Jews and Judaism: Caiaphas, the Jews who crucified Christ, the Pharisees and Herod. For him, fables and images of Jews and Judaism coincide in that they portray ecclesiastical authorities not only as violent, corrupt and false but also that they propagate lies and false teaching.

The author of the tract *Of Confession* does not do this explicitly. The notion of *Jewes fables* does characterize Judaism but only indirectly ties into the rhetorical pattern that includes other images of Jews and Judaism. For the author, *Jewes fables* seems much less effective than the image of the Pharisees. Thus, towards the end of the tract the writer exposes the corruption of the papacy with an image of the Pharisees in relation to the power the pope holds with the keys of heaven. While ignorant men take the image of

⁹⁶ Ibid., 72. The ‘sin rent’ was an annual fine for priestly and lay incontinence. See Herbert B. Workman, *John Wyclif: A study of the English Medieval Church, Volume 2* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), 117.

⁹⁷ *The English Works of Wyclif Hitherto Unprinted*, ed. F. D. Matthew, 104-105.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 101.

keys literally and thus erroneously, he argues that the “secounde errour in þis point is more perelouse in þe churche, for pharesees alargen her browes & gogelen fer fro goddis lawe; þei seyn þat þise keyes ben goostly wittis & power, ʒyuen to hem to bynde & assoile men aftur þe witt appropriid to hem; and hereby þe fend feyneþ oft bi his viker antecrist many errours in þe churche, & doþe myche harme to foolis.”⁹⁹ Here the writer ascribes the term *pharesees* to the pope because like the Pharisees of Matthew 23 who close off the kingdom of heaven, the pope does the same thing through his position to either bind or absolve on earth as the devil’s *viker antecrist*. Although fools have been harmed by this, lollards of course know better: it is Christ who “appropriþ to himself to qwiken dede men gostly, & to make hem stonde in grace.”¹⁰⁰

If Pharisees and Antichrist were not strong enough, other lollard writers found ways to condemn their opponents just as severely. The tract *The Order of Priesthood*, for example, includes this accusation: priests who extract payment to perform the Mass are worse than Judas who sold Christ’s body for money.¹⁰¹ The writer transfers the image of Judas, the principle traitor to Christ and the embodiment of Jewish criminality, to priests who profit from the sacrament of the altar. He condemns new forms of piety, especially the “grete crynge & ioly chauntynge þat stireþ men & women to daunsynge” and connects these acts of piety to what Christ said to the Pharisees, “þis peple honoureþ me wiþ lippis but here herte is fer fro me, þei worschipe me wiþ-ouen cause, techynge lore & comaundementis of men.”¹⁰² Astute lollard audiences would recognize the gospel references and the implicit reference to the Pharisees. True piety, therefore, does not

⁹⁹ Ibid., 341; *browes*, from *brewis*, bread soaked in boiling fat usually with meat; *gogelen*, look aside.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 344.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 167.

¹⁰² Ibid., 169; see Matthew 15, Mark 7.

comprise of chanting or holy crying or *comaumentis of men* but to “kunne & kepe & teche cristis gospel.”¹⁰³

One lollard treatise, *The Pater Noster*, reflects a typical didactic message to the faithful much like a related and shorter text on the same subject.¹⁰⁴ But the longer treatise contains polemical statements including its conclusion which involves images of Jews and Judaism. Although the writer seems primarily concerned with the instruction of his audience he inserts criticisms of his religious opponents from time to time. After the writer justifies English translation of the scriptures, he comments on the seven petitions that comprise of the Pater Noster.

For the petition in reference to the holiness of God’s name, the writer instructs his audience that their souls be “rueled by brennyng love after Cristes lawe.”¹⁰⁵ He then calls for the repentance of a whole host of individuals who he calls “lymes of þe fende,” to include proud clerks, those who practice simony, sellers of pardons and indulgences, false lawyers, wicked jurors, those who practice lechery, gluttons, backbiters and those who pursue God’s true servants, and includes Christ’s statement in Matthew 7.21.¹⁰⁶ In the petition about daily bread, the writer bids his audience to be mindful of their neighbor’s physical needs to guard against covetousness. But bread also represents God’s word which nourishes the soul. He beseeches his audience to pray that if the negligence “of oure byschopes and prelatz, and oþer false techers þat beþ in holy Churche, þe truþe of Godes word be nouzt ysowe in þe peple, praye we Jesus Crist byschepe of our soule,

¹⁰³ Ibid., 169.

¹⁰⁴ *Select English Works of John Wyclif, Volume III*, ed. Thomas Arnold, 93-110. The shorter treatise is from MS. Bodl. 789; the longer, more extensive treatise is from MS. Harl. 2398.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 102.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 103; *lymes*, limbs. The quote in reference to Matthew 7.21 reads, “And þerfor seyþ Crist in his gospel, *Nouzt every man þat seyþ to me, Lord, Lord, schal entre into þe kingdom of hevenes, bot he þat doþ þe wil of my fader schal entre into þe kingdom of hevenes.*”

þat he ordeyne prechours in þe peple to warne hem of synne, and telle hem þe truþe of God.”¹⁰⁷ Clearly, the ecclesiastical establishment has no such individuals; lollards, however, would certainly warn the people of their sin and tell them the truth from the scriptures which marks *trewe men* from those of the traditional clergy.

The writer, however, reserves his strongest polemic for the last petition about the deliverance from evil. He encourages his audience to pray that God would deliver them not only from the evil that could potentially corrupt them but from the pain caused by the sins of wicked men. He divides the consequences of sin into five types of pain: the pain suffered by Christ for man’s sin, the pain of damnation, the pain that Christ’s followers endure to purge them individually of sin, the pain endured by others to show that God hates sin and the pain that comes to wicked men to punish them for their sins. Of all the sins one could commit, the writer lists blasphemy against the Holy Ghost as the worst, committed by those in rebellion against God. Therefore, he argues, a man who rebels against God also rebels against Christ’s teaching, “and þus, as Seynt Poul seyþ, he is accursed of God.”¹⁰⁸ And those who attempt to undermine the propagation of Christ’s teaching resist Christ himself. He illustrates his point with an association between those who resist true preachers, no doubt ecclesiastical opponents, and the Jews who resisted Christ:

And þerefore seyde Crist to þe Jewes þat were contrarie to his lore, and pursued him for truþe, þat þey scholde deye in here synnes. And so þes men þat contrarieþ to þe gospel and to þe epistle, and wolde lette delay] it to be ypreched, and pursuwe þe trewe telleres þerof, loveþ nouȝt Crist, and þus schulle deye in here synne, bit yf þey amende hem whyle þey haveþ tyme.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 106.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 109.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 109.

The image of Jewish resistance to Christ serves as a powerful illustration most late medieval Christians could understand; the identity of “þes men” to which the author alludes would need further explanation. But before he reveals the identity of his opponents he finds it necessary to describe the different groups of Jews who lived during the time of Christ, namely the scribes and the Pharisees, and their reaction to Christ and their role in Christ’s death:

Wel we wyteþ þat þe scribes and þe Pharyseus and þe princes of þe prestis, in Jesus Cristes tyme, were more contrarious to his lore þan were opere commune peple; for þorghe entyssng of hem þe peple cryde, Do him on þe croos. Þe scribes were wyse men of þe lawe, and also þey were þe clergie of þe Jewes. Þe Phariseus were men of religioun, þat made customs, and kepte hem for lawe; and þus þey sette more by here laws þat þey hadde maade, þan þey dude by þe lawe þat God gaf to hem and to þe peple, þat was sufficient to be reuled by. Bot, under colour of perfeccioun, þey were departed in customs, in cloþyngis, and in many oþer doyngis fro þe commune peple, as þe maner of religious is nowē.¹¹⁰

Although the scribes, Pharisees and the high priests resisted Christ more vigorously and incited the people to condemn him to the cross, the writer identifies the Pharisees in the most negative terms. He makes no further comment about the high priests; the scribes, although they resisted Christ’s teaching, were nevertheless wise men of the law who fulfilled their calling as priests of the Jews. The Pharisees, however, were not even faithful to the law they were given. It is on this point that the writer associates the Pharisees with friars. Just as the Pharisees departed from the law through their customs, their different dress and their actions so do members of religious orders. He then explains that the Pharisees were the hypocrites “most contrarie” to Christ and the most influential among the people, which was why Christ condemned them eight times in scripture because they broke God’s commandments for their “feynede lawes.”¹¹¹ He then

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 109-110; *wyteþ*, blame; *þorghe*, through.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 110; the writer is alluding to Christ’s eight *woes* from Matthew 23.

beseches his audience to consider who reflects a similar condition to the Pharisees.

“Byholde now wel þese condiciouns,” he writes, “and loke where men doþ after hem oþer worse, and so þou schalt yknowe þe kynreden of þe Phariseus.”¹¹² He closes his treatise with how members of religious orders resemble the Pharisees:

And þes fayners of holynesse pursue Crist in his membres, as þe Phariseus pursued Crist bodilyche. And yf þey seye þat God is here fader, and his lawe þey kepe and here reule boþe, understonde þat Phariseus breke þe lawe þat God 3af to hem and to þe peple, for here feynede reule þat hy hemeself ordeynede. And þus, yf þes ypocrites seyþ þat þei kepeþ here reule and Godes lawe boþe, byholde here dedis. For þe Jewes seyde to Jesus Crist, þat God was here fader; bot Crist answerede hem aȝen, þat yf God hadde be here fader, þey scholde have yloved him. And yf þes were trewe Cristene men, þey scholde nouȝt pursue Cristes membres for prechyng of þe gospel. . . Praye we þerfore herteliche our Fader, þat he delyvere ous from yvel of Phariseis, þat is synne aȝens þe Holy Gost, and ȝyf ous grace to love his lore in herte, and to werche þerafter in dede, þat we may come to him in blysse, and wonye wiþ him in joye wiþoute eny ende.¹¹³

Thus, the writer employs a polemic that intentionally merges the image of Jewish Pharisees from the New Testament with friars in terms of departing from the law God has given, blaspheming the Holy Ghost and persecuting the true followers of Christ. Nor has the *yvel of Phariseis* abated. What began as didactic message about the Pater Noster ends with a polemic that reveals a struggle for truth in the face of persecution from a new sect of Pharisees; the lollard writer claims to represent true religion in the face of corruption and he exhorts his followers to love Christ’s teaching both in their hearts and through their deeds.

In certain texts, lollard polemicists resort to the refrain *heretic* to describe their opponents. These refrains at times stand alone as a simple form of condemnation but on other occasions the word *heretic* intermingles with images of Jews and Judaism. *The Grete Sentence of Curs Expounded*, a late fourteenth century controversial tract, consists

¹¹² Ibid., 110.

¹¹³ Ibid., 110.

of a wide array of images that illustrate or associate ecclesiastical opponents with anti-Christian images, including heretics and Jews.¹¹⁴ The references to heretics and heresy directed at ecclesiastical opponents appear in the tract throughout. The writer defines heresy as “errour meyntened aʒenst holy writ” and points out that clerics who live worldly lives full of pride, pomp, covetousness and idleness pertaining to spiritual work live against scripture and thus exemplify “heretikis and cursed Anticristis.”¹¹⁵ Worldly priests, who only believe that the Christian mission to save souls comes from the pope or prelate through a preaching license, do not understand scripture’s mandate to preach the gospel according to Saint Paul, and therefore they “ben cursed heretikis... as Judas was.”¹¹⁶ In the face of such opposition, the writer defends the work of “pore prestis” who endure hardship, imprisonment and slander as heretics while they authentically represent Christ’s life and teaching, work to preserve the king’s authority and save souls “aʒenst Anticristis tirauntrie, and ypocrisie of his weiward disciplis” who persecute without excuse.¹¹⁷

The writer’s condemnation of worldly clerics also extends to their profligate lifestyle at the expense of the poor. He charges them with “wasten pore mennus liflode in grete festis of riche men, and robis and fees of men of lawe, and herboryng riche lordis, not for charite” but for temporal gain. His use of the image of Judas reinforces his argument: just “as Judas staał þe money ʒoven to Crist and his disciplis to lyve þerby, so

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 267-338. Arnold argues that 1383 is a likely date since it appears that Despenser’s war in Flanders is actually occurring.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 271.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 271-272.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 272-273.

þes worldly clerkis and religiouse taken huge noubre of temperal goodis undir colour of almsdede and hospitalite, and stelen þes goodis of pore men” and other such vanities.¹¹⁸

One of the writer’s primary condemnations relates to simony and its various manifestations as they pertain to the sacraments. In his view, priests exact extortive fees for the sacrament of ordination and charge excessive fees for the sacrament of matrimony. In regard to the latter, he describes the church that practices “þis olde roton synne” not as a holy one but one filled with “Anticristis clerkis” and a “synagoge of Sathanas.”¹¹⁹ He also draws attention to the Mass. He condemns not the Mass itself but the practice of priests who perform the Mass for a fee, not unlike the charge we find in *The Order of Priesthood*. But he does not omit the Wycliffite notion that priests performing the Mass should live in holiness. The lollard demand for priestly holiness becomes clear when he excoriates his opponents as worse than Judas and the Jews:

And eche prest deme wisly himself, whi he seiþ his masse, and in what life; for zif þei ben not in clene lif, charite, and devocion, but in pride, coveitise, lecherie, envye, glotonye, or oþere grete synnes, þei dispisen God ful gretly, and as moche as in hem þei slen him, and don hym more dispite and vileyne þan diden Judas Scrioth and Jewis, þat hailed him on þe croos, and leiden him in a cold stone.¹²⁰

The reference to Judas and the Jews provides an illustrative reference point for his audience: after all, who could really be worse than Judas and the Jews who slew Christ? He then makes reference to John Chrysostom and Bede, followed by Augustine, which leads him to correlate his opponents with the Jews:

And Seynt Austyn seiþ, whanne Cristene men trespassen, and don more dispit to God, whenne þei dispisen him bi pride, coveitise, and fals swerynge, þan þe Jewis

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 276-277.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 284-285.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 287.

þat naileden him on þe croos; and namely þes heretikis, bi sicke symonye as is bifore seid, for all symonyentis ben worþi to be forsaken of alle trewe men.¹²¹

Here it is important to point out that the writer enlist Augustine to condemn church opponents; Augustine only refers to the seriousness of Christians who sin but the writer extends his condemnation to include the clergy and in particular the sin of simony. He repeats that association between Jew and heretic again when he charges that priests because of their wickedness defile the Eucharist simply when they ingest the consecrated Host. While the Jews certainly “suffriden Crist to be leid in a clene stoon after his deef . . . þes viciouse prestis, ful of pride coveitise and heresie, putten his bodi in here soule, þat is foulere a þousand fold þan ony stynkyng privey in erþe.”¹²²

When it comes to the issue of the privilege of the right of sanctuary for thieves and murderers the author chastises the practice in the harshest of terms. The privilege certain churches have “is opyn heresie” that

þes proude worldly clrekis wolen coste and fiȝtte to meyntene it forþ . . . but for to meyntene privylegie of Cristis gospel . . . wolen þei not coste a ferþing, but spende many þousand ound to make it heresie, and . . . prisone and brenne all men þat techen trewely þe gospel, and þe pore lif of Crist and his postlis.¹²³

This privilege represents nothing but slander of the holy church which is the bride of Christ. Not only does the practice permit robbery and promote hypocrisy but it “sclaundren holy Chirche wiþ þe cursede dedis of Anticristis chirche and synagoge of Sathanas.”¹²⁴

The image of the synagogue of Satan presents a stark contrast between the church of *trewe men* and the traditional church. For lollards the true church is the spouse of

¹²¹ Ibid., 287. It is not clear which Augustinian text the writer cites. The first statement refers to Augustine but the second ‘and namely þes heretikis...’ represents the author’s own argument against the clergy.

¹²² Ibid., 288.

¹²³ Ibid., 294.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 294.

Christ and reflects holiness among its members, far different from the corruption of the synagogue of Satan. The image of the synagogue of Satan appears again to intensify the contrast between the holy and the profane, this time as it relates to the attainment of lands and titles by the church. The author condemns “luciferis heretikis” who seek lands and titles and “wasten hem in glotonye, lecherie, and worldly vanyte” and thus “þei drawn þes lordischipis fro þe comynte of Cristene men, þat is holy Chirche, and murþeren hem in a litel convent of Sathanas synagoge...”¹²⁵

The author employs other images of Jews and Judaism to address ecclesiastical law and persecution. He argues that ecclesiastical law empowers the religious clergy to oppress Christendom worse than the Jews oppressed Christ and his apostles; as for persecution, wicked men of the traditional church who persecute *trewe men* “dispisen God more þan þe Jewis þat naileden him on þe cross.”¹²⁶ Those issues of ecclesiastical law and persecution, amplified through images of Jews and Judaism, serve his audience more than mere vitriolic condemnation of the clergy: the images of the Jews and their connection to church officials who persecute lollards immediately situates the lollard community with Christ and his suffering. Implied here is an exhortation to endure as Christ did in the face of his Jewish tormentors even if ecclesiastical authorities are worse.

In the tract *Fifty Heresies and Errors of Friars*, images of Jews and Judaism appear throughout as well. Since the pope has confirmed the establishment of religious orders, “he is a devel, as þo gospel seis of Judas.”¹²⁷ Friars resemble Pharisees in that both of them seek out converts: the former induces parents to give up their children to the order while Christ condemned the latter who sought converts and thus “maken hym

¹²⁵ Ibid., 302-303.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 309, 321.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 367.

double more a childe of helle.”¹²⁸ As in other lollard tracts, the writer addresses the issue of fraudulent begging. Those who can “beste robbe þo pore puple by fals beggyng and oþer disseytis, shal have þis Judas offis.”¹²⁹ At one point the writer recalls how Christ cleansed the temple in Jerusalem in relation to his condemnation on how friars and their monastic establishments drain offerings of the people and thus overthrow the local parish church. For the writer, true religion involves prayer in “spirit and treuthe” rather than in monastic houses; he condemns the monastic system with an allusion to how Christ “ordeyned þo temple of Jerusalem schulde be destried, for synne done þerinne.”¹³⁰ The figure of Judas appears again in the tract in relation to the issue of money: “Freris also ben Scarioths children, bitrayinge trew men of þo gospel, and so Crist, for money.”

The Lanterne of Liȝt, probably composed in the second decade of the fifteenth century but survived into the sixteenth century, also includes references to Jews as part of a polemical strategy against ecclesiastical opponents.¹³¹ In *Capitulum VII*, the author discusses the nature of the material church and specifically correlates religious orders with the sects of the Jews during the time of Christ:

God plauntid neuere þise newe sectis in neiþir of hise lawis / neiþir aproued suche manere of lijf. For Crist in his lyuyng / pullid hem vp bi þe rootis. Þat weren in hise daies as Esses, Saduseis & Pharisees & dampned her ordinaunce & seide whanne þei grewe aȝen in mounkis, chanouns & freris þat þei schulde be drawnen vp.¹³²

Since Christ eradicated the sects of Jews during his time, and “pulled them up by the roots,” religious orders represent illegitimate sects of the church. But not only are they

¹²⁸ Ibid., 373-374.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 376.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 380.

¹³¹ Lilian M. Swinburn, *The Lanterne of Liȝt* (London: EETS, Oxford University Press, 1917); for dating and survival of the text, see Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1984), 221; Anne Hudson, *Lollards and Their Books* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1985), 185n4; 235-236; Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 17.

¹³² *Lanterne*, 39.

illegitimate because of the work of Christ, they are also illegitimate because they persecute Lollards. He compares these orders to scribes and Pharisees who pursued the righteous blood of the faithful. Religious orders “make 3e schrynes to seyntis” and yet draw, hang and burn those “þat holden þe weie of Crist.”¹³³ He then describes the crucifixion of Christ overseen by the Pharisees and their leaders and compares that persecution with the persecution Lollards now endure: “So þise sectis goon biforn to smyte þe peple wiþ her tung...”¹³⁴

We have examined several vernacular tracts that not only promote a certain lollard piety, based on the scriptures, but evidence of a polemical strategy that delegitimizes, undermines and condemns the church and its clergy through images of Jews and Judaism. The lollard struggle for orthodoxy necessitated a sharp demarcation from a church thought to be unholy and images of Jews and Judaism provided audiences, with scriptural clarity, example of those who were of Christ and those who were not. If one of the hallmarks of lollard orthodoxy was to obey God’s commandments and live a life devoid of worldly pleasure and temporal wealth, the rhetoric involving Jews and Judaism assisted in promoting that goal since lollard audiences would clearly be able to identify the hypocrites in their midst. They would be able to, through these images, understand why they were being persecuted by the church: after all, Christ was persecuted by the scribes and Pharisees so therefore it follows that *trewen men* will have to undergo persecution from these *new Pharisees*. Vernacular tracts, however, only comprise of one of the sources of the rhetorical pattern and polemic strategy that I have explained. We now turn to lollard sermon material.

¹³³ Ibid., 43.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 43.

III

Images of Jews and Judaism appear throughout Wycliffite sermons, primarily because many of them expound on passages from the four Gospels and images of Jews and Judaism populate those scriptural passages. Most of the sermons that make references to the Jews often portray them in negative terms as hostile opponents to Christ and his teaching, much like other late medieval Christian texts. But lollards go farther: they use those images to frame polemical attacks on members of the traditional church in a similar pattern that we find in vernacular tracts or trial testimony. The extensive record of Wycliffite sermon material allows us to examine several associations between the church and its representatives and images of Jews and Judaism.

One sermon on Matthew 27 for Palm Sunday describes how the leaders of the Jewish priesthood along with the Pharisees went to Pontius Pilate to condemn Christ to the cross.¹³⁵ The preacher describes these two groups as “hiȝe prestis of þe temple and þes religiows” who feared how Christ’s fame and stature grew among the people.¹³⁶ Immediately, however, the preacher connects these *two folc* to his late medieval opponents: “And certis as þese two maner of folc diden Crist to deþe, so þei be now cheueteynes to destruyen his lawe, for þei letten þat þei may þe trewþe of þe gospel; and no wondur is, for þei in þeir lyuyng reuersen þe lif of Crist and ben weddide to contrarie lif.”¹³⁷ Since the traditional clergy behave in a similar manner against the gospel as the temple priesthood and the Pharisees did against Christ, the preacher explains that the

¹³⁵ Anne Hudson, ed., *English Wycliffite Sermons, Volume I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 424-428.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 424.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 424; *cheueteyne*, the head or leader of a religious group.

gospel condemns them “as heretikes and false prophetus” and that they “dreden þat þer gyle by þis schulde be knowe.”¹³⁸

The preacher then makes another attack on the clergy in reference to verses 62-65 when the temple priesthood and the Pharisees “aftyr þei hadden kylt Crist” went to Pilate to have the tomb guarded.¹³⁹ Curiously, the author places the blame of the crucifixion on the Jews, a departure from lollard Bibles which identify Christ’s tormentors as “knyztis of the iustice” or “knyztis of the president” and not the Jews; the *iustice* or *president* in this case refers Pontius Pilate according to Matthew 27.2.¹⁴⁰ One reason the author chooses to add to the text here might simply be that it reflects the common assumption among late medieval Christians that the Jews killed Christ. But here we have something else: a portrait of a powerless temporal lord who simply does the bidding of a manipulative priesthood bent on violence towards Christ. This explains why the author inserts a comment before Pilate tells the Jews to guard the tomb themselves: “And þis *pagent* pleyen þei þat hoyden þe trewþe of Godis lawe.”¹⁴¹

Pilate’s characterization provides an opportunity for the author to address how secular authorities are manipulated into enforcing heresy laws. The images of the temple priesthood and the Pharisees are used to explain the violent behavior of the church authorities. Secular authorities simply enforce the laws of the church and pursue supposed heretics; their obedience has devastating effects: “by such execucion of false

¹³⁸ Ibid., 424.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 425.

¹⁴⁰ *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments, with Apocryphal Books, in the Earliest English Versions made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and His Followers*, vol. IV, eds. Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850), 78, 80.

¹⁴¹ Hudson, ed., *English Wycliffite Sermons, Volume I*, 425; Hudson and Graden, eds., *English Wycliffite Sermons, Volume V*, 300; *pagyn*, *pagent*; *þis pagyn pleyen þei*: they practice this deceit.

prelatis and frerus is Goddis lawe qwenchid and anticristes arerud.”¹⁴² The author suggests that if secular authorities “passedon Pilate in þis poynt” and knew “Godis lawe in þer modyr tonge” they would realize that the church is pursuing *true men*; instead it remains obscured in Latin and “owr hy3e preestis and oure newe religiows...make statutes stable as a stoon, and geton graunt of knytes to confermen hem.”¹⁴³ In a gasp of exacerbation the preacher cries out, “O Crist! þi lawe is hyd 3eet; whanne wolt þow sende þin aungel to remoue þis stoon and schewe þi trewþe to þi folc?”¹⁴⁴

Among the ferial Gospel sermons, *Sermo 32* provides clear evidence of an association between the scribes and Pharisees of Matthew 23 and ecclesiastical authorities.¹⁴⁵ In that sermon the preacher reminds his audience how “Crist reprouyd þe pride and falsed of the scribis and of pharisees, þat many weyes bilgilden þe puple” and explains that the scribes were the doctors of the Jews but lived more “secularly þanne lyuen þese pharisees” but both “chalengiden to be maystris and reule þe puple as Moyses dide.”¹⁴⁶ But then the preacher confronts the pope and associates him with the scribes and Pharisees: for just as the “pope seiþ nou þat he is Cristis viker in erþe, so þes seyden þat þei hadden Moyses power and weren proude of þis staat.”¹⁴⁷ He then provides a highly polemical caveat. In view of the pope, the scribes and Pharisees “weren lesse yuel than is the pope in time of grace” and that such vicars “wexen wrse for there pride and coueytise...”¹⁴⁸ The preacher frames the remainder of the sermon with this polemical

¹⁴² Ibid., 425.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 425-426.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 426.

¹⁴⁵ Anne Hudson, ed. *English Wycliffite Sermons, Volume III* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 88-91. In Hudson’s volume, the title as printed reads “Mathei 3” but clearly the context is from Matthew 23 as Hudson notes on clii.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 88.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 88.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 88.

strategy by referring to several statements from Christ's condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees from Matthew 23 and how they apply to clerical authorities.

The preacher first addresses clerical hypocrisy. Just as Christ warned his disciples not to imitate the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, the preacher explains that they “spaken þe treuþe of þe lawe, but þei practisden it amys” and that “nou oure prelatiſ ben so blynde þat þei speken and don amys

and þe puple ſhal not do aftir þer wordiſ, for þei erren fro Goddiſ lawe and maken hem newe lawiſ, and þo þei ſpeken and techen. And þuſ for blyndeneſſe of þeſ prelatiſ þei ſynnen boþe in word and dede more þan þeſ folc diden aftir Moysiſ; for popiſ ben ferþere fro Criſt þan þeſe folc weren fro Moysiſ, and mych more falſly ben Criſtiſ vikeret boþe in ſynne of word and dede.¹⁴⁹

Here the preacher condemns the pope as *worse* than the *folc diden aftir Moyses*, that is, the scribes and Pharisees; this severe indictment against the traditional church hierarchy clearly would differentiate them, by implication, from lollard dissidents who do not sin in word and deed like their opponents.

Further denunciations go beyond the issue of hypocrisy to include how the sacrament of penance leads to covetousness in the form of indulgences. When Christ condemned the scribes and Pharisees for placing heavy burdens on the people that they were unwilling to carry themselves, according to Matthew 23.4, the preacher uses that image to expose greed: “and so don vikeret of Criſt today, for harde penaunſiſ þei putten on men which ſounnen þer lordchip; and coueytiſe aſ penaunſe þei putten aȝen reſound þat þei may not grounde bi lawe.”¹⁵⁰ Covetousness then has its own consequences: “and þuſ þei encroſon annuel rentiſ, aſ þei did wiþ þe reume of Englonde, and obbliſchiden it in

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 88-89.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 89.

nyne hundred mark to 3yue þe pope 3eer bi 3eer” and “þus þei my3ten encrese þer rentis bi sich penaunsis as þei wolden.”¹⁵¹

The most inventive attempt to condemn the clergy in the sermon involves the image of phylacteries worn by the scribes and Pharisees from Matthew 23.5. The sermon recalls how Christ condemned the scribes and Pharisees for doing deeds only to be noticed by people and their ostentatious display of large phylacteries and long prayer tassels. The preacher reminds the audience what phylacteries were: they “weren scrowis wiþ Goddis heestis, and taachid on þer left arm to haue þes heestis euer in mynde.”¹⁵² For the preacher, phylacteries represent something positive because they remind the wearer of God’s commandments, a surprising departure from the condemnatory tone of Matthew 23. But perhaps the author of the sermon understands the verse the way Christ intended: it is not the phylacteries themselves that Christ condemns but the ostentatious display of large ones as a form of pride. This nuance provides the preacher an avenue to condemn canon law as a departure from scriptural commandments. Thus, although the clergy resemble the scribes and Pharisees in terms of outward dress in that both wear “halewid cloþis” that reflect their orders, the clergy have abandoned phylacteries entirely:

But algatis men don wrse nou, for in stede of philateries men maken greet uolymys of newe lawis þat ben not Goddis comaundementis; and men ben nedid to use þes lawes boþe in doing and studying; and siþ þei may not alarge mennus wittis, but rapere maken þer wittis unable, þei neded men to leeue Goddis lawe, and so to leeue þe loue of God.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 89.

¹⁵² Ibid., 89.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 89-90.

The consequence of these new laws is damnation since the clergy insist that the people obey these ecclesiastical laws rather than God's commandments, a "foulere synne was neuere don fro þe bigynnyng of þe world."¹⁵⁴

The sermon ends with a condemnation of how the clergy seek status just as the scribes and Pharisees did, who "*louen first seetis at souperis, and first chayeres in synagogis, and gretingis in þe cheling, and be clepid maystris of men.*"¹⁵⁵ For the friars, the preacher argues that they "coueiten alle þes foure" despite Christ's commandment that only God should be called master and that there is one Father in heaven; he then condemns "abbotis and opere prelati of þe chirch" for the same sin since Christ "forfendide clepe to us sich fadris upon erþe."¹⁵⁶ He argues that these titles of the clergy should be abandoned, for "al þis heþene maner of wrchip þat is not grounded in Goddis lawe smacchiþ pride and shulde be left."¹⁵⁷

We should not miss the highly inflammatory rhetoric that appears in some lollard sermon material, namely statements that condemn the clergy or temporal authorities as worse than the Jews. In *Sermo 15* on Luke 9.57-62, for example, the preacher takes the opportunity to castigate friars and temporal lords who support them and promote Christ's religious order instead.¹⁵⁸ Although Christ and the apostles had no roofs over their heads, "here may we se hou oure newe religious uarien fro Crist, for þei han proper housing and godis in þer housing."¹⁵⁹ When an interlocutor approached Christ about burying their dead father, Christ responded to let the dead bury the dead and then exhorted him to

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 90.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 90; italics, Hudson; Matthew 23.6.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 91.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 91.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 36-38.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 37.

preach the kingdom of God. The preacher remarks that men of religious orders do not preach the kingdom of God at all and therefore “nou foolis and sinful men leden opere foolis into þe dich.”¹⁶⁰ But he encourages his audience that “siþ Cristis religioun is betere þan þes new ordris...Cristis ordere myzte ocupie eche man as myche as he myzte do, and no drede it myzte ocupie men betere þan þes newe ordris.”¹⁶¹ The preacher then exposes friars and the temporal authorities who might pursue those who serve in Christ’s order:

And 3if þes ordris pursuen trewe men, and inprisounnen þer oune briþeren for sich treuþe of þe gospel, þei ben wurse þan Heroude was. And in þis same dampnacion ben myzty men of þe world þat defenden þes newe ordris to do þes synnes, and opere mo; for whoeuere assentiþ on þis wise makip hym gilty wiþ þe doere. And þus Eroudis ipocrisie shulde be fled of men of þe world.¹⁶²

The Jewish image of Herod to which the author refers could be either the Herod of Matthew 2 who murdered the infants of Bethlehem or the Herod that had John the Baptist beheaded. Either way, the point of introducing Herod as a benchmark for villainy – and that religious orders are *worse* than him – serves the author’s polemical strategy. Secular lords should take heed too: God will condemn those who support the religious clergy who persecute *trewe men*.

One of these comparisons that does not fit the mold however appears in *Sermo 6* on John the Baptist from Luke 3.¹⁶³ The preacher explains that according to the scriptural passage when John began to preach, Tiberius was the emperor, Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was the lord of Galilee and other areas were divided between Herod’s brother Philip and Lysanias. In addition to these four secular leaders were “two

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 37.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 37-38.

¹⁶² Ibid., 38.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 15-16.

princis of prestis...Annas and Cayphas.”¹⁶⁴ The preacher then explains that John was not sent by Annas and Caiaphas but by God who ordained him; Annas and Caiaphas appear to have allowed John to fulfill his calling from God unimpeded. That leads the preacher to remark “And so it semep̄ to many men þat prelatis þat letten ‘trewe’ prestis to preche frely þe gospel ben wurse þan þes two bischopis of Iewis – summe bischopis ben glad of þes prestis, and summe been yuele enformed bi freris.”¹⁶⁵ Here the preacher exposes the absurdity of the claim that bishops who allow *trewe men* to preach unimpeded are worse than Annas and Caiaphas. He could have implied that the opposite is true: since *even* Annas and Caiaphas allowed John the Baptist to preach unimpeded, *as bad as they were*, what does that say about bishops who impede *trewe men* from preaching? But the preacher does not exploit it.

In *Sermo 8* on Mark 8, we find the images of the Pharisees and Herod to castigate both religious clergy and temporal lords.¹⁶⁶ In Mark 8, Christ feeds four thousand people miraculously, heals a blind man in Bethsaida and gives advice to his disciples regarding the Pharisees and Herod. The preacher reminds the audience what Christ told his disciples to do regarding the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Herod: flee from “*fro þe sourdow of pharisees and þe sourdow of Eroude...þat is clepid ipocrisie bi resound of properte if þing. For riȝt as sourdou infectiþ bred þat men shulden lyue wiþ, so ypocrisie fuyliþ good werk þat mannus soule shulde lyue wiþ.*”¹⁶⁷ The preacher then explains that the hypocrisy of both the Pharisees and Herod exist now, “for newe ordris bigilen þe puple” through false signs of holiness and temporal rulers “feynen holynesse in pursuyng

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 16.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 19-22.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 19-20; see Mark 8.15.

of trewe men.”¹⁶⁸ Both religious clergy and temporal lords work together, as seemingly Herod and the Pharisees did against Christ, not only to deceive but to persecute. Interlaced in these polemical statements, of course, the preacher calls his audience to flee hypocrisy, a hypocrisy exemplified by religious clergy and temporal lords that the scriptures confirm and attest through the images of the Pharisees and Herod.

One of the more imaginative rhetorical arguments involving the Jews appears in *Sermo 17* on Christ’s parable of the two sons and the vineyard from Matthew 21.¹⁶⁹ In this sermon the preacher reveals how the traditional clergy represent the second son in the parable, the Jews. The sermon contains both didactic and polemical elements. The passage relates a parable of a father who owns a vineyard and has two sons. He asks his first son to go work in the vineyard and he refuses, but afterwards repents and does the will of his father. The father then asks the second son to go work in the vineyard and he says that he will but disobeys his father. The preacher then explains that the father is God and the two sons represent the Jews and the heathen:

Þe heþene men be þe first sone, for þei weren bifore þe Iewis and also bifore Ebrewis...Goddis vynesceerd is holy chirche þat was fro þe bigynnyng of þe world...Þis first sone was first vntrewe, and seyde he wolde not serue to God, for he wolde not take bileue ne graunte in dede to be Goddis seruaunt. Þe toþer sone seyde he wolde, and dide in many patriarkis, but aftir þis firste sone was moued of God bi kindly skile to serue hym and lyue wel, as in Iob and Ietro, but largely whan heþene men token bi apostelis Cristis feiþ, and þanne þe toþer sone of þis fadir weren folc out of beileue. For, fro þat tyme þat prestis regnyden and killiden Crist for his treuþe, þei weren false to þis day and noyous to holy chirche. And þus bi iugement of þe Iewis Crist concludide hem schortly.¹⁷⁰

The image of the Jews here as the second son reflects a typical late medieval view: they were once the servants of God but when Christ came they killed him and thus suffered

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 20.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 41-43.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 42; some manuscripts read *softly* instead of *schortly*; *concludide*: i.e., refuted.

swift judgment. The heathen, however, convert in large numbers as a result of the work of Christ and the apostles. The preacher then frames the remainder of the sermon around the image of the two sons: secular men represent the first son and the clergy represent the second son. Both priests and clerics initially made the church “large and florischinge” but “nou ben þes two sones turnyd, for feiþ and good religoun stonden in seculer men, and in prestis ben wordis wiþoute good dede.”¹⁷¹ The preacher concludes that those who “knowen þe worldis stat seyen þat popis and cardinalis, bischops and religious ben most fer fro Cristis lif” and thus “þis parable of Crist dampneþ hem for her falsed.”¹⁷² The preacher then ends with a warning and exhortation that those who endeavor to serve Christ but turn away become “as false sones maken ussilf þe second sone” and so this parable “is needful to eche man heere.”¹⁷³ In other words, God forbid it that a servant of Christ become like the second son, like the Jews or the clergy.

Other images of Jews and Judaism appear among lollard sermons, especially as they relate to the religious. In the ferial sermon on Luke 17 entitled *‘Interrogatus Iesus a phariseis’* the preacher condemns religious orders and the pope and forecasts God’s day of judgment.¹⁷⁴ The author of this sermon does something peculiar when he includes the passage of scripture: he changes verse 20. When the Pharisees asked Christ when the kingdom of God will come according to Luke 17.20, all lollard Bibles read “The rewme of God cometh not with aspying.”¹⁷⁵ But the preacher changes the verse to read “*‘Goddis*

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 42.

¹⁷² Ibid., 43.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 43.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 53-55; i.e. *Sermo 21*.

¹⁷⁵ *The Holy Bible containing the Old and New Testaments, with Apocryphal Books, in the Earliest English Versions made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and His Followers*, vol. IV, eds. Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850), 205. There does not seem to be any version of a lollard Bible that renders this verse in an alternate manner.

rewme comeþ not wiþ keping of ceremonyes.”¹⁷⁶ The changing of the text to *ceremonyes* instead of *aspying* allows the author to condemn religious orders in reference to the religious orders of the Jews:

And þus þre ordris in Cristis tyme [unabled] hem to be of þis rewme, for bi keping of þer ordris þei leften keping of Goddis heestis. So myȝten bolde men seye to þes ordris þat ben today. For, as þer weren in Cristis tyme essay, sadusey and pharisey, so þer ben nowe in oure tyme freris and chanouns and monkis; and all þes þre destried Crist for bringing in of newe lawis, and for turning from his lawe, for þei token not wel Goddis word. And so it semeþ today...þus don alle þes newe ordris, and so myche þei faylen in Goddis lawe. And þus hordom of Goddis word is brouȝt in to mayntene freris.¹⁷⁷

After his initial condemnation of religious clergy through their association with the three Jewish sects, for the remainder of the sermon the preacher points out the hypocrisy of priests and the pope and cites lengthy portions of Luke 17 about God’s day of judgment. In light of God’s impending judgment, he exhorts his audience to keep Christ’s commandments, maintain one’s gaze upon the law of Christ, and dissuade anyone to fight for the pope since that would be a worldly cause in service of Antichrist.¹⁷⁸

In many ways this sermon reflects typical lollard themes: the condemnation of religious clergy regarding *newe lawes* at the expense of obeying God’s commandments, the hypocrisy of the traditional clergy and the association of the pope with Antichrist. The image of hypocrisy, addressed in the middle of the sermon, would likely be expected by an audience familiar with other lollard sermons or tracts: the mention of the Pharisees in the beginning of the sermon provides a scriptural basis to point out the hypocrisy of both the priesthood and the pope. One might recall the numerous *woes* against the scribes

¹⁷⁶ Hudson, ed. *English Wycliffite Sermons, Volume III*, 53, italics Hudson; see Gradon and Hudson, eds. *English Wycliffite Sermons, Volume V* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 299, note on line 7: the editors point out that the “English author has given the passage a polemical twist by his addition of the word ‘ceremonyes.’”

¹⁷⁷ Hudson, ed. *English Wycliffite Sermons, Volume III*, 53-54.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 54-55.

and Pharisees from Matthew 23, a popular scriptural passage often cited in lollard polemic. And the association of the pope with Antichrist needs little comment since it appears in numerous lollard texts and among those suspected of heresy.

What seems less typical, however, is the author's gloss of verse 20 to read *ceremonyes* instead of *aspye*, since scriptural integrity seems to be a hallmark among the lollards. It suggests that the author intended to condemn religious clergy from the outset specifically in reference to the Pharisees and other Jewish sects and to connect the two he sacrifices the text as written. He could have condemned the religious clergy on their own terms and simply argue that the religious clergy bring in new laws and forsake God's commandments, and chastise them for hypocrisy in the process. Certainly one need not reference the Jews to express anti-clerical sentiment. But images of Jews and Judaism illustrate so much with so little: the image of the Pharisee automatically communicates hypocrisy, opposition to Christ and ceremony over true faith and obedience, a subtext that lollard audiences would recognize immediately. The inclusion of Essenes and Sadducees, sects that do not even appear in Luke 17 at all, allows the author to attack specific groups of religious clergy in his midst. He sacrifices the text as written to make a polemical attack on the religious clergy; the image of Jews and Judaism provide a powerful amplifier for those criticisms.

These three sects of the Jews also appear in another sermon as well. In a sermon on Luke 14 the author reminds his audience of Christ's sacrificial call of discipleship which includes forsaking not only one's family but the denial one's own life or else "þei schal not come to heuene..."¹⁷⁹ He explains that the law of Christ calls Christians to love their own family members and their own lives less than Christ himself; members of

¹⁷⁹ Pamela Gradon, ed. *English Wycliffite Sermons, Volume II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 36.

religious orders, however, eschew this sacrificial call “for þei loue more þese newe ordres þan þei don rewle of þe gospel.”¹⁸⁰ The preacher then explains two parables that illustrate Christ’s teaching about counting the cost for following Christ and then cites Christ’s words from verse 33: “*Eche of 3ow þat renownsþ not to alle þingus þat he haþ may not be my disciple*” which refers to renouncing the devil, the world and one’s own flesh by loving God and the word.¹⁸¹ But this is not so for priests who love religious orders more than Christ’s law and thus fall into hypocrisy. The preacher explains how Christ dealt with the religious sects of his day: “And herfore Crist, to purge hys chirche, destruyede þese þre sectis, pharises and saduces and esses also” but now the devil “by þe lawe of antichrist” has established new sects “as monkys and chanownys and frerys, and money brawnches of hem.”¹⁸² The preacher points out that Christ calls his people to renounce such sects. The pericope of Luke 14.25-33 does not mention Pharisees, Sadducees or Essenes but it seems clear that including those images of Jews enhances the author’s condemnation of religious clergy: Christ came and destroyed them and by implication will destroy religious orders who represent Antichrist.

In addition, lollard sermon material correlates Jews and Judaism with the established church. In a sermon for “Fourth Sunday of Advent” about John the Baptist and the defense of *pore priests* we find correlations between the current priesthood and the Pharisees in the Gospels. The issue in this sermon is that church authorities, like the Pharisees who were afraid that John the Baptist was starting a “newe religioun” or a

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 38.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 40-41.

¹⁸² Ibid., 41.

“newe ordre,” fail to see that *pore priests* are serving Christ, just as the Pharisees failed to see that John was only serving Christ.¹⁸³

In another sermon called “Dominica tercia” inspired by Luke 15, the preacher writes about two parables wherein Christ communicates salvation and also to expose “both prelates and the religious” about their “pruyde and covetousness.” The writer then states:

The story of þis gospel tellith how *publicans and synful men weren comyng to Iesu* to heren his lore, and he treted hem graciously as a good lord. *But the scribes and Pharisees gruchchedon azen þis* and blasfemedon azen Crist, *and seyden he eet* with hem vnlawfully. And þis dede may fygure þyng þat fallyth now, siþ prelates as scribes and religious as pharisees gruchchen azen trewe prestes, membris of Crist...¹⁸⁴

We can see here that the homily seeks to expose the nature of those contending against *trewe prestes* and ends with expositions of the two parables. Like several other lollard texts the preacher demarcates and sharpens the boundaries between true religion and ecclesiastical corruption with images of Jews. This then allows *trewe prestes* to occupy a position of orthodoxy since the established church clearly has fallen into a state of decay, evidenced by its similarities with the Pharisees of old.

In the sermon known as the Egerton Sermon we find strong condemnations against ecclesiastical authorities because of persecution. The preacher speaks about persecution and suffering of *pore prestis* and clearly a rhetorical pattern emerges that involves images of Jews and Judaism:

And herefore þei pursuen wiþoute merci pore prestis, þat in lyuyng and word techen þe pouert of pore Crist and hise apostlis to be kept in al þe staat of þe clergie. And so as þe maliciouse bishops, Pharisees and scribis weren knytt togidir azens Crist þat prehide azens her coutise, and curside him and putte him out of

¹⁸³ *Lollard Sermons*, ed. Gloria Cigman (Oxford: Early English Text Society, Oxford University Press, 1989), 50-51.

¹⁸⁴ Anne Hudson, ed., *English Wycliffite Sermons, Volume I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 232.

her synagogis, and on al wise lettide him and hise apostlis to teche þe gospel, þe which techiþ prestis willful pouert, so bishops and religiouse, and kunninge men of þis mengid lawe pursuen vnmesurabli pore prestis þat suen Crist and hise apostlis in lyuyng and teching, and þat more maliciousli þan diden her felowis in þe oold lawe...And so as Caiaphas and hise compeers killiden Crist for drede of leesyng of her worldly good, so oure prelatis, her felowis and folowers, but wipoute mesure of more malice, killen Crist in hise pore membris þat techen þis conclusioun.¹⁸⁵

Here we have a correlation of how the opponents of Christ in the gospels persecuted Christ and his apostles with ecclesiastical authorities in England. But the preacher describes ecclesiastical authorities in hyperbolic terms as worse than the “malicious bishops, Pharisees and scribis” as well as Caiaphas. He describes prelates as pursuing lollards with *more malice* than Caiaphas “and hise compeers killiden Crist.” In several late medieval sources writers often describe how the Jews killed Christ out of malice. Here the preacher assigns *malice* not to the Jews but to *oure prelatis*.

But less hyperbolic sermons exist too. Two examples illustrate lollard criticism of avaricious clergy in reference to Jews and Judaism. In a sermon on Luke 16, the author cites verses 16-17 in which Christ teaches that no one can serve both God and wealth to the scorn of the Pharisees; he then condemns the traditional clergy: “and þus it woulde falle today of oure religious and oure clerkis, þe whiche ben 3ouyn to aueriss, for þey louen þes godis more þan opere.”¹⁸⁶ In another sermon on Luke 22, the figure of Judas appears in connection to traditional clergy. The preacher exhorts his audience to flee from it and “speciali prestis of Christ, for Iudas fel by þis synne and bitrayed Crist his

¹⁸⁵ *The Works of a Lollard Preacher: The Sermon Omnes Plantacio, the Tract Fundamentum Aliud Nemo Potest Ponere and the Tract De Oblacione Iugis Sacrificii*, ed. Anne Hudson (Oxford: EETS, Oxford University Press, 2001) 46, 48.

¹⁸⁶ Hudson, ed., *English Wycliffite Sermons, Volume III*, 266-267.

maystir...And al þe synne þat prestis don in þe offys þat Crist haþ 3ouyn hem comeþ of aueriss of hem, and þus þey ben his traytours as Iudas.”¹⁸⁷

Several ferial Gospel sermons include short, precise polemical gibes that involve images of Jews and Judaism in reference to the traditional clergy. In *Sermo 26* in the ferial cycle on Matthew 21, the author argues that since the “hye prestis wiþ scribis” allowed the little children in the temple to speak, “so þes bischopis and newe scribis letten to telle Goddis lawe.”¹⁸⁸ The implication is, of course, that if the bishops refuse to allow lollard preachers to preach God’s law freely they would be worse than the Jews of the temple. The description of friars as *newe scribis* connects them to the scribes of the temple whom lollard audiences would understand as adversaries of Christ. In *Sermo 27* on Matthew 12, the author associates the apostasy of the scribes and Pharisees with religious clergy. He explains that just as the scribes and Pharisees sought signs from Christ, miracles that ultimately prove unprofitable for faith, “þis apostasye trauelen alle þes newe ordris, as 3if þei wolden put uertu and religioun in þer cloþis; but Christ koude neuere putte þes þingis but in holy spiritis.”¹⁸⁹ A sermon on John 5 compares the Jews who did not understand who Christ was nor seek heaven with “men þat ben clepid holy chirche” who “taken wiþ a ful wille þe pope as viker of God” and “makip hem worldly wynnyng and lyue gloriously heere, and þat þei seken and not þer bliss.”¹⁹⁰ More sermons associate the Pharisees with religious clergy, such as *Sermo 40* on Matthew 15.¹⁹¹ In a sermon which largely includes much of John 9 which involves how the Jews sought miracles from Christ and describes the incredulity of the Pharisees when Christ

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 274.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 73.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 75.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 95.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 113-116.

heals a blind man, the preacher makes a closing remark that attacks the clergy: “Þis story semeþ opyn, but it techiþ trewe men hou þe pharisees today bileuen not in Cristis werkis, but denyen Goddis lawe for þer bilawis as þer sabot; for mankynde was borun blynde and saw not þe grace of God, but Crist by his manhed liȝtnyde it and made it se.”¹⁹² Since the Pharisees chided Christ and accused him of not keeping the Sabbath, the author describes how the religious clergy, since they deny God’s law, have their own regulations for *sabot* much like the Pharisees.

Among a few Sunday epistle sermons what emerges as the dominant image of Jews and Judaism involves the issue of the *olde lawe*. In a sermon on Galatians 4, the preacher explains that the gospel in Christ provides freedom from the law of the Old Testament and so “we schulde caste owt now cerymonyes of þe oolde lawe” because “so kepyng of þes cerymonyes schulde not laste wiþ þe blis of heuene.”¹⁹³ Earlier he explains that according to a passage in Isaiah 54, the prophecy fortells of a time when the heathen will come to faith and that “þis chirche, þat is nowe bareyne of children of God, schal haue moo gostly children þan þe chirche of Iewis þat now haþ spouse.”¹⁹⁴ With the advent of Christ that time arrived. He then explains that since Christians represent the children of free woman instead of Hagar, based on Paul’s allegorical interpretation of Genesis 21, so “schulde þis betture fredom be coueytud of cristene men.”¹⁹⁵ These contrasting images between bondage with ceremonies of the *oolde lawe* and freedom in Christ allows the preacher to turn his attention on the traditional church. But he goes further than perhaps expected, castigating the traditional church as being in a worse state

¹⁹² Ibid., 134-136.

¹⁹³ Anne Hudson, ed., *English Wycliffite Sermons, Volume I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 558.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 558.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 559.

than the bondage of Hagar and worse than the *oolde lawe* under the scribes and Pharisees. He explains that Antichrist “haþ more þrallud now þe chirche þon it was in þe oolde lawe” and “makup now newe lawis, and growndup hem not on God and mon; for mo cereymonyes be now browte in þan weron in þe oolde lawe, and more taryon men to come to heuene, þan dydon in þe oolde lawe tradicyons þat weron fowndone of scribis and pharisees.”¹⁹⁶ For the preacher, the ceremonies of Judaism do not apply to Christians now that Christ has come and therefore the church “schulde not...be bounden wiþ þat þraldam as it was furst, and specially siþ it lettup to renne swiftly to bliss of heuene...”¹⁹⁷ Unfortunately, the traditional church has gone even further than its predecessors in creating new ceremonies and laws that surpass the old law represented by Hagar and the Judaism of the scribes and Pharisees. Now Christians are “chullyd, now wiþ popis, and now wiþ byschopis, now wiþ cardynalis of popis, and now wiþ prelati vndur byschopis” and “anticrist chullup men to 3eelde hem to 3yuen hym money.”¹⁹⁸ The church, then, has not returned to the bondage of the old law under the scribes and the Pharisees but worse than the old law under the scribes and Pharisees.

The comparison of figures in the traditional church as being worse than an image of Jews and Judaism appears in a sermon on Hebrews 9 too.¹⁹⁹ But this sermon has a different tone towards Jews and Judaism than other examples found in lollard discourse. The author explains that in comparison to “emperouris buschopis” the “bischopis of þe oolde lawe weron bettore and more worþi...for þei seruydon and figuredon Crist by auctorite of God” but “emperor byschopis now seruon and figuron anticrist, and þer

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 559.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 558-559.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 559; *chullyd*, *chullup*, kick, chase about.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 562.

auctorite is takon of þe moste feend aʒenys Crist.”²⁰⁰ So even though Christ’s sacrifice has replaced the sacrificial rites of the old tabernacle and that Paul “techeþ in þis epistle þe excellence þat Crist hadde ouer byschopis of þe oolde lawe” the preacher considers them more worthy than the bishops of the traditional church.²⁰¹ In some ways this seems unsurprising: after all, the priesthood of the Old Testament was part of God’s ordinances despite the fact that their yearly sacrifices in the tabernacle would not result in heaven.²⁰² But the author attempts to make his comparison somewhat surprising in that even though the *bischopis of þe oolde lawe* could not be compared to “oure bischop Crist” they are more worthy than the bishops of the traditional church. Those bishops of the Jews who have been superceded by Christ and have ceased in their sacrifices, who no longer play any type of role in redemption whatsoever, are still more worthy of God than English bishops who serve Antichrist.

The sermons on the Sunday epistles include other examples where authors associate images of Jews and Judaism with the traditional church. The pattern appears in a sermon on 1 John 3 where just as religious clergy hate those who “speken Goddis lawe aʒenus hem” it should surprise no one since “þus hateden scribis and pharisees Crist.”²⁰³ And for any audience member confused about how the preacher views begging friars, he simply states they “ben not oure breþeren, but phasrisees.”²⁰⁴ In a sermon on 1 Corinthians 12 the author describes three ways *false men* curse Christ: through sinful deeds, calling Christ a false prophet “in herte and word...and curse hym bi vnbileue as

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 562.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 561-562; note: like most late medieval commentators on the Epistle of the Hebrews, Paul is considered the author of the epistle; today the authorship of the epistle is much less certain.

²⁰² Ibid., 562.

²⁰³ Ibid., 614.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 618.

diden Iewis long tyme” and to feign the name of Christ and hold the view that their own law is better than God’s law.²⁰⁵ The preacher then castigates the traditional clergy, for they are “ypocritis þat Crist hatip” the most, more than sinful men who do not bend their wills to God and the Jews who consider Christ a false prophet.²⁰⁶ The remainder of the sermon provides a rationale for this opprobrium towards the clergy.

CONCLUSION

Lollard authors amplified their invective against traditional religion and specific clerical figures through images of Jews and Judaism. It by no means characterizes even a majority of their polemic; the image of Antichrist appears far more frequently than images of Jews. But images of Jews and Judaism fortified radically negative opinions about the church and its clergy through re-fashioned examples from the scriptures and provided lollard audiences a clear vision between the *trew men* and the clergy, the true flock of Christ and the corrupt ecclesia and God and Antichrist. Persecution of lollard dissidents could be comprehensively explained through a simple reference to Caiaphas; the corruption of religious clergy needed little convincing once lollard audiences could see their resemblance to the Pharisees. And lollard rhetoric aimed to convince them of several other correlations from the scriptures: that the church was not only ruled by Antichrist but that it was a synagogue, or worse the synagogue of Satan; priests who charged money for the performance of the Mass were worse than Judas; the church’s ceremonies resembled the old law of the Jews.

Lollards who thought with Jews about traditional religion and its clergy found a radical set of images in which to differentiate themselves from their opponents. This no

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 644.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 644.

doubt helped lollards envision for themselves a purer orthodoxy and a more genuine Christian piety as they developed ways to apply scriptural texts not only for their own faith but also to explain what their opponents truly represented. It reinforced a lasting concept about the primacy and authority of the scriptures; it confirmed for them that what they read in the scriptures was true not only for themselves but for those arrayed against them. Images of Jews and Judaism helped convince dissidents that members of the church were not only corrupt but the way they practiced their faith was corrupt too. Lollardy did survive into the sixteenth century; one wonders if this rhetoric played a role in convincing dissidents never give in to the pressure from church and crown to ever seek to return to the church of Antichrist nor find fellowship among the scribes and Pharisees. Many years later, evangelicals of the sixteenth century would draw upon a very similar rhetorical pattern to develop a polemical strategy of their own in a campaign to reform the church. Many of them would reach back and appropriate lollard texts to develop new lines of attack against what they also viewed as a corrupt institution and even the synagogue of Satan. But lollards were not the only ones to employ images of Jews and Judaism to characterize and condemn their opponents.

Chapter 3

Thinking with Jews on and off Stage: Confronting Lollardy and the Struggle for Orthodoxy in Late Medieval England

The Church struggled for decades against lollardy after John Wyclif and his Oxford associates began writing and preaching heterodox opinions in the late 1370s and early 1380s. After Wyclif's death in 1384, lollardy gradually became a movement dominated by the laity and especially after the failed insurrection of 1414, although not exclusively.¹ Throughout the fifteenth century, ecclesiastical authorities mobilized the church, crown and commons to root out lollardy from the realm. They utilized several forms of propaganda to combat heresy, to include preaching, legal proclamations by secular and ecclesiastical authorities and public performances such as processions involving abjured heretics undergoing penance.²

Heresy trials sought to expose and hopefully restore those who held heretical opinions about various church doctrines and practices. A successful ecclesiastical intervention would result in the examinee's allegiance to orthodox teaching and condemnation of his or her heretical opinions, followed by a public demonstration of penance. As Ian Forrest points out, during public processions of penance spectators would be able to identify the heresy and the heretic through a public reading of their crimes and thus juxtapose heresy *vis-à-vis* orthodoxy in the venue of a public spectacle.

¹ Norman P. Tanner, ed., *Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428-1431* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), iv, 7, 25. The suspects under examination at Norwich from 1428-1431 were mostly lay examinees, but four of the sixty individuals charged with heresy were clergy.

² Ian Forrest, *The Detection of Heresy in Late Medieval England*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), 113. Forrest points out that the term *propaganda* should be defined in a neutral sense, one that does not connote "lies, deceit, cynicism, or malice, although the sense of aiming to mould public opinion is retained."

Spectators would also be reinforced with a sense of community as well as recognize ecclesiastical authority.³

Anti-heresy campaigns led by resolute, determined bishops to bring forth suspected heretics under examination were not the only methods the church employed to root out lollardy. In addition to sermons, defenders of traditional religion sought to expose and condemn heresy through other rhetorical mediums such as devotional literature, treatises and most creatively, drama. These rhetorical mediums sought to expose lollards not as the innocent, heroic dissidents who represent Christ more faithfully as *trewe men* but rather those who pose a dangerous threat and seek to destroy Christ, deny the doctrines of the church and teach erroneous ones of their own and sow discord and rebellion. At stake for defenders of the church was not merely the stature or reputation of an institution but the very realm itself and the truth of Christ as preserved by the church. The rhetorical responses to lollardy include authors who associate lollardy with images of Jews and Judaism as polemical retaliation to lollard polemic. But they refer to images of Jews and Judaism about lollardy not solely for polemical purposes. Images of Jews and Judaism not only expose lollard corruption and deviance but also didactically explain the implications of or proper response to the threat of lollardy or lollard opinions. And sometimes defenders of the church simply refer to images of Jews and Judaism to undermine lollard polemical attacks against traditional orthodoxy.

When writers employ images of Jews and Judaism for polemical purposes to confront lollardy they do not attempt to blur the lines between heretic and Jew to construct some sort of ambiguous, nefarious composite. Rather, they *think* with Jews and

³ Ibid., 137-142. Forrest argues that public processions of penance was one of the methods of propaganda utilized by ecclesiastical authorities in the years surrounding Oldcastle's rebellion but even afterwards.

Judaism about lollards and therefore accentuate lollard perfidy and their dangerous influence through associations with images of Jews, images that nearly all late medieval Christians viewed with varying degrees of hostility and disdain. For late medieval churchmen, Jews represent one thing and heretics another, and although both are considered enemies of the church and Christ himself, heretics did not by all accounts betray, torture and murder Christ. It is the Jews, not lollards, who appear at the foot of the cross in devotional material, sermons and drama. Writers who attack lollardy through images of Jews and Judaism do so by capitalizing on existing negative assumptions late medieval Christians had towards Jews and Judaism and directing those negative perceptions towards their intended polemical targets, the lollards.

In this chapter I will examine several late medieval texts that confront lollardy through images of Jews and Judaism as part of the campaign to fight heresy and promote orthodoxy. Those texts include brief examinations of late medieval macaronic and Middle English sermons, Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ* and other devotional literature and Reginald Pecock's lengthy anti-lollard treatise *The Repressor Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*. For much of the chapter, however, I will focus on the miracle play known as the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, which I argue should be considered one of the most creative attempts in the fifteenth century to expose and confront lollard error. This miracle play incorporates a Host-desecration narrative involving Jews to expose and confront lollard opinions about the Eucharist, specifically their denial of transubstantiation, all the while promoting orthodoxy: Eucharistic piety, confession, penance and the authority of the clergy and the church. The playwright confronts lollardy through a public spectacle and associates lollard denial of the Eucharist

with Jews on the stage who commit heinous sacrilege, who re-torture and kill the very embodiment of Christ. But the play ends with miracle, conversion and restoration. The Croxton play should not be considered some eccentric, even comic attempt to confront lollardy but a serious alternative to the other sincere attempts to confront lollardy we find in sermons, devotional literature, Reginald Pecock's *Repressor* and anti-heresy campaigns to bring suspects back into the fold.

It should be noted that late medieval churchmen do not seem to develop a widespread rhetorical strategy involving images of Jews and Judaism like their lollard opponents. While lollard writers frequently associate the clergy and the church with images of Jews and Judaism, defenders of traditional religion employ this strategy much less frequently. In a way, defenders of the church do not need to implicate their opponents through images of Jews and Judaism: the opprobrium of *heretic* and all that means both doctrinally and legally sufficiently condemns lollard opponents. Lollards, however, often resort to images of Jews and Judaism because they have little else in their rhetorical arsenal; images of Jews and Judaism allowed them to create a rhetorical strategy that went well beyond the typical anti-clericalism of the period. This does not suggest that lollard polemicists, who employed images of Jews and Judaism more frequently, had the upper hand against their opponents. Several defenders of the church employ arguments that not only seem much more sophisticated and nuanced than their lollard counterparts but in the case of the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, much more creative.

Most of the macaronic sermons in MS Bodley 649, dating from the first half of the fifteenth century, confront lollards.⁴ Images of Jews appear in the sermons, predominantly Old Testament illustrations for the audience's edification or warning rather than denunciation. Like many late medieval Christians, the preacher differentiates Old Testament Israelites like Moses, Elijah and Hezekiah from the Jews who lived during the time of Christ and thereafter. For example, in Sermo 11, which we will examine shortly, refers to the *Jews* as Israelites of the Old Testament, the people of God for that epoch in history with whom the church identifies as its spiritual heritage. Thus, we find a reference to Jews in Sermo 19 which explains that just as the accouterments of the Levitical priesthood "nourishes the body of man and makes it grow and keeps its members whole" so faith in the Trinity "increases the body of Christ, the Church, for where the Church once stood in a handful of Jews, now a great mass of people flows to her..."⁵ The *Jews* in these examples do not reflect the negative impressions we have for the *Jews* during the time of Christ. In Sermo 4, for example, the preacher describes those New Testament-era Jews as *false*, the implication that they do not resemble their forbearers: those "false Jews [who] falsely accused him, spit in his face, thoroughly beat and buffeted him..."⁶ And in Sermo 14, we find imagery that recalls scenes from Love's *Mirror*, Margery Kempe's visions and the passion narratives found in late medieval drama: "Our Lady...when she met with her beloved son outside the gate of Jerusalem

⁴ Patrick J. Horner, ed., *A Macaronic Sermon Collection From Late Medieval England: Oxford, MS Bodley 649*, trans. P. Horner (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2006). MS Bodley 649 contains a total of forty-five sermons, twenty-three of which comprise Horner's edition which will be discussed here. Of those twenty-three, twenty of them explicitly include condemnations or references to lollards or lollardy.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 452.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

with the cross on his back” saw “the spurning and the punching, the villainous hatred and hateful villainy that the Jews did to him...”⁷ The sermons also do not include hagiographical narratives of Jews that we find in Mirk’s *Festial*, probably due to the intended audience. One thing seems certain however: these homilies reveal an orthodox preacher who references Jews and Judaism as frequently as he confronts lollardy, although not necessarily in association with one another.⁸ But the manuscript contains some sermons wherein images of Jews and Judaism and anti-lollardy intersect in interesting ways.

In Sermon 11, *Videbant signa*, the preacher finds lessons from the experiences and eventual fall of the Jews in biblical history to illustrate the precarious position of England in relation to God’s favor. Here the preacher associates lollardy with images of Jews and Judaism to argue that the lollards have put England in relation to God similar to that enjoyed by Israel before its destruction. He begins with an image of the woman from Revelation 12 in all her splendor which eventually leads him to his main point: how the beauty of the human soul, crowned with the spectacular jewel of Christ himself, “is [now] eclipsed by the dark moon of worldly wealth” which “is the cause of our defeats in battle and of all the trouble in the kingdom.”⁹ In addition to avarice, the preacher confronts another problem in the realm which is responsible for “the starry light of faith” being withdrawn:

I pass over how maliciously the Lollards express their views about the faith, how many people they have blinded; it is widely known. But they have so perverted

⁷ Ibid., 376.

⁸ Ibid., 2-3. MS Bodley 649, according to Horner, was written by a single hand. Horner suggests that this collection represents “the efforts of one orthodox Catholic preacher” who defends the doctrines of the church and frequently condemns lollards.

⁹ Ibid., 296.

the true meaning of sacred scripture, they have so mixed faith with heresy and errors with truth, that the layman wavers in the faith and lives in great doubt.¹⁰

The preacher then explains the mystery of three signs of divine disfavor which draws from images associated with Jewish sacrifice to God from the Old Testament, “namely the wavering of the pillar, the quenching of the fire, and the stinking of the larder.” Thus, if God approved, the pillar of smoke would stand erect and not waver; likewise the fire would never be extinguished nor would the larder in the sanctuary give off a stench.¹¹

The preacher connects the first sign of vengeance upon the Jews, a wavering pillar of smoke, with the wavering faith of Christians in the realm:

But this firm column of faith which once rose up straight toward God, now wavers shamefully and is bent to the side. If you wish to know what is the cause of this, surely the accursed tornado of Lollardy. And Lollardy can reasonably be compared to a tornado...And in its whirling it does great damage on the earth and exposes men and beasts to great sicknesses. So it is with this accursed Lollardy: it is generated by diabolical suggestions within the cloud of pride, for out of great malice and deep pride it begins to contradict the teachings of the saints who were taught by the Holy Spirit...And just as the wavering of the column was to the Jews a clear sign of subsequent vengeance, so the wavering of the column of faith is a sign of future vengeance among us unless we change...¹²

The other two signs of divine disfavor include the sacrificial fire that barely burns in England, which represents a lack of charity, and the stench of the larder which the preacher uses to illustrate the stench of blood, namely murder.¹³ The preacher provides a summary warning to his audience, that just as the Jews suffered under divine judgment and “placed in eternal slavery” with their “honor overturned” and Jerusalem destroyed, so too will England suffer. The remainder of the sermon exhorts the audience to see the

¹⁰ Ibid., 296.

¹¹ Ibid., 302.

¹² Ibid, 302-304.

¹³ Ibid., 304-306.

signs of divine disfavor within the individual, and with those signs “our life can be amended and the kingdom saved.”¹⁴

For the preacher, the future of the kingdom is at stake. The example of the Jews and their subsequent judgment serve as a warning: infidelity will lead to God’s judgment, an infidelity he associates with greed, lack of charity, murder and lollardy. The preacher internalizes and appropriates the image of the Jews under judgment to instruct his audience to view lollardy as a sign of impending doom for the kingdom along with other sins. Whatever made the column of smoke waver for the Jews, which the preacher does not explain, lollardy makes the column of smoke in England waver too. Implied here, then, is an equivalency between whatever made Israel’s pillar waver and lollard perfidy, the latter who “contradict the teachings of the saints who were taught by the Holy Spirit.”

In Sermo 15, *Exiuit de templo*, the preacher exposes the culprits that have caused a national crisis for the church, the nobility and the commons. Inspired by the scene in John 2 in which Christ expels those who sold animals or exchanged money from the temple, the preacher associates the moneychangers with the lollards.¹⁵ This famous scene in the Fourth Gospel depicts Jews selling sacrificial animals in the temple to the bereavement and consternation of Christ. But the sermon writer brings this biblical episode to his contemporary audience. He asks, “Who are these moneychangers? Those who travel through the provinces sowing false doctrines” and who teach “men heresy and errors” and have “attempted to destroy the sacraments of the Church.”¹⁶ Just as some of the Jews polluted the temple with their greed and Christ condemned them, lollards pollute England with heresy and should be condemned likewise.

¹⁴ Ibid., 318.

¹⁵ Ibid., 396-417.

¹⁶ Ibid., 400.

Later in the sermon, the preacher describes a great pagan temple that was destroyed by the Emperor Theodosius and implicates the lollard “moneychangers” in England: “this great temple constructed by the devil is the synagogue of Satan, the church of the damned” and a “cursed temple.” But the king rose up and destroyed it, much like “our gracious king overturned the cursed temple,” and “in this way he conquered the rebels within the temple of the kingdom who rose against our lord and against his Christ.”¹⁷ This last statement certainly refers to the revolt in England led by Sir John Oldcastle, crushed by the forces of Henry V. The preacher illustrates the lollard *temple* not as a true church like lollards claim but the *synagogue of Satan*: perhaps the preacher recognizes that some lollards have characterized the church as a synagogue; here the preacher strikes back against that rhetoric with the image of the synagogue but specifically tied to Satan.

In addition to the sermons in MS Bodley 649, we do find a few Middle English sermons that confront heresy. The *Festial* mentions lollards in two of its sermons, *De festo sancte trinitatis sermo utilis* and *De festo corporis Christi sermo*.¹⁸ We do know that Mirk makes numerous references to Jews and Judaism but not in the context of a polemic against lollardy. For the sermon designated on the Feast of the Trinity, traditionally an occasion for preachers to condemn heresy, Mirk singles out the lollards, almost to the point that one could conclude that lollards held anti-trinitarian views since Mirk writes “Þe secunde skyl why þis fest was ordeynid is in confondyng of heretekys and to destoyen þe falce opynions þat þei heldyn aʒeynus þe Holy Trinite, os Lollerdes doth

¹⁷ Ibid., 414-416.

¹⁸ John Mirk, *Festial*, MS Cotton Claudius A. II. EETS 334, ed. Susan Powell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 150-160.

now.”¹⁹ The other sermon, for the Feast of Corpus Christi, condemns lollard opinions about images. Other than these two instances, the *Festial* does not address lollardy specifically or even heresy in general. We should not conclude then that Mirk wrote the entire *Festial* specifically to counter the lollard threat.²⁰ Mirk’s *Festial*, likely written in the closing decade of the fourteenth century although popular throughout the fifteenth century, was composed at the beginning of the lollard movement before it was officially condemned by Henry IV’s *De Heretico Comburendo* of 1401, Archbishop Arundel’s Constitutions a few years later or the Council of Constance’s explicit condemnation of Wyclif in the next decade.²¹ Mirk emphasizes devotion to an orthodoxy that, as far as he was aware, had very few serious rivals at the time of its composition. But the primary reason relates to the fact that the basis of his material comes from the *Legenda Aurea*, composed well before the onset of the lollard movement. Therefore, although Jews frequent his work, he does not associate lollardy with Jews and Judaism unlike a few of the sermons from MS Bodley 649, or a later Middle English sermon from MS. Royal 18 B xxiii which we shall examine below. As the fifteenth century began, the frequency of polemic increased and the defenders of traditional religion began to associate lollardy

¹⁹ Ibid., 151. For one explanation of what Mirk means here, see Alan Fletcher, “John Mirk and the Lollards,” *Medium Aevum* 56, vol. 2 (1987): 219. Fletcher explains that Mirk intends the Trinity to mean “orthodox belief in general, and by means of a steady verbal transition causes the expressions ‘the hye Trinite’ and ‘the faip of Holi Chirche’ to be made interchangeable.”

²⁰ For an argument that considers Mirk’s *Festial* as a series of sermons to confront lollardy, see Judy Ann Ford, *John Mirk’s Festial: Orthodoxy, Lollardy, and the Common People in Fourteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2006), 143, 145. She writes, for example, that Mirk wrote the *Festial* “to dissuade the masses from Lollardy and revolt” through “a subtle approach” and that Mirk’s criticism of the lollards reflects his “central counter-argument” that characterizes the entire sermon collection, which “challenges Lollardy’s rejection of an ecclesiology based on historically established oral tradition and communicated through non-textual expression.” For a more cautious conclusion, see Fletcher, “John Mirk and the Lollards,” *Medium Aevum* 56, vol. 2 (1987): 217-224.

²¹ For an analysis on the Council of Constance that singled out Wyclif, see Norman Tanner, “Wyclif and Companions: Naming and Describing Dissenters in the Ecumenical and General Councils,” in *Image, Text and Church, 1380-1600: Essays for Margaret Aston*, Papers in Medieval Studies 20, eds. L. Clark, M. Jurkowski and C. Richmond (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2009), 131-141.

with Jews and Judaism more frequently, perhaps partly in reaction to lollard propaganda which slurred the church with images related to the enemies of Christ.

Most of the Middle English sermons found in MS. Royal 18 B xxiii, composed towards the end of the fourteenth century or the early fifteenth century, do not confront heresy.²² Like the *Festial* they include exhortations and didactic messages to strengthen devotion. For example, Sermon 2 exhorts everyone, including children age seven years and older to know the Pater Noster, the Ave Maria and the Creed; Sermon 3 outlines the twelve articles of faith which “euery Cristen man to beleue in vppon þe peyn ov euere-lastynge dampnacion.”²³ Furthermore, like Mirk’s *Festial*, approximately one-third of the texts refer to Jews and Judaism to some degree. However, this collection primarily comprises of passing references of Jews, Judas, Pharisees, and the Sabbath derived from the New Testament.²⁴ Sermons 11, 22, 31 and 41, however, include images of Jews from hagiographical sources, often in an adversarial or negative role. But we should contrast all of those images of Jews and Judaism, whether from the New Testament or hagiography, with the several sermons that include illustrations or examples from the Old Testament which view Israelite figures as faithful forerunners to the church. Sermon 29, for example, views the “old lawe” in a didactic sense: the preacher casts more blame on Christians now than when Adam sinned because Christians now have numerous examples from both the “old lawe and þe new” to learn how to flee from sin. Likewise,

²² Woodburn O. Ross, ed. *Middle English Sermons Edited from British Muesum MS. Royal 18 B xxiii*, EETS 209 (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1940).

²³ *Ibid.*, 12, 14-15.

²⁴ *Ibid.* Examples include Sermon 5 drawn from Luke’s Gospel that mentions the Sabbath of the Jews and the ‘Farysees’; Sermon 13 is organized around a series of questions the Jews asked John the Baptist regarding his identity; Sermons 31 and 49 draw from the scene in the Gospels about the publican and the Pharisee who enter the temple to pray; Sermons 35 and 47 refer to Jesus’ condemnation of the Jews as children of the devil from John 8; Sermon 51 explains why the Jews did not believe in the Virgin Mary the same way Gentiles did.

Sermon 38, inspired by Numbers 20, explains that the children of Israel who needed water needed the water of grace spiritually also, which now means “all Cristen men þat are now dwellynge in þis werld, þe wiche nedis, as þe children of Israel dud, watur for to live by.”²⁵

Of the fifty-one sermons in Ross’ edition, he identifies Sermons 22, 39 and 42 that seem to address heresy, which in the context of the period reasonably includes lollards.²⁶ The intersection between anti-Jewish imagery and anti-Lollard polemic only falls on Sermon 22, which contains a clear defense of the sacrament of the altar interlaced with particular images of Jews and Judaism, likely preached on Easter. Ross does not include Sermon 22 as a sermon belonging to a group of sermons, i.e. with common authorship; I do not find a hagiographical parallel in Mirk’s *Festial* either.²⁷

Inspired by the words of Christ from John 6, “*Qui manducat hunc panem, viuet in eternum,*” the preacher defends the doctrine of transubstantiation against lollard opposition.²⁸ After some imagery regarding a lion, the preacher cites Matthew 9 (mistakenly) “*Accipite et comedite; hoc est corpus meum*” and expounds on the verse: “‘take,’ seys Crist, ‘and ete of þis brede, for it is my body in þe forme of brede, þe wiche brede is a full good medecyn to þi soule.’”²⁹ This idea of the consecrated Host as medicine leads the preacher to his next point: just as physicians from afar cure diseases

²⁵ Ibid., 68, 76, 146, 214-215.

²⁶ Ibid., xxxiv-xxxv. Ross identifies Sermons 22, 39 and 42 as sermons that confront heresy, lollards in particular, given their date of composition. They promote an orthodoxy in light of heresy, specifically lollardy, “since in the later Middle Ages there was no heretical movement in England of any importance except Lollardy” (xxxvi). Sermons 37 and 41 also mention heretics or heresy, but like Ross, I do not find these statements as addressing or reacting to specific lollard opinions.

²⁷ Ibid., xix-xxvi.

²⁸ Ibid., 125-133. Ross argues that this sermon must be dated after the 1380s with lollards in mind. He writes, “Since Lollards assailed the Church’s position concerning the miracle of the altar, it is almost certain that this sermon was first delivered after the spread of Lollardy” (xxxiv-xxxv).

²⁹ Ibid., 126. Woodburn notes in the margin the correct citation of the passage, Matthew 26.26.

that native doctors could not cure, so Christ, “when all prophetis be þe lawe of Moyses fayles for to saue mans sowle, for þat was þe lawe of vengeaunce, þen com Crist, and with is precieuse blode he made man hole.”³⁰

After the preacher declares an equivalency between Christ’s body and the sacrament of the altar, he addresses *the lewde man*, a person who should not question the veracity of transubstantiation, for the “Hoste is Goddes bodie in þe forme of brede” and thus “beleue as holychurche techēþ þe pleynty.”³¹ Furthermore, he instructs his hearers to suspend their senses when receiving the sacrament:

For it semeþ to þin eye but as a litill brede, but 3itt it is no brede but Goddes owen flessch and is blode. And to þin eye it semeþ litill, and 3itt is ful mekell [great]; why-for it fulfilleþ bothe heven and erthe. Also in þe savour in þi mouthe it semeþ brede, and it is not so; for-why certeynly it is þe same flessch þat was borne of Oure Ladye Seynt Mary on Cristmasse day. So I sey, 3iff þou shuldest deme aftur þe sight of þin eye, þan þou shuldest erre a3eyns þe feythe. And þer-fore þou þat arte a lewd man, it suffice to þe to beleue as holychurche techēþ þe.³²

The phrase *litill brede* reminds us of the lollard position regarding the sacrament of the altar from the *Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards*, which states “þat þe feynid miracle of þe sacrament of bred inducith alle men but a fewe to ydolatrie, for þei wene þat Godis bodi þat neiere schal out of heuene be uertu of þe prestis wordis schulde ben closed essentiali in a *litil bred*, þat theur schewe to þe puple.”³³ Whereas lollards argue that Christ remains in heaven and not in a piece of *litil bred* despite the words of a priest at the altar, the preacher argues that Christ does indeed dwell in a “littil brede,” despite what one sees or tastes or what lollards claim as the truth.

³⁰ Ibid., 126.

³¹ Ibid., 127.

³² Ibid., 127.

³³ “The Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards,” ed. H. S. Cronin, *English Historical Review* 22 (1907: 292-304): 297, emphasis mine. Cronin cites Roger Dymok’s manuscript dated around 1397, “Against the XII Heresies of the Lollards” which includes both Latin and English text, and argues that the English version of the Conclusions was presented before Parliament.

To reinforce his main message regarding the sacrament the preacher draws upon two scenes from the gospels and a hagiographical story about a Jew, a Christian, a dispute over a consecrated Host and the Jew's dog. The first gospel account recalls the episode when Christ fed bread to the five thousand from John 6. According to the preacher, the Eucharist "in þe forme of brede, fedip many hundreþ þousaundes of men."³⁴ The second gospel account involves the disciple Thomas from John 10.29 who doubted Christ's resurrection until he saw resurrected Christ himself. The preacher reminds the audience that it is more blessed to believe than to see, inspired by Christ's words: "*Quia vidisti me credidisti; beati qui non viderunt et crediderunt...* And þer-fore þe principall mynde þat þou shalte haue in þe blisse of heven shall be þat þou shalte leve þoo þinges þat passeþ þi witt."³⁵

These two gospel illustrations instruct the audience that the sacrament of the altar nourishes the faithful now no less than what Christ did when he fed the five thousand, and therefore the sacrament of the altar reflects the same type of miracle. As for the issue of doubt, represented by Thomas, the preacher privileges belief over the senses unlike the lollards who maintain that the sacrament remains as bread: although lollards doubt Christ calls the faithful more blessed if they believe rather than see. But the preacher conveys something else as well, namely not to allow lollards to influence the faithful with their unbelief. It is no coincidence that the preacher's third illustration involves a Jew unwilling to believe in the miracle of the Eucharist.

The story focuses on a dispute between a Jew and a Christian, similar to some of the other hagiographical content found in Mirk's *Festial*. A Christian and a Jew have a

³⁴ Ibid., 128.

³⁵ Ibid., 128.

dispute over whether a consecrated Host truly embodies “þe seconde Persone in Trinite” and the Jew wagers that his dog will eat the bread even after it has been consecrated.³⁶ To increase the stakes, the Jew agrees to nearly starve the dog for three days. After three days the Christian brings a consecrated Host to the Jew’s house. The dog eats four or five non-consecrated *obeles* but refuses to eat the consecrated Host and runs. The Jew catches and beats the dog and the dog ends up strangling the Jew since “þe dogge felte þat he wold haue mad hym to haue eten itt.” This story, according to the preacher, proves that a consecrated Host “is brede of liff” even to a creature that “neuer had techynge of holychurche.”³⁷

The preacher closes his homily with a few exhortations and admonitions regarding faith, hope and charity and that a Christian must build a house upon these three precepts. The sacrament feeds the soul while bread feeds the body; receiving eternal life must involve receiving the sacrament, and therefore the foundation of the house must include that the Christian “beleu stedfastely in þe feythe of holichurche and in þe Sacrament of Goddes flesh and is blode, and þe same bodie þat doed and rose.”³⁸ The Christian finds hope in the sacrament of penance, for God “is so mercyfull þat he will forȝeue þe maner of trespass and synnes.”³⁹ Charity comprises of the roof of a Christian’s house, and the preacher provides an exhortation and a warning: if one lives a good life, the sacrament results in salvation; if one receives it without charity or in an unworthy manner, then he or she “resseyveþ it to dampnacion and not to þi saluacion.”⁴⁰

³⁶ Ibid., 129.

³⁷ Ibid., 130.

³⁸ Ibid., 131.

³⁹ Ibid., 132.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 132.

The juxtaposition of Christ with the law of Moses emphasizes Christ's preeminent status as the source of grace: a physician has come from afar not to condemn but to save the soul. Whereas the law of Moses represents only vengeance, the advent of Christ provides grace through the sacrament of the altar all who take it in faith, hope and charity. The illustration of the Jew, the Christian and the dog reflects the juxtaposition between grace and vengeance, the new law in Christ and the old law, the faithful and those deemed outsiders. Those on the outside comprise of Jews and the *lewd men* who question the church's teaching, resist its authority, refuse to prioritize belief over the senses, doubt the efficacy of the sacrament in the same manner that Thomas doubted the resurrection and who have less sense than the dog who strangled his Jewish master. Those outsiders would be lollards who refuse to believe that the *littil brede* consecrated by a priest is truly the body and blood of Christ.

II

Devotional literature contains several examples of anti-lollard arguments or condemnatory statements, some of them framed with images of Jews and Judaism. I will primarily examine Nicholas Love's *Mirror*, although we can find examples from other devotional literature. Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection*, for example, compares the pride of heretics with that of the proud Pharisee in Luke 18 who prayed in the temple and thanked God that he was not like other sinners. Hilton writes, "but a heretic and a hypocrite have neither [meekness or good will], for they have the condition of the pharisee" and he warns his readers to watch out for the "synne of pride" because a

“heretic sinneth deadly in pride.”⁴¹ Hilton associates the pride of the Pharisee with one of the cardinal sins which characterize heretics. His devotional message implores his readers not to imitate the hubris shown by heretics since they reflect the same condition as the Pharisees who opposed Christ.

Nicholas Love’s *Mirror* contains six specific anti-lollard passages, three of which reference images of Jews and Judaism as part of a rhetorical strategy to expose lollard opinions in a forceful way while at the same time reinforce his defense of orthodoxy. Love provides the marginal note, *contra lollardos* or *nota contra lollardos* or something similar to identify portions of the text that address or condemn lollard opinions.

The three passages that do not contain references to Jews and Judaism address the issues of ecclesiastical authority and auricular confession. In the “Monday” portion of the text, Love identifies Christ’s blessed people through an argument that supports ecclesiastical authority handed down from Christ to his ecclesiastical representatives. He argues that Christ commands the faithful “by his ministers, & be buxum to hes vikeres, þat bene in holy chirch þi souereyns, not only gude & wele lyuyng bot also schrewes & yuel lyuyng, & so lerne of Jesu to be meke in herte & buxom & þen shalt þou be of his blessed peple.”⁴²

Love defends auricular confession and penance in Capitulum xii of the “Wednesday” portion of the text which relates Mary Magdalene’s conversion to Christ. Love notes that Mary speaks to Christ in her heart and wipes his feet with her hair as an act of contrition. He argues that “here haue we ensample of trewe repentance & penance þat is needful to forȝiuenes of synne...þe which penance as alle holy chirch techþ, stant

⁴¹ Walter Hilton, *The Scale of Perfection*, ed. and trans. John P. H. Clark and Rosemary Dorward (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 102-103.

⁴² Love, *Mirror*, ed. Michael G. Sargent, 25.

in sorowe of herte in shrift of mouþe & in satisfaccion of dede.”⁴³ Love then counters the lollard argument that auricular confession is unnecessary:

Bot here perantere sume men þenken aftur þe false opinion of lollardes þat shrift of mouþe is not needful, bot þat it suffice onely in herte to be shruen to god, as þis foreside woman was, for þe gospel telleþ not þat she spake any worde by mouþe, & 3it was hir sinne fully for3iuen as it is seide, & as it semeþ þis is gret euidence for þat opinion.⁴⁴

Love then offers a defense of the church’s teaching on auricular confession. Mary did not have to confess with her mouth to Christ because she was in the very presence of “god & man” in bodily form who knew the intentions of her heart. But now that Christ no longer abides in bodily form, confession by mouth is necessary. Love connects Christ’s divinity and humanity to repentance, confession and penance. When people sin, they sin against both Christ’s divinity and his humanity and therefore since “we haue not here his bodily presence as Maudleyne hade . . . in his stede vs behoueþ to shewe to þe preste by worde, þat we haue offendet him as man, as we shewen to him by repentance in herte, þat we offendet him as god, þat is to sey at þe leste by deadly sinne.”⁴⁵ Priests, therefore, have been “specialy ordeynet” in lieu of Christ himself to forgive sin.

Love repeats his defense of auricular confession again in Capitulum xxxiv of the “Thursday” portion that relates the story of the raising of Lazarus. Lazarus was raised by Christ and “vnbonden by goddus ministers, to whom onely he 3af þat powere, seying þus to hem, *Alle þat 3e vnbynde in erth sal be vnbonden in heuen.*”⁴⁶ With this scriptural citation, Love defends the authority of the church regarding confession against “hem þat

⁴³ Ibid., 90. “Shrift” is the ME word meaning “sacramental penance.”

⁴⁴ Ibid., 90-91. In this section, Love notes in the margin, “Contra lollardos nota de confessione.”

⁴⁵ Ibid., 91.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 132-133. Love notes in the margin, “Nota de confessione & absolucionem contra lollardos.”

repreuene confession ordeynet by holi chirch” and those who believe that one can confess directly to God without the mediation of a priest.

The three *contra lollardos* passages that include references to Jews and Judaism relate to almsgiving to the church, the doctrine of transubstantiation and an odd statement defending ecclesiastical authority. All three of these passages appear towards the end of the work in the “Thursday” portion, which Michael Sargent points out contains the most alterations from the original pseudo-Bonaventuran text.⁴⁷ Love defends the practice of almsgiving to the church criticized in numerous lollard tracts. In a discussion about how the Jews and Judas have turned against Christ, the former “utterly conspired in to his dep” and the latter betrayed and sold him “for xxxⁱⁱ penys,” Love then condemns those who criticize almsgiving, namely lollards:

Here mowe we forþermore note specialy to purpose þat þei are of Judas parte þat reprehenden almesdede[s], offrynges & oþer deuociones of þe peple done to holi chirch, haldyng alle sich 3iftes of deuocion bot foly, & seying þat it were more needful & bettur, to be 3iuen to pore men. O Judas þat þ[us] pretendest with þi mouth þe releuyng of pore men, þere as sobely in þe entent of þi herte þat is grondet in enuye a3eynus men of holi chirch.⁴⁸

Love then recalls scenes from the Gospels in which Christ reproved “sharply þe scribes & þe pharisees” for their covetousness but that he never reproved people to “wipdrawe ather dymes or offrynges or oþer 3iftes of deuocione done to hem.” Furthermore, he argues that Christ commended both rich men and the poor widow for her gift of “tweyn minutes” and concludes that “Judas & hees felaghes bene sufficiently repropuede & confondet in here fals opinione & doctrine a3eynus holy chirch before seid.”⁴⁹ Love’s employment of the figure of Judas to associate lollard opinion about almsgiving serves to

⁴⁷ Ibid., xviii.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 137-138.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 138.

excoriate his religious opponents with perhaps the most reviled figure known to Christians. He specifically associates lollards with Jewish envy, a common trope found in Mirk's *Festial*. Lollards reprehend almsgiving not because they believe in helping the poor directly but because of envy "a3eynus men of holi chirch."

Love employs a virulent polemic against the lollards when he defends the doctrine of transubstantiation. His extensive defense of the Eucharist includes a reference to the figure of Judas in order to condemn lollard opinions about the blessed sacrament. In the *contra lollardos* passage, Love addresses those who "falsly byleuen & seyene þat the holy sacrament of þe autere is in his kynde brede or wyne as it was before þe consecracion." He condemns lollards as "more reprouable as in þat part þan Judas, for þei seene not Jesus bodily byside þat sacrament as he dide, and þerfore it is lihtere [easier] to hem fort byleue, & more to [t]hir dampnacion if þei byleue not as god himself & holi chirch haþ tauht..."⁵⁰ Here, Love argues that at least Judas had to overcome the difficulty of believing in the sacrament of the altar in the presence of Christ in bodily form. Lollards, by contrast, have no such excuse and he condemns them as *worse* than Judas himself.

Michael Sargent also highlights an unusual alteration, noting that the chapter "on Christ's discussion of his Last Supper and death is replaced with a treatment of the sin of scandal, which includes a reference to obedience even to 'pharisaic' ecclesiastical leaders."⁵¹ As a reaction to the common lollard indictment that associates ecclesiastical leaders with scribes or Pharisees, often in reference to Matthew 23, Love offers a counter-argument. He does not deny that Christ condemned the scribes and Pharisees and

⁵⁰ Ibid., 151.

⁵¹ Ibid., xviii.

cites Christ himself from that passage of Matthew: *‘Wo to 3owe scribes & pharisees,’* especially for “þe pride, þe ypocrisye, þe coueitise & oþer wikked condicions of hem.” But then he qualifies his argument with a statement based specifically on Matthew 23.3: “Neuerless þerwiþ he bad þe peple, þat þei sholde kepe & fulfille alle [t]hir teching bot þat þei shold not folowe [t]hir werkes & yuel lyuyng.”⁵²

While numerous lollard voices argue for the illegitimacy of sinful priests, Love argues for the primacy of ecclesiastical authority over and above the frailty of individuals, regardless of how opponents characterize them. The passage prior to Love’s citation of Matthew 23 involves a description of the growing animosity of the Jews towards Christ, especially among “þe princes & þe pharisees” who “mihten accuse him as worþi þe deþ.”⁵³ He then relates how Christ reprehends the Jews, and especially the scribes and the Pharisees, for their hypocrisy, covetousness and other vices, which includes the line from Matthew 23: *‘Wo to 3owe scribes & pharisees, þat louen worldly wirchipes in many maneres, & so forþ of oþer vices.’* But immediately Love finds it necessary to qualify the line from Matthew 23 in defense of ecclesiastical authority. Love does not associate Lollards with scribes or Pharisees or Jews like in the previous examples. Rather, the notation in the margin, *nota contra lollardos*, reveals that Love attempts to confront a common lollard trope that associates the priesthood with scribes and Pharisees, a lollard tactic likely familiar to him and his audience. He could have just continued with the narrative devotion, but he must have felt it necessary to try to prevent this particular lollard accusation from gaining an audience. Love asks his audience to consider what Christ promotes despite his condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees, and

⁵² Ibid., 142.

⁵³ Ibid., 141-142.

argues that whether or not a priest resembles the scribes and Pharisees is irrelevant: what a priest teaches, in particular the orthodox doctrines of the church, matter much more than a priest's individual behavior: an argument on what Christ told his disciples according to Matthew 23.2.

While Love's *Mirror* primarily serves to deepen the spiritual lives of its readers through devotional passages surrounding the life of Christ, Michael Sargent notes that it "also played a major role in Archbishop Arundel's campaign against Wycliffite heresy" based upon an official memorandum attached to copies of the *Mirror* which states "that it be published universally for the edification of the faithful and the confutation of heretics or lollards."⁵⁴ In the few instances in which Love explicitly confronts lollard opinions, half of them involve images of Jews and Judaism. Two of those, which concern almsgiving and the sacrament of the altar, employ an association of lollards with the figure of Judas, and we should not miss the virulent polemic deployed here to defend church orthodoxy. Love attempts to expose the true nature of lollard opinions through an association with perhaps the most familiar and reviled Jewish figure of the gospels. Thus, he re-casts lollards not just as wayward Christians with strange heretical opinions but rather as envious collaborators with the Jews, particularly Judas Iscariot, the one who betrays Christ to the Jews who then crucify him.

The third *contra lollardos* example that involves Jews and Judaism, however, reveals a writer who tries to articulate a nuanced defense of ecclesiastical authority by appropriating the space normally reserved for scribes and Pharisees themselves. Love's

⁵⁴ Ibid., xv. See n.11, which refers to the Latin memorandum on page 7, the last line which reads: "*proprie vocis oraculo ipsum in singulis commendavit & approbavit, necnon & auctoritate sua metropolitana, ut pote catholicum, publice communicandum fore decrevit & mandavit, ad fidelium edificacionem, & hereticorum siue lollardorum confutationem. Amen.*"

exegetical counter-argument employs Christ's words from Matthew 23.3; Love seeks to disrupt lollard polemic that describes scribes and Pharisees in straightforward negative terms: while one should not imitate them if they display sinful behavior, nevertheless Christ commands the faithful to submit to their authority. Not only does Love deflect a common lollard trope but he uses the same passage of scripture to reinforce ecclesiastical authority by shifting the argument from priestly behavior to one of submission to the priesthood. Those who do not submit to the priesthood defy the command of Christ.

But we should regard this move as somewhat unusual and one which could potentially backfire. After all, to assign ecclesiastical authorities a position normally occupied by scribes and Pharisees, figures who throughout Love's *Mirror* as well as other sources of the period represent some of Christ's chief opponents, might actually authenticate lollard criticisms of the priesthood and galvanize lollard critics. But perhaps Love believed the alternative would be worse: if one allows lollard criticism to go unchallenged it could legitimize anti-clerical sentiment among the laity and undermine the authority of the clergy. Love's exegetical creativity, turning Matthew 23 from anti-clerical polemic to a defense of orthodoxy, was probably the best option at hand to confront a vocal and unyielding minority who frequently identified the church's representatives as scribes and Pharisees. Thus, Love *thinks* with Jews about lollards not only through a polemical association with Judas over almsgiving and the sacrament of the altar, but also through an imaginative counter-argument that attempts to neutralize lollard polemic by defending the authority of scribes and Pharisees and thereby ecclesiastical authority.

III

Around 1449, English bishop Reginald Pecock wrote *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, a book designed to counter lollards opinions.⁵⁵ Through a series of reasoned arguments against stated lollard opinions, Pecock offers a rational justification for Christian orthodoxy. For Pecock, orthodoxy includes piety related to images, pilgrimage, the cult of the saints and the Eucharist among others; it also means the legitimacy of the church as an institution, to include its hierarchy, canon law, religious orders and temporal wealth.⁵⁶

The *Repressor* reveals a defender of traditional religion who rarely uses invective against his religious opponents. Primarily, Pecock refutes lollard doctrinal positions through a series of syllogisms that justify the “xj. gouernauncis of the clergie, whiche summe of the comoun peple vnwijsly and vntreuli iugen and condempnen to be yuele.”⁵⁷ Pecock argues that if lollards cannot prove that the practices and behaviors of the clergy exhibit a “defaute and a trespace,” then lollards “ouʒtist be stille, and not so vundirnyme and blame.”⁵⁸ Although the *Repressor* aims to silence critics of the clergy through refutation rather than invective, I do not want to suggest that it is devoid harsh criticism against the lollards. After all, he states in the prologue that lollard criticism of the clergy has produced “mich indignacioun, disturblance, cisme, and othere yuelis, forto rise and be continued in manie persoones bi long tyme of manye ʒeeris...”⁵⁹ He responds to

⁵⁵ Reginald Pecock, *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, ed. Churchill Babington, 2 Volumes, 1860 (reprint New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, lxxxvii; Joseph F. Patrouch Jr., *Reginald Pecock* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970), 90.

⁵⁷ Pecock, *The Repressor*, 4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

lollards who believe that only moral Christians who study the Bible know the true sense of scripture with a denunciation: some of those who hold such opinions, Pecock argues, have “ben founde and knowun openly among hem silf and of othere neiȝboris to be greet lecchouris, summe to be avoutreris in greet haunt and contynuaunce, summe to be theefis, euen aȝens her owne leernyng and aȝens her owne holding and doctrine.”⁶⁰ At one point Pecock blames the church’s reliance on preaching, which “is ful profitable into the eende of exortacion and of remembrauncing” but not so “into the eende of best teching” to “be a greet cause of the wickidli enfectid scole of heresie among the lay peple in Ynglond, which is not ȝit conquerid.”⁶¹ In the fifth part of his book, Pecock provides a list of numerous heretical sects the church has had to contend with over the centuries, from the “sect of Menandrianis” to Valentinians, Cathars, Nestorians, Waldesians, and finally “the sect of the Wiclifistis, which aȝens the vij. principal gouernauncis touched and rehercid bi the proces of this present book holden in the maners rehercid in this present book, and in wors and horribler maner, as it is open in the book of Wiclif and of othere being of his sect.”⁶² Pecock’s opinion of the lollards reflects the negative opinions of his contemporaries regarding heresy. Although he structures a majority of his arguments in a syllogistic format which includes lollard opinions and reasoned refutations, perhaps admitting that the best way to combat heresy is through, as Kantick Ghosh argues, “persuasively and rationally argued counterpositions” in lieu of heresy trials, I would not go so far as to argue that Pecock’s view of lollardy is sympathetic as some suggest.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ibid., 103.

⁶¹ Ibid., 89.

⁶² Ibid., 497-501.

⁶³ Kantick Ghosh, “Bishop Reginald Pecock and the Idea of ‘Lollardy’” in *Texts and Controversy from Wyclif to Bale: Essays in Honour of Anne Hudson*, Medieval Church Studies 4, eds. Helen Barr and Ann M. Hutchison (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011), 257. While Ghosh admits that Pecock engages in “heretic-slandering” in the *Repressor*, he writes, “Despite such aberrations into the standard topoi of

Pecock may sympathize with those caught up in lollardy but not lollard opinions themselves nor the threat lollardy poses to the church or the realm as a whole. In addition to the abovementioned instances of anti-lollard invective, one of Pecock's major arguments against lollard views on scriptural authority employs images of Jews as a way to expose and accentuate lollard error.

In the first part of the *Repressor*, Pecock criticizes how lollards exalt themselves over other Christians by their sole insistence on and superior knowledge of the Bible, to the exclusion of all other texts. Inspired by Romans 3.27, Pecock compares lollards to the Jews who converted to Christ who

enhaunciden hem silf aboute the conuersis of the hethen men, bi cause the conuersis of the Iewis had red bifore and studied and learned the Oold Testament, and so hadden not learned the conuersis of the hethen men. Where he seith this: *Where is thi gloriyng? He is excludid. Bi what lawe is he excludid? Certis bi the lawe of kinde and of feith.*⁶⁴

Pecock then offers a remedy for boasting, mainly that Christians will be able to learn the Bible faster, more clearly and in a better way by studying vernacular devotional texts than by studying the Bible alone, and “therfore thi ‘boasting is excludid.’”

Pecock then provides a scriptural rebuke to lollard hypocrisy from Romans 2.1, 12-23. Lollards who boast about their knowledge of the Bible will eventually fall into hypocrisy. In similar fashion, Pecock argues that lollards remind him of what “poul seide

antihetical polemic, Pecock's vision of Lollardy is, on the whole sympathetic. For him, the misguided laity are capable of rational persuasion; most importantly, they are eager to listen and learn.” Ghosh then cites Pecock's *Book of Faith*, in which Pecock would engage in a dialogue with persons “contrarie to the churche” who loved him for his patience in hearing their opinions. He rightly points out that in the *Repressor* Pecock concedes that trials of heretics has not stopped the spread of lollardy (see *Repressor*, 128). But “rationally argued counterpositions” should not be seen as sympathetic to lollardy, nor Pecock's patience when talking to dissidents. Clear statements from the *Repressor* reveal that Pecock viewed lollardy as a heretical threat to the church.

⁶⁴ *Repressor*, 59.

in sumwhat lijk caas to the conueris of Iewis.” He then condemns the hypocrisy of the lollards with scripture by actually inserting them into the text of Romans 2:

*But if thou art a named Iew, (or ellis for this present purpos for to sei thus: but if thou art a named knowun man,) and restist in the lawe, and hast glorie in God, and hast knowen his wil...what thanne? Thou that prechist me schal not stele, stelist? Thou that techist me schal do noon aduoutrie, doost auoutrie? Thou that wlatist mawmetrie, doost sacrilegie? Thou that hast glorie in the lawe, unworschipist God bi breking of the lawe?*⁶⁵

Pecock associates the *known men*, a common designation of the lollards, with the Jews of Romans 2: the boasting of knowing scripture does not inoculate a person from hypocrisy just like it did not for the Jews. He implores his audience from James 1.21 to receive his warning, which he compares to the “graffid word, which may saue 3oure soulis” from many dangerous errors and heresies.⁶⁶ How lollards place a supreme authority and dignity on the scriptures, again, reminds Pecock of the Jews from Romans 2-3, when Paul asserted limitations on exalting the Old Testament:

And if 3e bithenke 3ou wee how it is in werk of this present first parti bitwixe me and 3ou, certainly it is in lijk maner as it was bitwixe Poul and the Cristen whiche at Rome were conurtid fro Iewry into Cristenhode. Forwhi in the daies of Seint Poul Iewis and tho that weren conuertid fro Iewis lawe into Cristenhode magnifieden ouermiche the Oold Testament...And euen lijk maner is bitwix 3ou and me in these daies. Forwhi many of the lay parti dignifien ouer miche the writing of the Newe Testament, and many other dignifien ouermiche the writing of al the hool Bible...God therefore grante that as the Romayns obeyed to the open resoun and proof which Seint Poul made and wrote azens hem, that so 3e obeie to the open proof which y make and write azens 3ou...⁶⁷

Here, Pecock exposes the dangers of a central doctrinal claim of his opponents.⁶⁸ In these passages, Pecock challenges the lollard insistence that the scriptures serve as the sole authority for life and faith because that insistence leads to boasting, hypocrisy and error.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 63-64.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 69.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 69-70.

⁶⁸ Patrouch, 104-105.

The lollards, otherwise known as ‘Bible men’ or ‘knowen men,’ placed a premium on scripture for the only source of knowledge, religious doctrine and practice. Anne Hudson argues that the “center-piece” for lollard beliefs and doctrine was the primacy of scripture; their other doctrinal views about the Eucharist, confession, images, whether clergy should own temporal wealth or pilgrimages stem from how they read and understood scripture.⁶⁹ Lollards opposed the legitimacy and authority of the clergy and certain doctrines of the church precisely because, in their view, many of the practices of the church were simply not found in the Bible. Pecoock, however, argues that the Bible itself cannot be the sole source for faith and practice because the scriptures themselves reveal the presence of a natural moral law prior to the Bible being written, which God “plauntith in mannis soule whanne he makith him to his ymage and likenes.”⁷⁰ Reason, then, allows human beings, specifically clerics trained in natural philosophy, to determine the sense of scripture, especially if the scriptures seem to contradict natural moral law.⁷¹ Thus, the Bible cannot be the source of moral law but rather only attest to its presence; the lollards’ insistence on the scriptures alone as a law for faith and practice is undermined by the scriptures themselves.

We should not, however, miss the invective Pecoock imbeds in his argument: lollards not only place a premium on the scriptures that even the scriptures do not commend but that approach to scripture reflects an error that resembles the Jews. We should not, then, view this passage as merely a clever, rational counter-position: the association between lollards and Jews represents sharp and aggressive anti-lollard polemic. And Pecoock associates lollards with Jews in order to provide a clear line of

⁶⁹ Anne Hudson, *The Premature Reformation*, 389.

⁷⁰ Pecoock, *The Repressor*, 29.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 25-26.

demarcation between orthodoxy and unorthodoxy: it demonstrably challenges lollard claims of legitimacy when their claims clearly reflect the very Jewish error Paul himself writes against. The argument thus exposes the true extent and nature of lollard error while reinforcing Pecock's own position as a faithful expositor of scripture and champion of orthodoxy. Pecock's rhetorical move should not be viewed in isolation however, since he was likely aware that lollards often associated the church and its clergy with particular images of Jews and Judaism. That polemic seems to force Pecock to explain the nature of that Jewish sect from the New Testament, the Pharisees, a name lollards often employed as rhetorical slander to denigrate proponents of traditional religion.

Pecock discusses the Pharisees as they relate to his justification for religious orders. Opponents condemn religious orders because they violate certain scriptural principles and "thei ascriuen and zeuen the fynding and the mentenaunce of alle such sectis...to the feend and anticrist, and thei callen it to be werk of the feend..."⁷² Pecock argues, however, that as far as the existence of religious orders, "Holi Scripture weerneth not and forbedith not, doom of cleer and weel disposid natural resoun weerneth not and forbedith not, mannes lawe weerneth not and fobedith not, is leeful and not worthi be vndirnome and blamed."⁷³ The establishment of religion serves to constrain the human will which might not otherwise be constrained by "resound and of God."⁷⁴ He cites several Old Testament figures that God established religion specifically: Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, the Israelites, which "God ordeyned the cerymonyalis and the iudicialis so manye to the Iewis as the bookis of Exodi and of Numeri maken ther of mensiouun..."

⁷² Ibid., 476.

⁷³ Ibid., 524.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 525.

and the sons of Jonadab from Jeremiah 35 who refused to drink wine, build houses or plant vineyards which was above and beyond the written law but allowed by God.⁷⁵

Pecock then turns to the New Testament. He explains that scripture does not condemn the Pharisees as a sect in and of itself. Christ did not condemn the Pharisees because of their religion but for their “synnes whiche thei did, not as deedis of her religioun, but rather as deedis bisidis her religioun,” which include ambition, covetousness and hypocrisy.⁷⁶ As for the sect itself, Pecock argues that “Crist allowed weel the religioun of the Pharisees sett to the comoun lawe of Iewis thane rennyng, thou3 Crist blamed the persoones of the same religioun” and that Paul does not condemn the Pharisees as a sect either but instead identifies himself as a Pharisee in Acts 26 and Galatians 1.⁷⁷

Pecock’s apology for the legitimacy of Pharisees as a sect reminds us of Nicholas Love’s exegetical polemic concerning ecclesiastical authority from Matthew 23 discussed above. Lollard rhetoric and its constant refrain that associates religious clergy with the scribes and Pharisees or its constant condemnation of the Pharisees results in peculiar responses from both Love and Pecock. In Love’s case he defends the authority of the scribes and Pharisees who sat in Moses’ seat as a way of affirming ecclesiastical authority with the words of Christ. In the case of Pecock it forces him to think with Jews not about his lollard opponents but to defend the legitimacy of religious orders. Both defenders of traditional religion, separated by several decades, nevertheless find it necessary to address the common lollard polemic that associates the clergy with the Pharisees. For Pecock, Christ condemned individuals but not the sect as a whole, and

⁷⁵ Ibid., 526-528.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 528-529.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 529.

therefore Christ, and scripture as a whole, permits the establishment of religious orders.

How successful Pecock was in his approach to confront lollard heretical opinions is less relevant than why he wrote the *Repressor*. In the *Repressor* Pecock confronts and refutes lollard error through reasoned argument as an alternative to ecclesiastical prosecution. At times, however, he employs polemical statements that associate lollards with images of Jews and Judaism, especially as it relates to scriptural authority. In the end, Pecock was himself charged and condemned for heresy and it seems that his novel approach to confront lollardy in the vernacular backfired.⁷⁸ But other defenders of orthodoxy found new ways to confront lollardy too, especially in work that combines the creativity of a dramatist with a passion and commitment to orthodoxy often displayed by ecclesiastical authorities. We now turn to the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*.

IV

In the last half of fifteenth century, somewhere in East Anglia, an anonymous author composed a miracle play in which five Jews buy a consecrated Host from a Christian merchant and subject it to a series of tortures. By the end of the play Christ appears to the Jews from the bleeding Host and they convert and submit to baptism before a bishop while the Christian merchant confesses his involvement in the scheme and undergoes penance. The drama, known as *The Play of the Conuersyon of Ser Jonathas the Jewe by the Myracle of the Blyssed Sacrament*, or commonly known as the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, was likely written soon after 1460.⁷⁹ It shares similarities

⁷⁸ Ibid., xxxiv-liii.

⁷⁹ Norman Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, Early English Text Society (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 58-89. On lxxxiv-lxxxv, Davis notes that the term “Croxton” is found in line 74 of the play, ‘at Croxston on Monday’ which probably refers to the many Croxtons in the vicinity of ‘Babwell Myll’ (line 621), the other place-name found in the play. Most scholars refer to the play as the Croxton

with many Host desecration miracle stories in that the figure of the Jew serves as the torturer and tormenter of the Host. However, the English version differs in one crucial respect from Continental versions in that at the end of the play the Jews convert; in most Continental versions the Jew or Jews are executed.⁸⁰

The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* transports the audience to “the forest of Aragon, in the famous cité Eraclea, the yere of owr Lord God M cccc. lxj.”⁸¹ In the banns the two narrators prepare the audience for what they are about to witness on stage. A wealthy Jew will buy a consecrated Host from a wealthy Christian merchant named Aristorius and settle on the ludicrous price of a hundred pounds; the wealthy Jew, who will be joined by other Jews, will become joyful in obtaining the Host. But the audience is warned of what will take place next as well as the miracle that is coming:

They grevid our Lord gretly on grownd,
And put hym to a new passyoun;
With daggers gouen hym many a greuyos wound;
Nayled hym to a pyller, with pynsons plucked hym doune...
And sythe thay toke þat blysed brede so sownde
And in a cawdron they ded hym boyle.
In a clothe full just they yt wounde,
And so they ded hym seethe in oyle;
And than they putt hym to a new turmentry,
In an hoote ouyn speryed hym fast.
There he appyred with woundys blody;
The ovyn rofe asondre and all tobrast.
Thus in our lawe they wer made stedfast;

Play of the Sacrament, even though the official title of the play is *The Play of the Conuersyon of Ser Jonathas the Jewe by the Myracle of the Blyssed Sacrament*. The place-names suggest that the author is of East Anglian origin.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. lxxiii-lxxv. Davis discusses several Continental versions of Host desecration and miracle plays that were circulating in the late medieval period. He cites the most common version that takes place in Paris in the year 1290, where a poor Christian woman sells a Jewish moneylender a Host who then proceeds to torture it and is betrayed by his family and executed. “Dramatic treatments of this theme are recorded in Italy, the Netherlands, and France. For example, in 1473, as part of a festival held in Rome in honour of Leonore of Aragon, Florentine actors performed a play of the miracle of the Host; about 1500 a Dutch play, 1,325 lines long, was written by one Smeken and acted at Breda – but it differs in that the persecutor is not a Jew but a doubting Christian.”

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

The Holy Sacrement sheuyd them grette fauour;
In contrycyon thyr hertys wer cast
And went and shewyd ther lyues to a confessour.⁸²

At this point an audience will be anticipating a shocking act of violent sacrilege perpetrated by Jews and then a miracle and their subsequent conversion. The narrators do not minimize the actual sacrilege and violence about to take place: the Jews will stab and torture *our Lord* in a *new passyoun* and a *new turmentry*; they will spill his blood. But it will result in a miracle in which the Jews will see the Lord, their hearts will be moved to contrition and they will seek out a priest for conversion. Thus, the banns establishes from the outset that the drama about to take place will take audiences from the depths of extreme anguish as they witness the Jews stabbing the Lord to the heights of wonder and awe as the Jews behold the miracle before them and repent. The banns assures the audience that despite what the Jews will do to the Host, this play has a cheerful and miraculous ending.

But the banns tells the audience the motives of the Jews and the message the playwright wants to convey to the audience. The narrators explain why “þe Jewes with Holy Sacrement dyd woth,/ In the forest seyde of Aragon.”⁸³ There is a reason why the Jews will subject the Host to daggers and other tortures. But before the narrators reveal why the Jews will do this, they make an appeal to the audience. Since the audience will witness “hys mercy and hys mekyll myght” towards the Jews so that “thei shuld nat lesse hys hevenly lyght” audience members should “Vnto youer gostly father shewe your

⁸² Ibid., 59, lines 37-52; *In an hoothe ouyn speryed hym fast*, hot oven locked Him up securely; *The ovyn rofe asondre*, the oven split asunder; *tobrast*, shattered.

⁸³ Ibid., 60, lines 59-60; *woth*, injure.

synne;/ Beth in no wanhope daye nor nyght./ No maner off dowghtys þat Lord put in.”⁸⁴

Doubts about the Host, then, is what will drive the Jews to subject it to a new passion:

For þat þe dowghtys þe Jewys than in stode –
As ye shall se pleyd, both more and lesse –
Was yff þe Sacrament were flesshe and blode;
Therfor they put yt to suche dystresse.⁸⁵

The reason the Jews will subject the Host to daggers and torture is therefore one of curiosity, specifically in relation to the veracity of transubstantiation. Here the playwright complicates the straightforward notion of Jewish malice towards Christ: while Jewish malice provides an explanation for many late medieval Christians as to why the Jews tortured and murdered Christ, the Jews of this play seem to be motivated by curiosity as to whether “þe Sacrament were flesshe and blode” or not. We should, however, be cautious here. While the intentions of the Jews might be one of curiosity and doubt about transubstantiation, the act of sacrilege upon the Host and the violence done to it would be no less real and horrific for a late medieval audience.

The play begins with an introduction Aristorius, a wealthy Christian merchant who has traveled all over the known world, followed by Jonathas the “chefe merchaunte of Jewes.”⁸⁶ It should be noted that the first words Jonathas speaks are somewhat unusual: “Now, almyghty Machomet, marke in þi magesté,/ Whose laws tenderly I have to fulfill...”⁸⁷ *Machomet*, of course, refers to the late medieval image of Muhammad or an image of Islam; the playwright includes the term three other times in the play.⁸⁸ We should not, however, view these references to *Machomet* as evidence that the playwright

⁸⁴ Ibid., 60, lines 66-68; *mekyll*, great; *wanhope*, despair; *No maner off dowghtys þat Lord put in*, Do not subject the Lord to any doubts.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 60, lines 69-72.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 64, line 196.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 62, lines 149-150.

⁸⁸ Ibid., see 64, line 209; 68, line 332; 72, line 453.

is making a specific reference to Muhammad or Islam. Rather, these references serve as dramatic devices which reinforce the image of the Jewish characters as exotic, non-Christians.

After Jonathas tells the audience about how wealthy he is he introduces four other Jews, Jason, Jazdon, Masphat and Malchus. Jonathas reveals that he has doubts about whether a consecrated Host is what the Christians claim:

þe beleve of thes Cristen men ys false, as I wene;
For they beleue on a cake – me thynk yt ys onkynd.
And all they seye how þe prest dothe yt bynd,
And be þe might of hys word make yt flesh and blode –
And thus be a conceyte þe wolde make vs blynd –
And how þat yt shuld be he þat deyed upon þe rode.⁸⁹

Each Jewish character then makes statements that agree with their master Jonathas.

Masphat, for example, acknowledges that Christ died on Calvary but that the Host could not be the same thing as “he that on Caluery was kyld.”⁹⁰ The five Jews agree that they should obtain a Host to test it and see if it will bleed. Jonathas then meets Aristorius to buy one.

Jonathas first offers the amount of twenty pounds for the Host, but Aristorius refuses, saying he will not for a hundred pounds obtain one for fear of angering the Lord. When Jonathas explains why he wants a Host and that Aristorius can obtain one for him, with the promise that if it is truly the body of Christ he will amend his life, Aristorius not only has doubts about Jonathas’ plan but also great concern about being caught: “I fere me þat I shuld stond in drede;/...And preste or clerke might me aspye,/ To þe bysshope þei wolde go tell þat dede/ And apache me of ereye.”⁹¹ When Jonathas then offers forty

⁸⁹ Ibid., 64, lines 200-204; *wene*, think, believe; *onkynd*, unnatural.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 64, line 214.

⁹¹ Ibid., 67, lines 298, 300-302.

pounds, Aristorius refuses and drives a hard bargain: “I Wold not for an hundder pownd.”⁹² Jonathas finally relents and they settle on the astronomical price of a hundred pounds. Aristorius obtains a Host from the church during the night and gives it to Jonathas.

Now with the Host, Jonathas calls forth his fellow Jews and explains to them that a merchant obtained it from a Christian temple. The playwright then inserts a reference to Jewish blindness, perhaps drawing upon the image of the blindfolded *Synagoga*: Jonathas describes the Host as “thys bred that make vs thus blynd.”⁹³ The Jews then surround the Host as it lies on a table. Jonathas tells the group that Christians believe this Host to be “Jhesu þat was attayntyd in owr lawe/ And þat thys ys he þat crwcyfyed was.”⁹⁴ That statement reminds the audience that the Jews condemned Christ to death and anticipates the impending drama about to take place. Jonathas then rehearses the scene from the Last Supper in which Christ gives his disciples bread:

On thes wordys ther law growndyd hath he
That he sayd on Shere Thursday at his soper:
He brake the brede and sayd *Accipite*,
And gave hys dyscyplys them for to chere:
And more he sayd to them there,
Whyle they were all togethere and sum,
Syttyng at the table soo clere,
*Comedite Corpus meum.*⁹⁵

Following this statement Jonathas explains that Christ gave Peter the power to proclaim this truth of the Eucharist and to all subsequent Christian ministers including bishops and curates. Jason then reminds the audience about the virgin birth but of course as a Jew

⁹² Ibid., 67, line 312.

⁹³ Ibid., 70, line 388. See chapter 1 regarding the blindfolded *Synagoga*.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 70, lines 395-396; *attayntyd*, condemned.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 70, lines 397-404.

remarks that it is “ageyns owr law thys ys false heresy.”⁹⁶ Jasdon explains that Christ was heralded as the king of the Jews and that he rose from the dead and appeared to Thomas and Mary Magdalene. But like Jason he concludes that this is heresy as well. Masphat explains that after Christ ascended God sent the Holy Spirit which gives wisdom and refers to the disciples from Acts 2 when he says “They faryd as dronk men of pymente or vernage.”⁹⁷ Finally, Malchus tells the audience that there will be judgment, and he fears that “owr dredfull Judge shalbe thys same brede” and reminds the audience that Philip said what the Lord will do: “*judicare vivos et mortuos*.”⁹⁸

Through these statements, the playwright reinforces central doctrinal claims of Christian orthodoxy: the Eucharist and specifically transubstantiation, the virgin birth, the resurrection, the gift of the Holy Spirit and final judgment. Jonathas then says that “ye haue rehersyd the substance of ther lawe” and they plan how they are going to strike the Host before them. With daggers in hand Jason, Jasdon, Masphat and Malchus each stab the four quarters of the Host while Jonathas strikes “þe myddys” to see if the Host will emit blood.⁹⁹ To their astonishment the Host begins to bleed as per the stage directions: “*Here þe Ost must blede*.”¹⁰⁰ Panic sets in: the bleeding Host will not detach from Jonathas’ hand. Some of the Jews begin to fire up a cauldron full of oil. When they nail the Host to wooden pole, Jonathas realizes that his hand cannot free itself from the sacrament. The Jews attempt to pull Jonathas from the wooden pole while his hand and the sacrament are still nailed to it and in so doing tear off Jonathas’ hand as they free Jonathas.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 71, line 415.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 71, line 429.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 71, lines 435, 440; *judicare vivos et mortuos*, to judge the living and the dead.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 72, line 467.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 73.

At this point the play takes a strange, comedic turn beginning at line 525. An assistant named Colle and a Dutch doctor, Master Brundyche, enter the play. Master Brundyche tries to help Jonathas but Jonathas refuses and eventually the Jews drive the doctor and his assistant off the stage. The two characters certainly bring to the drama some sort of comic relief. For example, when Cole asks the doctor about how his last patient fared under his treatment, he replies that “she neuer fele anyoyment” to which Cole then quips, “Why, ys she in hyr graue?”¹⁰¹ But several critics convincingly argue that this portion of the play involving the doctor and his assistant, lines 525-652, is an interpolation to the original play.¹⁰² In addition to not being mentioned in the banns, differences in style, consistency with the English folk play tradition and that the characters contribute nothing to the story, I argue that this portion of the play actually makes a mockery of not only the purpose of the play but the Host itself: the Jews just committed sacrilege against a Host which bleeds, proof for the audience that it really is the flesh of Christ. The playwright would unlikely insert a comedic interlude at any point in the play but especially here in the middle of a *newe passyoun*.

After the doctor and his assistant exit the stage, the four companions of Jonathas continue to torture the Host. They free the Host from the wooden post with Jonathas’ hand still attached and throw it into the cauldron of boiling oil. The oil turns to blood and

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 76, lines 582-584.

¹⁰² Norman Davis, editor, *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, lxxv. After Jonathas’ hand is torn off a Dutch doctor and his boy assistant appear on stage and offer to help Jonathas. Davis discusses this odd segment in the play, which on the surface seems somewhat comic. He writes, “The English play also stands alone in incorporating a scene of comic buffoonery between a quack doctor and his boy... and has been thought, with good reason, to be an interpolation into a text originally wholly serious.” For differences in rhyme and meter as evidence of an interpolation, as well as the characters contribute nothing to the story, see Hardin Craig, *English Religious Drama of the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 326-327; see also John C. Coldewey, ed., *Early English Drama: An Anthology* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1993), 274-275. Coldewey writes that the scene of the Dutch doctor and his assistant is “almost certainly interpolated, as it is not mentioned in the banns” and that it “clearly derives from the English folk play tradition...”

Malchus cries “I am so aferd I am nere woode.”¹⁰³ They turn to Jonathas to tell them what to do next. Jonathas suggests taking the Host and putting it in an oven. When the oven is hot enough Jason takes the Host, still attached to Jonathas’ hand, out of the cauldron with pincers. The oven bursts with blood according to the stage directions: “*Here the owyn must ryve asunder and blede owt at þe cranys*” followed by an appearance of the image of Jhesus to the Jews.¹⁰⁴ The Jews are astonished and likely the audience as well. The torment of the Host stops immediately with the appearance of the image of Christ.

Some audience members might expect that Christ will curse or condemn the Jews at this moment in the play in a similar manner to the Virgin Mary’s condemnation of the Jews found in the *N-Town Cycle* or Margery Kempe’s visions of the crucifixion.¹⁰⁵ But Jhesus does not react this way; instead he confronts the Jews with kindness: “*O mirabiles Judei, attendite et videte/ Si est dolor sicut dolor meus,*” followed by “Oh ye merveylows Jewys,/ Why ar ye to yowr kyng onkynd,/ And I so bitterly bowt yow to my blysse?/ Why fare ye thus fule with yowre frende?”¹⁰⁶ Jhesus then says, among other things, “Why blaspheme yow me? Why do ye thus?/ Why put yow me to a newe tormentry,/ And I dyed for yow on the crosse?”¹⁰⁷ And he reminds the Jews of their former crimes too: “Whyle that I was with yow, ye ded me velanye.”¹⁰⁸ Jhesus ends his speech with a merciful call: “I shew yow the streytnesse of my greuance,/ And all to meue yow to my

¹⁰³ Ibid., 79, line 676; *woode*, mad, insane.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 80.

¹⁰⁵ See chapter 1 above.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 80, lines 717-721; *O mirabiles Judei, attendite et videte/ Si est dolor sicut dolor meus*, O wonderful Jews attend and see/ If there be any sorrow like to my sorrow; *onkynd*, cruel; *bowt*, redeem.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 81, lines 731-733.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 81, line 735.

mercy.”¹⁰⁹ The mercy Jhesus extends to the Jews leads each of them to kneel down in sorrow and repentance. Jhesus then restores Jonathas’ hand. Jonathas exclaims, “Oh thow my Lord God and Sauyowr, osanna!// Thow Kyng of Jewys and of Jerusalem!// O those mighty, strong Lyon of Juda...” followed by a promise to present himself before the bishop.¹¹⁰ Episcopus gladly receives Jonathas and now Episcopus becomes the central character in the play: the stage directions read “*Here shall be image change agayn into brede.*”¹¹¹ He orders that the Holy Sacrament be brought to the church in a solemn procession.

We should note here the unusual aspect of the Croxton play when compared to the *N-Town Cycle*. Here the Jews accept the mercy of Jhesus unlike the Jews in the *N-Town Cycle* who respond with contempt when Christ offers forgiveness from the cross. But more importantly we should note the significance of the dialogue between Jhesus and the Jews: it reveals a central component of playwright’s rhetorical strategy. The figure of Christ does not overlook what the Jews have done since what they have done is inexcusable, blasphemous and cruel. He makes no mention that they did it for the sake of curiosity. What they have done was crucify and torture Christ again; Jhesus alludes to that fact when he refers to the crucifixion when the Jews treated him with villainy. But here we have divine mercy at work. The playwright has written a play in which Jewish villainy has been overcome by divine mercy: mercy from *yowre frende* according to line 722. Jhesus emits emotion and genuine love towards those who have abused him. The playwright here uses the depths of Jewish villainy to reveal the mystical heights of divine love and mercy. The Jews are moved by contrition not because of the fear of judgment

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 81, lines 739-740.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 82, lines 778-780.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 83.

but because Jhesus extends a gracious hand. The playwright of the Croxton play has overturned the conventions about Jewish Host-desecration. His rhetorical strategy is one of confrontation and mercy towards the enemies of Christ.

In the final episodes of the play, Episcopus delivers a sermon when he places the Host on the altar and the scene resembles a church service. He exhorts his children to be strong in spiritual battle against the devil who constantly seeks to destroy their souls; he reminds his audience not to be negligent of the seven virtues and commands them to acknowledge any sins they have forgotten to their confessor. He then calls his audience to beseech “owr Lord and Sauyowr so kene/ To put doun that serpent, cumberer of man,/ To withdraw hys furious forward doctryne bydene,/ Fulfyllyd of þe fend callyd Leuyathan.”¹¹² The *froward doctryne* here refers to the Jews and their doubts about the veracity of transubstantiation. After the sermon Aristorius admits his guilt and Episcopus orders him to undergo penance which consists of abandoning his life as a merchant. The Jews kneel before Episcopus and he christens them, saying “Now the Holy Gost at thys tyme mot you blysse/ As ye knele all now in hys name,/ And with the water of baptyme I shall yow blysse/ To saue yow all from the fendys blame.”¹¹³ Jonathas, speaking for himself and all the Jews, promises in his travels “by contré and cost” to keep Christ’s law, serve the Trinity and rectify their “wyckyd lyuyng” and not “offend as we haue don befor.”¹¹⁴ Episcopus has the last words of the play. He exhorts the audience to serve God with devotion, pray diligently and keep the Ten Commandments in order to “saue yowr sollys from hell.”¹¹⁵ The play ends with the singing of *Te Duem Laudamus*. These last

¹¹² Ibid., 85, lines 880-883.

¹¹³ Ibid., 87, lines 952-955.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 88, lines 965, 967.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 89, lines 988-999.

scenes intensely and dramatically promote traditional orthodoxy: confession and penance, submission to ecclesiastical authority as the representative of Christ and the doctrine of transubstantiation.

For several decades commentators have written extensively about the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*. The debate centers around the primary purpose of the play and a range of theories regarding its Jewish figures. Some critics identify the play as an anti-lollard drama but minimize or ignore the Jewish identity of the main characters and interpret them as either representing lollards or the embodiment of some of the play's other themes.¹¹⁶ Other commentators ignore or marginalize the play's anti-lollard theme and some reduce the Jewish characters in the play to merely skeptics, doubters, objects of

¹¹⁶ Cecilia Cutts, "The Croxton Play: An Anti-Lollard Piece," *Modern Language Quarterly*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (March 1944): 45-60; Lauren Lepow, *Enacting the Sacrament: Counter-Lollardy in the Towneley Cycle*, (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1990); Sarah Beckwith, "Ritual, Church, and Theatre: Medieval Dramas of the Sacramental Body," in *Culture and History 1350-1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities and Writing*, ed. David Aers, 65-89, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992); Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theatre of Devotion: East Anglian Drama and Society in the Late Middle Ages* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 34-41. Cutts argues that the Croxton play serves as a piece of anti-lollard propaganda due to its emphasis on traditional orthodox doctrines such as transubstantiation, penance, confession and the authority of the church through its clergy and that other Host miracle stories composed in England at the time confronted lollardy as well. For example, she cites one of the earliest examples of a Host miracle stories to be the story of the knight Cornelius Cloune, whose story found its way into a sermon at Paul's Cross in 1382. The knight, who did not believe in the Real Presence of the sacrament, was convinced of its truth following a miracle he experienced during Mass. She also cites Walsingham's miracle story in 1389, the St. Thomas miracle of 1445, and the St. Edmund Host miracle of 1464. But Cutts ignores Jewish identity in the play: she interprets the Jews of the play not as Jews but as substitutes for lollards. Lauren Lepow interprets the play as an anti-lollard drama as well, with some valuable and convincing arguments to support its anti-lollard theme. But she ignores the Jewish figures almost entirely other than ambiguously coupling them in with Aristorius, whom she argues represents a lollard heretic (30-31, 102). I assume that since Lepow ignores the Croxton play's Jewish figures entirely, and does not discuss its anti-Jewish imagery, that she basically views the Jews in the same manner as Cecilia Cutts. Sarah Beckwith also recognizes the anti-lollard potential of the play because of its emphasis on the sacrament. As for the Jewish figures in the play, they serve "to explore the resources of doubt" (72). Gail McMurray Gibson argues that the play centers on grace for heretics specifically, not Jews (38). She apparently refers to the Jews of the play as "Jews" in quotation marks, meaning, I presume, that the characters of Jonathas, Jason, Jasdon, Masphat and Malchus are not *actually Jews* but stand-ins for lollards. While I definitely agree with Gibson that the play's purpose is to confront lollardy, internal evidence refers to the characters as Jews throughout the play and they enact a passion sequence on a Host in concordance with other miracle plays or stories that feature Jews as the antagonists.

conversion or simply generic infidels.¹¹⁷ Still other commentators emphasize the identity of the Jews of the play and ignore or minimize the play's anti-lollard purpose.¹¹⁸ And

¹¹⁷ David M. Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics: A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 37-39; Sister Nicholas Maltman, O.P., "Meaning and Art in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*." *ELH*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (Summer, 1974): 149-164; Michael Jones, "Theatrical History in the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*." *ELH*, Vol. 66, No. 2 (Summer 1999): 223-260; Ann E. Nichols, "The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*: A Re-Reading," *Comparative Drama*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Summer 1988): 117-137. Bevington describes the play's emphasis is that of faith versus doubt. The author "has no interest in them [the Jews] as a race, as social outcasts, or as perpetrators of hideous cabalistic massacres of Christians, despite the popularity of tales in the vein of Chaucer's Prioress...Jonathas is simply a type of skeptic who considers the Christian dogma of the mass to be rationally indefensible" (38). Maltman's main emphasis is that the play is a "vivid statement of the meaning of the Blessed Sacrament" and is didactic (149). The figure of the Jew is a sympathetic character, and the "play is not anti-Semitic" (157). She agrees that the Jews of the play are doubters, but also that they are Jews and are part of the meaning of the play. Thus, they serve merely as objects for conversion. Michael Jones seems to share Bevington's idea that the Jews signify skeptics, and while he acknowledges the play's anti-Jewish roots he overcomes this paradox by suggesting that the Jews are exotic and magnetic figures "that complicates a straightforwardly negative judgement upon them" (240). Ann E. Nichols challenges the argument that the Jews represent lollards, since the Jews in the play are *infidels* and not heretics, and thus "the reference to heresy in the play is peripheral rather than central" (244). For Nichols, the drama primarily communicates divine mercy and conversion through the power of the Passion of Christ and the baptism of the Jewish characters as recipients of divine grace. Thus, the Croxton play ultimately emphasizes mercy towards the Jewish characters. See also Richard L. Homan, "Two *Exempla*: Analogues to the *Play of the Sacrament* and *Dux Moraud*," *Comparative Drama*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (Fall 1984): 241-251. Richard L. Homan argues that we should consider the *Play of the Sacrament* as a serious piece of devotional art and that the play does not contain elements that negatively portray Jews. Homan writes, "This interpretation is consistent with the argument of several authors that the *Play of the Sacrament*, despite naming its protagonists Jews, conveys none of the anti-Semitic spirit found in continental plays" (244); "Devotional Themes in the Violence and Humor of the *Play of the Sacrament*," *Comparative Drama*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (Winter 1986-87): 327-340. Here Homan contends that the "comparisons I have made to contemporary stage technique and devotional art suggest it addresses those concerns not in the manner of anti-Semitic ridicule but in the manner of serious devotional art" (339).

¹¹⁸ Donnalee Dox, "Medieval Drama as Documentation: 'Real Presence' in the Croxton *Conversion of Ser Jonathas the Jewe by the Myracle of the Blessed Sacrament*," *Theatre Survey*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (May 1997): 97-115; Robert L. A. Clark and Claire Sponsler, "Othered Bodies: Racial Cross-Dressing in the *Mistere de la Sainte* and the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 1 (1999): 61-87; Ruth Nisse, *Defining Acts: Drama and Politics of Interpretation in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 113; Steven F. Kruger, *The Spectral Jew: Conversion and Embodiment in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 87-88; Michael Mark Chemers, "Anti-Semitism, Surrogacy, and the Invocation of Mohammed in the *Play of the Sacrament*," *Comparative Drama*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2007): 38; Lisa Lampert, "The Once and Future Jew: The Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, Little Robert of Bury and Historical Memory," *Jewish History*, Vol. 15 (2001): 235-255. Dox argues that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the Jews and lollards in the play and thus the figure of the Jew must signify something else: The Jews in the play do not symbolize heresy but rather serve as witnesses to Christian truth and testify to that truth for the audience (109). Clark and Sponsler argue that although they do not completely dismiss the idea of an anti-lollard connection to the play's Jews, they emphasize the Jews' role as the "alien, proscribed, and demonized other" in order to "contribute to the construction of a fictive cultural coherence" (80-81). In other words, the Jews of Croxton provide cultural cohesion by occupying a negative role in Christian society, a society in which they cannot remain. Thus, Clark and Sponsler observe that the bishop sends the Jews away to a kind of 'exile' that promotes social cohesion for those who stay behind, never to be reintegrated into the community despite their conversion. While these observations provide us with key insights about how Jewish exile advances

finally other commentators interpret the anti-lollard theme of the play while maintaining some semblance of the Jewish characters as Jews.¹¹⁹

cultural coherence, the focus on the Jewish characters' exile seems to overlook what led up to it. Nisse, Kruger and Chemers all focus attention on the play's anti-Judaism which identify the Jew as an outsider, drawing parallels between apocalyptic sources involving Jews, the pollution of Jewish blood and the invocation of the name *Machomet* and its links to a Muslim threat. Lampert argues that the cult of Robert survived well into the fifteenth century and that the audience of the Croxton play would have been familiar with the story of Robert's martyrdom. Furthermore, she writes, "Although Robert's martyrdom occurred over two hundred years before the writing of the *Play of the Sacrament*, his relics were still sufficiently revered to be housed in a chapel named in his honor until at least 1520, as indicated by records of singers paid for performing in St Robert's chapel in that year." Although Lampert links this child imagery to that of Robert of Bury, who was allegedly sacrificed by Jews in 1190, the child imagery in the Croxton play does not necessarily originate with the cult of Robert. See R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Trent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial*, (New Haven: Yale University Press in cooperation with Yeshiva University, 1992), 4. Ritual child murder was already a part of the "morphology," to use Hsia's term, surrounding Host desecration and Christian sacrifice. However, the Croxton play's impact on an audience who was familiar with the cult of Robert would be more pronounced than an audience who was not acquainted with a specific event of child martyrdom. For some pioneering work on the issue of anti-Semitism and English literature in general, as well as the phenomenon known as "the stage Jew," see Bernard Glassman, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes Without Jews: Images of the Jews in England 1290-1700*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1975); for the issue of anti-Semitism as it relates to the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, see Stephen Spector, "Anti-Semitism and the English Mystery Plays" in *The Drama of the Middle Ages: Comparative and Critical Essays*, eds. Clifford Davidson, C. J. Gianakaris, and John H. Stroupe, (New York: AMS Press, 1982), 328-341. Spector draws upon psychoanalytic theory to argue that the anti-Semite "simplifies the fearful complexities of his life by localizing all threats in the Jew...[which he can] then extirpate his doubts and fears by execrating the Jew." He further writes, "A remarkably similar pattern occurs in fifteenth-century mystery play cycles, which make the Jew represent precisely and only those evils that were most threatening to the goals of the plays. By rejecting the Jew, the auditor rejected the threats, which were the impediments to faith and salvation" (328).

¹¹⁹ Miri Rubin, "The Culture of Europe in the Later Middle Ages," *History Workshop* 33 (Spring, 1992): 167-169; David Lawton, "Sacrilige and Theatricality: the Croxton Play of the Sacrament," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (2003): 281-309; Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms, 1350-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Victor I. Scherb, *Staging Faith: East Anglian Drama in the Later Middle Ages*, (London: Associated University Presses, 2001). Rubin emphasizes the play's comedic and theatrical elements, which differentiate it from other Host-desecration tales, especially since the Jews convert at the end of the play rather than face execution. While she maintains that the Jewish figures represent Jews and discusses the anti-lollard themes of the play, she de-emphasizes any hostile or negative portrayal of the Jewish characters since "Jews are not the subject of the Croxton *Play*, its dramatic force is not fuelled by the desire to punish and avenge the desecration of Christ's body, it is not phobic." This interpretation, I argue, ignores the blatant villainy perpetrated by the Jewish characters even if they receive divine mercy from Christ, something that would not be lost on a fifteenth-century audience nor the figure of Jhesus in the play. Jews are indeed the subject of the Croxton play since they are an integral part of the play's central purpose of confronting lollardy through emphasizing the veracity and power of transubstantiation through images of Jews and Judaism. Without the Jews as subjects of the play, with all of their villainy exposed, the play's central polemic against heresy is completely undermined. David Lawton notes that the play includes an "occasional, general, and forensic connection between Lollards and Jews" (290) while Anthony Bale argues that the Jew serves a variety of purposes, including a link to lollardy in order to create an adversary that crosses all other social distinctions (141). Victor I. Scherb primarily views the Croxton play as a "diatribe against commerce" with a devotional purpose, but he also acknowledges its "polemical subtext" (72, 84). That subtext comprises of an anti-heretical polemic that confronts those members of the audience who have, or are in danger of adopting, heretical opinions about the Eucharist: "The dramatist, in effect seizes the

Internal evidence in the play clearly proves that the playwright intended these characters to be Jews and he does not confuse or blur the line between Jews and heretics either. Therefore we should reject interpretations that minimize, distort or ignore Jewish identity or culpability in the Croxton play. The playwright clearly and conspicuously depicts Jonathas, Jason, Jasdon, Masphat and Malchus as Jews and late medieval audiences would not view these figures as anything but Jews. Numerous characters consider them Jews, from the banns to the end of the play, including Jhesus when he speaks to them beginning in line 719. And while they do doubt the veracity of transubstantiation, the Jews choose a method to confront that doubt that involves Host desecration and violence towards Christ, a re-enactment of the crucifixion and the crime of deicide. This *crime* would not be lost on a late medieval audience since it was rehearsed regularly through the passion sequences we find in late medieval drama, sermons and devotional literature. Furthermore, the Jews of the play reject central tenets of Christianity such as the Eucharist and transubstantiation, the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ. Finally, they undergo conversion and baptism at the end of the play unlike their co-conspirator Aristorius who confesses his sin and undergoes penance.

opportunity to identify the audience with the heretical belief of the Jews, beliefs uncomfortably like what they, or perhaps some of their neighbors, might hold. At the same time, such beliefs are exteriorized and identified with a conventionally distant other – the Jews of [Eraclea] – and further distanced by the actors performing most of their actions upon a scaffold” (76-77). While Scherb offers a valuable contribution about the relationship between Croxton’s Jews and the issue of heresy, I would like to offer a few responses. First, we should note that Jews did not hold “heretical” beliefs about the Eucharist: Jews held anti-Christian views about the Eucharist, consistent with their role as outsiders, or, more accurately, as the enemies of Christ and the church. The playwright maintains a distinction between Jews and heretics. Scherb also insists that commerce and its adverse effects on piety dominate the play’s meaning. Although the play portrays Aristorius as an avaricious opportunist, the Jews play the primary conspirators, with Jonathas in particular willing to pay an exorbitant amount of money to obtain the Host. Scherb argues that the plan to obtain a Host originated with Aristorius’ greed and that the Jews were motivated solely by curiosity. But this seems an odd interpretation given the fact that the Jews describe Eucharistic belief as false and unnatural and torture and crucify the Host, subjecting Christ to a ‘new passyoun.’ Scherb’s emphasis on Aristorius’ greed ignores the character’s real crime: collusion with the enemies of Christ to facilitate sacrilege.

Although the Jews do convert at the end of the play we should not simply reduce them to objects of conversion similar to some of the hagiographical tales we find in Mirk's *Festial*. In the Croxton play the Jews perpetrate a dastardly act of sacrilege and torture and the figure of Jhesus does not overlook what they have done. Rather, he shows them mercy because of what they have done.

Although the playwright features Jews committing Host desecration and emphasizes divine mercy towards them this should not distract us from the central purpose of the Croxton play. Therefore, we should reject interpretations that ignore or minimize the play's anti-lollard purpose. The playwright confronts one of the central doctrinal issues at stake in the church's struggle for orthodoxy against the lollards in the fifteenth century. Internal evidence points to the playwright's anti-lollard agenda. In the banns the first narrator exhorts the audience to show their sins to the priest so as not to be in despair day and night and "No maner off dowghtys þat Lord put in."¹²⁰ In other words one should not subject the Lord to one's doubts; what follows this statement refers to the doubts the Jews have about the veracity of transubstantiation. The playwright clearly confronts any doubts about transubstantiation among the audience right at the beginning of the play. Although non-lollards could have doubts about the Eucharist, these statements in the banns point to a playwright likely aware of the struggle over Eucharistic orthodoxy. Towards the end of the play, Episcopus delivers a sermon after he places the Host on the altar which points to an anti-lollard theme as well. He declares that "the Passyon of Cryst ys meynt vs among" (or, meant for us) and that one should beseech the Lord to bring down the serpent so that he will withdraw "hys furious froward doctryn"

¹²⁰ Norman Davis, ed., *Non-Cycle Plays and Fragments*, 60, lines 66-68.

immediately.¹²¹ Clearly the perverse or evil doctrine to which Episcopus refers relates to Christ's passion and given that he has just placed the Host on the altar, the *froward doctryn* points to lollard denial of transubstantiation.

Several scholars have pointed out other internal evidence in the play that points to the playwright's anti-lollard agenda. Lauren Lepow argues that the phrase uttered by Jonathas "Owr wyckyd lyung for to restore" and Aristorius' promise to amend "myn wyckyd lyfe" at the end of the play serve as puns that relate to John Wyclif, inspired by Thomas Netter who referred to John Wyclif as "Joanne, cognomento impiae vitae: John Wicked-Life."¹²² Gail Gibson suggests that a statement towards the end of the play contains a common statement for lollards who have recanted. She refers to the point when Jhesus instructs the Jews to show themselves to his priests in line 765. Gibson argues that the "miraculous image speaks to order the 'Jews' to 'Ite et ostendite vos sacerdotibus meis' ('Go and present yourselves to my priests'), the standard refutation to the errors of the Lollards," which sounds similar to Thomas Hoccleve's statement against Oldcastle, "Go to the preest, correcte thyn errors."¹²³

In addition to internal evidence, we should acknowledge that the play was written amidst a religious climate fraught with ecclesiastical anxieties about heresy and doctrinal purity and the church's doctrine of the Eucharist was central among them. Trial records reveal ecclesiastical campaigns that likely relate specifically to the Croxton play. In 1457, Bishop Chedworth of Lincoln and Bishop Gray of Ely tried five men for heresy and sentenced them to penance. The five men all came from parishes or towns within thirty

¹²¹ Ibid., 85, lines 878 and 880-882.

¹²² Lepow, *Enacting the Sacrament*, 31; see lines 965 and 973.

¹²³ Gibson, *Staging Faith*, 38.

miles of Croxton.¹²⁴ In 1467, William Barrow of Walden was executed on heresy charges, including his denial of transubstantiation. This was likely a case of relapse; the record of his previous trial has been lost. However, his original trial could have been within a few years of the Croxton play's composition date around 1460. These records indicate that heresy trials occurred around the time and location of the Croxton play, and likely the author of the play was aware of these trials and the public processions of penance or execution that resulted. Furthermore, five of the six men were given the sentence of penance, congruent with the play's final scene. The exception, of course, was a case of relapse.¹²⁵ Finally, these records reveal that ecclesiastical authorities investigated and confronted heresy within their jurisdictions and that they were at least concerned with the spread of heresy. Whether lollard dissidents actually populated these dioceses is less relevant than what ecclesiastical authorities perceived as a threat. In 1494, Bishop Coldwell of Norwich issued a commission to inquire about and proceed against heretics in his diocese even though none came to light.¹²⁶ It was his perception of the continuing presence of lollards or other heterodox dissidents in his diocese that drove Coldwell to act. The playwright of the Croxton play shared this concern back around 1460. But he developed a different, more creative approach to stopping the spread of lollardy, specifically as it related to the doctrine of the Eucharist. The Croxton play

¹²⁴ Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 132-133. Bishop Chedworth sentenced William and Richard Spark from Somersham in May 1457. In early June, Bishop Gray sentenced Robert Spark of Reche, a village in the parish of Swaffham, John Crud of Cambridge, and John Baile of Chesterton. All of these locations are within thirty miles of Croxton, believed to be the location of where the Croxton play was composed in 1461.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 131, 237-238. Thomson notes that Alnwick's trials in 1428-1431 resulted in sentences that usually resulted in penance rather than execution. "A final point which might be noted about Alnwick's persecution is that, after the early burnings of White and the others, the Bishop does not appear to have needed recourse to the death penalty." See also Ian Forrest, *The Detection of Heresy in Late Medieval England*, 140. Forrest analyzes Thomson's list of trials on pages 237-238 of *The Later Lollards*. "Thomson calculates that between 1414 and 1522 only thirty-three out of 545 heresy cases resulted in execution, that is 6 per cent."

¹²⁶ Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 134.

confronts lollard denial of transubstantiation through images of Jews and Judaism to persuade audiences that not only is the Eucharist the literal body of Christ but that to deny that doctrine associates one with Jews who desecrate and torture the Host. We should also not that it is not unusual to find late medieval examples of the intersection between Jews and lollards. For example, when Margery Kempe was suspected of heresy at Caawood just south of York, some onlookers wondered whether she was a Jew: “Some of the people asked whether she were a Christian woman or a Jew; some said she was a good woman, and some said no.”¹²⁷ Margery’s accusers apparently found something about her that reminded them of Jews and Judaism or something that warrants that type of opprobrium; it is unlikely that they actually thought she was a Jew. The statement is meant to condemn her because they suspect her of heresy; they are not confusing heresy with Judaism but rather thinking *with* Jews about what they suspect is lollardy. This episode serves as a precedent of sorts for the Croxton play.

The playwright of the Croxton play maintains a distinction between the Jew and the heretic as part of his rhetorical strategy; he associates one with the other on the primary doctrinal point of the play, the Eucharist. The playwright maintains identity of the Jews precisely so that he can associate those who deny transubstantiation with the Jews on stage, Jews who subject Christ to a new set of tortures through Host desecration.

¹²⁷ *The Book of Margery Kempe*, ed. and trans. Lynn Staley (New York: Norton & Company, 2001), 85. See Anthony Bale, “Christian Anti-Semitism and Intermedial Experience in Late Medieval England,” in *The Religions of the Book: Christian Perceptions, 1400-1660*, eds. Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 34. Bale argues that the term “Jew...seems to mean ‘Loller’ and ‘heretyke’ for the ecclesiastics seek to determine the extent, if any, of Kempe’s heterodoxy rather than her Judaism. ‘Jewe’ does not mean Jewish, but rather that which is disruptive to Christianity and the Christian establishment...” Bale goes on to argue that it is unlikely that ecclesiastical authorities would really regard Margery as a Jew given their training in Scripture and that it is rather her “disruptive and violent devotional style” that gets her into trouble in the first place. I would contend, however, that some of Margery’s accusers apparently connect suspicions of heresy with some aspect of Jewish perfidy, although the text is unclear as to specifics.

We should not miss the playwright's scathing polemic: he associates those who deny transubstantiation, the lollards, with the Jews who crucified Christ and committed deicide. For the playwright, those who deny the Eucharist are not simply Christians who struggle with doubt about the miraculous power of the sacrament but the enemies of Christ like the Jews. But the playwright's rhetorical strategy presents another extreme, one of miracle and restoration. He seeks to reinforce Eucharistic devotion through the repudiation of the sacrilege on stage and the doubt or denial associated with it on the one hand and its miraculous power on the other. And that miraculous power turns Jewish desecration into contrition. The true power of the miracle is that *even the Jews* can be persuaded by the miracle of the Eucharist. An audience member who denied transubstantiation would be confronted with a searing indictment on the one hand but a gracious hand on the other: deny the doctrine of the Eucharist and be just as criminal as the Jews; submit to the doctrine of the Eucharist and be accepted by the church through the mercy of Christ. The Croxton play represents a unique and creative attempt to confront lollardy through images of Jews and Judaism during a period of religious tension. While the church sought to combat heresy through interrogations the playwright of the Croxton play found a way to address heresy through a public spectacle. Not only did he make the Eucharist something real but he could impugn those who denied its miraculous power with visceral sequences of Jewish violence against Christ and convince them to return to the love and care of the church.

The way in which we interpret the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament* has implications on how we understand the fifteenth century, the church, lollardy and even the Reformation in the sixteenth century. For example, the revisionist historian of late

medieval and Reformation England, Eamon Duffy, modifies his original 1992 position regarding the Croxton play from his first edition of *The Stripping of the Altars* with qualifying statements in the preface of his 2005 edition. In his discussion of the Croxton play, Duffy argues that the play illustrates several important sacraments, that the “sin of the Jews in the play in recrucifying the Sacramental Christ is specifically that of unbelief” and that this sin of unbelief would remind an East Anglian audience to recall “those other unbelieving outsiders, the Lollards.”¹²⁸ However, in the preface of his 2005 edition Duffy writes,

And by the mid-fifteenth century, so apparently promising a platform for anti-Lollard polemic as the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament*, probably written in Suffolk, contains no obvious connections or allusions to contemporary heresy. The anti-sacramentalists of the play are Jews, not Lollards, and there is not even the most oblique reference in the play to any continuing tradition of East Anglian heresy...Despite the continuing insistence by some historians on the deep-rooted persistence of Lollardy ...there is surprisingly little hard evidence of *widespread* popular appeal.¹²⁹

While Duffy originally suggests that lollardy was a real concern for the writer of the Croxton play and linked to the Jewish figures in some way, he reverses his position in the preface of his second edition in light of other critics who interpret the Jewish figures of the play as Jews rather than proxies for lollard heretics. Historians are certainly free to evolve in their interpretations of historical material in light of new research. While I agree that we should not distort or minimize the identity of the Jews in the play, and Duffy’s more recent interpretation seems to support these recent trends in scholarship, nor exaggerate the widespread popular appeal of lollardy as Duffy and other revisionist have argued, we do not need to accept reductionist interpretations of the Jewish figures

¹²⁸ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580, 2d Edition*, first edition 1992 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 107.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, xxx.

nor conclude with some revisionist historians that we must diminish the presence of lollardy in order to offer a vision of late medieval traditional religion as deeply meaningful, popular and coherent.

I would argue that Duffy's descriptions of the Jews as "unbelieving outsiders" or "anti-sacramentalists" seriously distorts late medieval attitudes towards Jews and Judaism, even for the Jews of the Croxton play. Neither description encapsulates Jewish envy, stubbornness, perfidy or malice; nor do they reflect the late medieval Christian view that the Jews were the enemies of the human race.¹³⁰ We do not find images of Jews reduced to innocuous terms in Margery Kempe's text during her visions of the passion, a figure Duffy offers as a premier example of the vitality of orthodox lay religion, nor in Nicholas Love's *Mirror* or the cycle plays of the period. The dramas of the *N-town Cycle*, for example, have particular relevance because they originated in East Anglia and were performed around the same time as the Croxton play.¹³¹ These plays present the Jew on the stage as the permanent adversary of Christ and responsible for his crucifixion, a theme repeated time and again for English audiences. Late medieval Christians did not merely consider Jews as *outsiders* but enemies of Christ, cursed to wander as the embodiments of God's disfavor and judgment and a reminder to Christians about the triumph of the church over the Jews.

Certainly the Jews of the Croxton play doubt the veracity of the Eucharist as *unbelieving outsiders*. But *doubt* or *unbelief* for the Jews of the Croxton play does not

¹³⁰ See chapter 1, n. 73.

¹³¹ Stephen Spector, editor, *The N-Town Play, Vol. I*, Early English Text Society, s.s. 11, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), xv-xvi; xxxviii-xl. See also David Lawton's "Sacrilege and Theatricality: the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*" wherein he writes that the Croxton play may have been a "touring production...in common with some morality plays of the region and with the one probable touring cycle, the N-Town Cycle" (285). Furthermore, he writes that the Croxton play reenacts "the buffeting and torture of Christ from the cycle plays" (287).

suggest something innocent or blameless, some kind of even-handed, disinterested approach to the doctrine of the Eucharist as if the Jews are conducting some sort of experiment. In a late medieval context these terms suggest refusal, blindness, obstinacy and perfidy. The *doubt* or *unbelief* of the Jews leads them to commit violent sacrilege against Christ. Therefore, to characterize the Jews of the Croxton play as simply “anti-sacramentalists” does not reflect late medieval attitudes about Host desecration at all. The Jews of the Croxton play perpetrate a blasphemous crime against the living body of Christ, altogether different than even a lollard who refuses to submit to auricular confession or believes that the Eucharist remains material bread after consecration. We cannot attenuate the violent and sacrilegious actions of the Jews with the suggestion that simple unbelief or anti-sacramentalism drove the Jews to test the Host any more than we would argue that late medieval Christians thought that the Jews who tortured and murdered Christ did so simply out of unbelief.

Furthermore, we should note that late medieval Christians highly esteemed the Host and its celebration as part of the liturgical calendar. During the Feast of Corpus Christi every summer the faithful carried the Host and celebrated the miracle of the sacrament in a solemn procession.¹³² Duffy argues convincingly that the establishment of

¹³² R. T. Davies, editor, *The Corpus Christi Play of the English Middle Ages*, (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972), 23-25. Davies writes that the Corpus Christi plays were celebrated annually during the Feast of Corpus Christi, on the second Thursday after Pentecost in the summer. “The purpose of the Feast and the services of the day may also have been both stimulating and formative. They were to celebrate the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper, which commemorates the redeeming Passion of the Lord, and it was officially explained in 1264 that a separate feast, more capable of appropriate observance, was now instituted for this purpose because Maundy Thursday, the day of the institution of the Last Supper, was, in the crowded business of Holy Week, too occupied with other important matters. Now it is clear from sermons and homiletic literature which have the Corpus Christi Feast as their subject, that, inasmuch as Jesus was believed to be really present in the Sacrament, it was the miraculous power of the Holy Eucharist, or, more specifically, of the consecrated Host, that engaged most devotional attention. This was why the Host was carried in procession on this day. Thus, among the wide range of medieval plays, it might rather have been one such as that known as the Croxton play of the Sacrament which became the natural drama of Corpus Christi, because it enacted miracles worked by the Host.”

Corpus Christi guilds throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries points to evidence of feast's popular allegiance among the laity, which not only united a community around the sacrament but also united the faith of that community.¹³³ When confronted with the Host-desecration sequence in the Croxton play, audiences would be horrified, offended and enraged that the Host is stabbed by the Jews but not surprised that Jews perpetrate the crime. As Ronnie Hsia points out, Host-desecration narratives involving Jews was not a new phenomenon in the late medieval period since stories Eucharistic desecration began to circulate from the twelfth century onwards when the veneration of the body of Christ found its way into the theology, liturgy and practice of the church.¹³⁴

As for the issue of religious dissidence in late medieval England, Duffy explains in the preface to the second edition of *The Stripping of the Altars* that his work “does not exclude or ignore difference, dissent, or doubt” but that his primary focus was “the content and character of traditional religion.”¹³⁵ As for the Reformation, Duffy argues that the impact of lollardy on later Protestant development “has been grossly exaggerated,” which echoes Richard Rex’s point: Protestants were converts from traditional religion, not lollardy.¹³⁶ He further writes that “if we are to believe the surviving visitation and court records, fifteenth-century Lollardy seems to have been less of an irritant to most diocesan authorities than local cunning-men or womanising

¹³³ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 43-44; 92, n. 18.

¹³⁴ R. Po-Chia Hsia, *Trent 1475: Stories of a Ritual Murder Trial*, (New Haven: Yale University Press in cooperation with Yeshiva University, 1992), 4. Hsia further examines the relationship between Host desecration, sacrifice, and the ritual murder of children by Jews, who writes, “In these medieval representations of Host desecration, depicted in paintings, exempla, chronicles, and plays, the eucharist became interchangeable with the Christ Child, thus revealing the intimate morphology between discourses of Eucharistic abuse, Christian sacrifice, and ritual murder.”

¹³⁵ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, xx.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, xxi. He draws his point from Richard Rex, *The Lollards* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), chapter 5.

priests...¹³⁷ Although Duffy rightly emphasizes traditional religion's coherence and widespread appeal to refute earlier historiographical distortions, especially the argument that the presence of lollardy reflected traditional religion's widespread unpopularity to be exploited by evangelicals in the sixteenth century, this forces him to minimize the presence of lollardy to the point that he completely ignores the Croxton play's anti-lollard purpose and the church's general concern for the spread of heresy.

Duffy's arguments invariably respond to scholars such as Gail McMurray Gibson and Norman Tanner, the former who describes the religious climate of East Anglia in the late fifteenth century as one of "remarkable tolerance and leniency, indeed almost resignation, about the presence of Lollardy."¹³⁸ Her contention draws almost exclusively from Norman Tanner's assessment of East Anglia's tolerant religious climate.¹³⁹ But the lack of heresy trials does not necessarily indicate that lollardy was widespread and therefore tolerated by ecclesiastical authorities. Duffy's contention could be just as plausible: the lack of heresy trials indicates not a tolerance for religious dissidence but the absence of religious dissidence entirely. But equally possible is A. F. Thomson's point too, that the lack of trial records could suggest that lollards simply avoided detection by ecclesiastical authorities.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, Thomson advises us that heresy trial records in and of themselves will not reveal to us the number of dissidents since it "is clear from a

¹³⁷ Ibid., xxii-xxiii.

¹³⁸ Gail McMurray Gibson, *The Theater of Devotion*, 30.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 31. Gibson writes, "The truth is probably simply that many East Anglian clergymen as well as laymen explored with intensity and sincerity a wide range of religious options. As Norman Tanner observes about the religious life of Norwich in the fifteenth century, the absence of formal accusations and definite evidence of Lollardy at Norwich during most of the century would seem to suggest that 'the religion provided by the local Church was sufficiently rich and varied and sufficiently tolerant towards what might be called the left wing of orthodoxy to cater to the tastes of most of its citizens.'" See Norman P. Tanner, *The Church in Late Medieval Norwich, 1370-1532* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1984), 166.

¹⁴⁰ Thomson, *The Later Lollards*, 3.

study of the records that there must have been prosecutions of which no detailed information has been preserved.”¹⁴¹ At best the number of heterodox dissidents remains uncertain.

What does seem certain is that the church employed a variety of measures to confront the spread of lollardy beyond judicial initiatives. The preacher of MS Bodley 649 certainly viewed lollardy as a major concern, and Reginald Pecock did not compose his lengthy *Repressor* to refute opponents that did not exist. The playwright of the Croxton play felt that Eucharistic devotion was certainly at stake and was likely aware of the ecclesiastical initiatives in and around East Anglia when he composed his play. While I agree that some historians exaggerate the widespread popularity of lollardy in late medieval England and Duffy’s revisionist corrective to the historical record rightly challenges past historiographical excesses, we do not have to choose between visions of the period in which heterodox dissenters are ubiquitous and ones from which they are almost entirely absent. The Croxton play in particular shows us the existence of doubt, heterodoxy and even heresy in the midst of the rampantly prospering traditional religion of fifteenth-century East Anglia. We should think of lollardy, not in terms of numbers or its level of popular appeal but rather from the vantage point of ecclesiastical authorities who sought to safeguard an orthodox order and condemn heresy through propaganda such as the Croxton play. It should not be surprising that ecclesiastical authorities deployed propaganda in the form of a miracle play: it was public, visceral and accessible.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 3.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have provided several examples in which defenders of traditional religion associate or refute lollardy with images of Jews and Judaism. These include sermons, Nicholas Love's *The Mirror*, Reginald Pecock's *Repressor* and the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*. We reasonably conclude through this examination that supporters of the church promoted traditional orthodoxy amidst a climate that was anything but stable. The perception that lollardy was a growing menace demanded that defenders of the church act as part of or as an alternative to ecclesiastical authorities who sought out and examined heresy suspects. The authors of the texts heretofore discussed adopt a rhetorical strategy that conflates lollard opinions or doctrine with images of Jews and Judaism. But sometimes defenders of orthodoxy refute lollard polemic by thinking with Jews about their own traditional religion: both Nicholas Love and Reginald Pecock think with images of Pharisees in interesting ways that nuance straightforward negative views about the Pharisees themselves in order to undermine lollard rhetoric arrayed against them. For the playwright of the Croxton play, he *thinks* with Jews about lollard dissidents and how both groups held a common disdain or repudiation about the doctrine of transubstantiation. The result was a play that both unambiguously condemns lollard opinions about the Eucharist through images of Jews committing Host desecration and promotes a Eucharistic orthodoxy through a highly engaging and public spectacle. Like other propaganda utilized by ecclesiastical authorities, it served to confront, and hopefully resolve, the internal doubts that some might hold regarding a central orthodox doctrine through its public performance, polemical tone and message of penance.

The author, composing this play in the 1460s, offered it as part of a larger campaign to confront a perceived dissidence which concerned ecclesiastical authorities as they struggled for orthodoxy through sermons, devotional literature and public processions of the abjured. It can be read as one of many attempts to characterize various sorts of doubters or dissidents not as eccentric or embarrassing neighbors or kin to be tolerated or ignored but rather as enemies of God and true religion to be confronted. At the very least we can conclude that the people who produced the Croxton play and the authors of the texts I have examined in this chapter were not as blithely confident about the dominance and popularity of an entirely orthodox and monolithic traditional religion as at least some historians have been. As the Reformation arrived on the shores of England in the 1520s, the struggle for orthodoxy continued. Proponents of traditional religion faced a new threat as reformers brought to England a *newe learning*, but both groups also employed images of Jews and Judaism in ways similar to the previous century.

Chapter 4

William Tyndale's Struggle for Orthodoxy

The most prominent evangelical reformer of the Henrician period was the biblical scholar William Tyndale. Tyndale largely pioneered a strategy that characterized the evangelical movement in England and its struggle to define a new orthodoxy, although it is certain that he was not unaware of England's lollard past. The struggle for orthodoxy, led by Tyndale and later by such men as Robert Barnes, George Joye, John Frith, John Bale and Thomas Cranmer, fundamentally involved a two-pronged offensive. First, they sought to propagate the *newe lerning* and its central doctrinal claims and praxis through preaching and print. These doctrinal claims included justification by faith alone, the proper understanding of works vis-à-vis faith, the justification for a reduced number of what they viewed as biblically-sanctioned sacraments, the primacy of scripture and the vital role of preaching the word of God to bring about true conversion and salvation. Second, they employed a constant stream of polemic designed to critique and condemn various beliefs and practices of traditional religion and censure defenders of the traditional church with the goal of persuading audiences of not only the legitimacy of the *newe lerning* but the illegitimacy of the old faith. Specifically, reformers employed rhetorical arguments that sought to not only dismantle centuries of religious tradition and practice but shock audiences out of their religious reflexes during a period when the reform movement was nascent, largely unpopular and vulnerable. Those rhetorical attacks not only denigrated traditional religion and its ecclesiastical overseers but it provided a stark contrast between what was true and what was false, who was authentic and biblical and who was corrupt, hypocritical and superstitious. Those contrasts

oftentimes involved images of Jews and Judaism, images that had become a familiar part of the fabric of late medieval Christianity. By and large, most Christians in late medieval and Reformation England held varying degrees of hostility towards these images.

Reformers exploited that hostility in their polemical offensive against traditional religion.

During the Henrician Reformation, many English reformers thought about traditional religion in terms of Jews and Judaism with varying degrees of frequency and for various reasons. For some, images of Jews and Judaism provided audiences with familiar and widely recognizable illustrations through which one could associate, and thereby denigrate, traditional church opponents. Other reformers thought with Jews not only for polemical purposes but used them to advance their claims of biblical orthodoxy. For William Tyndale, by 1531, thinking with Jews helped uncover the origins of the church and how it had gone wrong from the beginning. In this chapter I will examine Tyndale's *The parable of the wicked mammon*, his famous treatise *the Obedience of a Christian Man*, his refutation of Thomas More entitled *An Answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* and his exegetical treatise *An exposition upon the V. VI. VII. chapters of Mathew*.

I

In 1528, William Tyndale published his first major treatise, *The parable of the wycked mammon*, inspired by Luther's sermon on Luke 16. Tyndale's primary argument concerns the doctrine of justification by faith alone and the role of works in the life of a Christian.¹ In the preface, however, Tyndale finds it necessary to set the record straight

¹ William Tyndale, *The parable of the wycked mammon* (London: John Daye, 1547; STC 24457). Although Tyndale published his treatise in 1528, I refer to a later publication which was compiled in 1536 and

regarding two former associates, William Roye and Jerome Barlowe. Tyndale's association with Roye, at least, had already been established: Roye praises Tyndale's pseudonym 'William Hitchyns' in the preface of *A brefe dialogue bitwene a Christen Father and his stubborne Sonne*, published in 1527.² Now Tyndale wanted nothing to do with Roye or Barlowe; he distanced himself from both men after they published *Rede me and be not wroth*, a virulent anti-Wolsey dialogue which perhaps threatened the reception of his newly translated New Testament in England.³ Tyndale's indictment of Roye appears in a marginal note: "Wyth Gods word ought a man to rebuke wikednes and false doctrine and not wyth raylyng rimes."⁴ That seems to be the impetus behind Tyndale's treatise: a servant of the Lord must be "peaceable vnto all men and ready to teach" and able to suffer meekly and allow God to grant opponents repentance; Roye and Barlowe's rhymes betray authentic faith, a stark contrast from the kind of faith Tyndale wanted to promote. Tyndale appeals to his readers: "Let it not offende thee [that] some walk inordinatly; let not the wickedness of Iudas cause thee to despise the doctrine of his felowes."⁵ In other words, Tyndale does not want readers to associate him with such unsophisticated and vulgar polemicists.

Tyndale perhaps had a point. Roye and Barlowe's 'rhymes' begin with an illustration of Cardinal Wolsey's coat of arms followed by a description "Of the prowde

published in 1547. The earliest publication was from Antwerp by Johannes Hoochstraten; see David Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 156.

² William Roye, *A Brefe Dialogue bitwene a Christian Father and his Stobborne Sonne*, STC 24223.3, 1527, eds. Douglas H. Parker and Bruce Krajewski (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 99.

³ William A. Clebsch, *England's Earliest Protestants, 1520-1535* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 230.

⁴ Tyndale, *The parable*, sig. A3r. For a classic and somewhat unsympathetic analysis of Tyndale's relationship with Roye and Barlowe and Roye's work, see Clebsch, 229-240; a more sympathetic treatment of Tyndale, see Daniell, *William Tyndale: A Biography*, 157-158.

⁵ Tyndale, *Parable*, sig. A3v; see Daniell, 158, who argues that it "is not for thing that the passage against Roye prefaces his exposition of the parable wherein he tackles systematically the issue of works as subsidiary to faith: Roye's bad works show him lacking in faith, and untrustworthy."

Cardinall this is the shelde/ Borne vp between two angels off Sathan.”⁶ In their preface they describe ecclesiastical officials as false teachers, the founders of “dampnable sects” who bringe upon “their owne heddes swyfte dampnacion”, wolves in sheep’s clothing and “abhominable ministers.”⁷ They attack Wolsey and the Mass directly throughout; in the initial dialogue between the characters Author and Treatise, Author’s refrain *vt inueniatur iniquitas eius ad odium*, taken from Psalm 36.2, comes after each of his stanzas with Wolsey surely in mind.⁸ Treatise points out that although people hate the Cardinal, “Yet in the masse they putt moche confidence.” Author reassures him because “Itt is goddis will his trueth to avaunce/ And to put antichrist oute of his kyngdom.”⁹ After this exchange the work includes a mock-lamentation that describes the Mass as deceased and a dialogue between two servants, Watkyn and Ieffraye. Ieffraye describes religious orders under “antichristis raygne/... To helpe mass against the gospell” and offers an *opinion* about Wolsey: “some men call hym Carnall/ And some saye he is the devil and all/ Patriarcke of all wickednes.”¹⁰ A few images of Jews and Judaism accompany the these images of the devil, Antichrist and corruption. At one point Ieffraye explains that the Cardinal associates with “falce farises and scribes” to obtain worldly wealth through bribery with men “Full of frauds and perversite.”¹¹

But Roye and Barlowe expand their condemnation beyond Wolsey. In the second part of the dialogue they excoriate friars, particularly the Observants. Ieffraye associates

⁶ William Roye and Jerome Barlowe, *Rede me and be nott wrothe, For I saye no thyng but trothe*, Strasburg: John Schott, 1528 in Edward Arber, ed., *English Reprints* (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1966), 20.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 21-23.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 29, n. 1. In modern translations this is Psalm 35.3, which reads *that his iniquity be found unto hatred*.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 26-27.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 55.

friars with seemingly every form of slander and disparagement imaginable for a sixteenth-century audience: ruffians, wretches, rascals, intolerable beggars, the defilers of virgins, fraudulent inventors of frauds, chickens of the devil's brood, diligent imaginers of lies, practitioners of simony, free "cobby holders" of hell, Satan's soldiers, Antichrist's mariners, hell hounds and most importantly, "Enmies against goddis worde allwaye."¹²

Watkyn replies that at least the friars deliver sermons to the poor, for which Ieffraye remarks "Their preachynge is not scripture/ But fables of their conieture/ And mens ymaginacions."¹³ Furthermore, Ieffraye condemns their doctrines and practices, in typical evangelical fashion, because they lead people to error: the error being that the Mass and pilgrimage make satisfaction for sin and that works bring about salvation. But the authors reserve some of their most strident denunciation of friars for the Observants in particular. After Ieffraye excoriates friars in general, Watkyn asks, "The observauntes are not so disposed?" Ieffraye replies, "So god helpe me of all hypocrisy/ They are the very foundacion." Watkyn is surprised by this assertion since they are so revered in the world.

Ieffraye explains:

Ye so were the scribes and pharisays/
Through their falce hypocrisy ways/
Amonge the lues in reputacion.
Neverthelesse in inward maners/
They were worse then open synners/
Whome oure lorde also did coursse.

Watkyn then asks how his interlocutor could make such a comparison between the Observants and the scribes and Pharisees; Ieffraye replies, perhaps reaching the limit of opprobrium, "Ye savyng after my opinion/ The observantis are farre worse."¹⁴ Ieffraye

¹² Ibid., 72.

¹³ Ibid., 73.

¹⁴ Ibid., 75.

then describes at length how Observants are far worse: lust, errors in doctrine, theft, greed and material gain despite their outward poverty, all under the protection and support of the pope who represents Antichrist and even to the point of disobeying the rightful temporal authority of the king. Above all, of course, they find protection under “the englisse Lucifer/ Wotherwyse called the Cardinall” and so the dialogue invariably returns to Wolsey.¹⁵

Wolsey remains the principle target for the remainder of the dialogue although the authors attack the Bishop of St. Asaph, Dr. Henry Standish, who “played the part of Iudas.”¹⁶ Wolsey’s main crime, “To brenne goddis worde the wholly testament” serves as a refrain in Ieffraye’s lengthy indictment of the Cardinal whom he describes as a tyrant, an advocate of the Antichrist, cruel, a murderer without mercy, lewd and among other things, a “paynted pastoure/ of Satan the Prophet.”¹⁷ Standish, serving as Judas, along with his own moral failings, betrayed the Gospel when it arrived in England:

“Immediately he did hym trappe/ And to the man in the red cappe/ He brought hym with stronge honde/...The gospell he did theare accuse.”¹⁸ Watkyn then observes, “He did mo persones represent/ Then Iudas the traytour malevolent/ Whiche betrayed Christ to the Iues.” Ieffraye explains that in one of them, Wolsey, one can see “Herod/ Pilat/ Cayphas/ and Anne/ With their propertis severall”

And in another manifestly/
Iudas full of conspiracy/
With the sects pharisaicall.¹⁹

¹⁵ Ibid., 105.

¹⁶ Ibid., 119.

¹⁷ Ibid., 114-116.

¹⁸ Ibid., 117-118.

¹⁹ Ibid., 118.

Ieffraye explains that these forces placed the Gospel on trial; Wolsey played the part of Pilat who gave into the demands of the Bishop of London who served in the role of Caiaphas. The result was that Wolsey condemned it to the fire, “Wherto all the bisshoppis cryed/ Answeringe/ it cannot be denyed/ He is worthy fo to be served.”²⁰ The dialogue ends with Ieffrye and Watkyn parting ways; Ieffreye decides to live among the heathen and warns Watkyn about false Christians and to submit to the Bible’s authority over those who proclaim to be scholars.

We can perhaps understand then why Tyndale would want to disassociate himself from Roye and Barlowe. *Rede me and be nott wrothe* does not instruct or exhort, it only condemns, and with some of the most condemnatory language sixteenth-century critics of traditional religion could muster: images of Antichrist, the devil and Jews. Blatant evisceration of Wolsey’s character in particular and the ecclesiastical establishment in general, especially friars, might have endangered Tyndale’s reputation and the reception of his works in England. But it does not seem that the polemic itself, its substance, led Tyndale to distance himself from the authors. After all, Tyndale’s *Wicked Mammon* features Antichrist, the devil and images of Jews and Judaism as well. More likely Tyndale disagreed with the dialogue’s style, its “rayling rimes” – rather than its substance. Tyndale believed in scholarship and argument from the scriptures, not simply the evisceration of religious opponents.

In the remaining portion of his preface Tyndale manages to associate his ecclesiastical opponents not only with scribes and Pharisees but also Antichrist. Tyndale’s view of Antichrist “is not an outward thyng, that is to saye, a man that shoulde sodenly appeare wyth wonders as oure fathers talked of hym” but rather “a

²⁰ Ibid., 120.

spirituall thing; and is as moch to say as agaynst Christe, that is one that preacheth false doctrine contrarye to Christ.”²¹ Not only does the Old Testament provide evidence of Antichrist, specifically those who contended against the prophets, but the apostles also attest of his work in the New Testament epistles. Antichrist does retreat from the scene when the word of God overcomes him, but he re-appears “with a new name and new raiment” as a force against Christ.²² Thus, Tyndale associates the scribes and Pharisees, who represented Antichrist spiritually during the time of Christ, with his contemporary church opponents, citing the familiar opprobrium of Matthew 23. Not only do the scribes and Pharisees rob widows, pray long prayers, obstruct entrance into the kingdom of heaven, obscure the knowledge of faith, but they also break God’s commandments with their own traditions and fool the people through hypocrisy, which “thinges all oure prelates do:

but have yet gotten them newe names and other garmentes and weedes, and are other wise dysgysed. Ther is difference in the names betwene a pope, a Cardinal, a Bishoppe, and so forth, and to say a scribe, a pharisey, a seniour and so forth: but the thyng is all one.²³

Tyndale warns his readers that because true Christians can now identify Antichrist among those in the church, one should be watchful, for “he will change hym selfe ones moare and turne hym selfe in to an angell of lyght.”²⁴ He then explains that just as the Jews have been unaware of Christ for last fifteen-hundred years, the church has been unaware of Antichrist during that time as well. The Jews would have found Christ if they would have looked in the law and the prophets; Christians would have found Antichrist long ago if they would have looked for him in light of the doctrine of Christ and his apostles. Those

²¹ Ibid., sig. A3v.

²² Ibid., sig. A3v-4r.

²³ Ibid., sig. A4r.

²⁴ Ibid., sig. A4r.

Christians who do identify him now, presumably Tyndale and other evangelicals, suffer excommunication and persecution, since Antichrist, through ecclesiastical authorities, “maketh it trayson vnto the kinge, to be acquainted with Christe.”²⁵ Tyndale offers one consolation, that if the church and king do not reign together with Christ, at least Christ will live forever.

After Tyndale briefly recites the narrative of Luke 16, he contrasts the people who trust in the scriptures, God’s promises and the merits of Christ with those of false religion and worldly wisdom, clearly a reference to proponents of traditional religion who “put trust in their own merites” and believe they “shalbe iustified in the sighte of God by the goodness of theyr owne workes and haue corrupt the pure worde of God to confyrme theyr Aristotle...”²⁶ Tyndale then defines justification, citing Paul from Romans 1, “that fayth only before al workes and without al merites but Christes onely, iustifieth, and setteth vs at peace with God.”²⁷ He quickly establishes the dichotomy between law and grace; the former condemns one to death and damnation, fitting for the “heyres of eternal damnation” who “are by nature the children of wrathe” while the latter have faith which “bryngeth pardon and forgeuenes freely purchased by Christes bloude and bringeth also the spiryte, the spyrte loseth the bondes of the deuyll and setteth vs at lybertye.”²⁸ Through an exegesis of a whole range of biblical verses, Tyndale seeks to establish that God justifies the sinner through faith apart from deeds, not unfamiliar to both those sympathetic to Luther’s ideas and those against them. At the heart of his message on justification is the process of true conversion, a process that begins with the preaching of

²⁵ Ibid., sig. A4v.

²⁶ Ibid., A6r.

²⁷ Ibid., sig. A6v.

²⁸ Ibid., sig. A7r-v.

God's law which condemns the sinner, followed by an exhortation of God's promises in Christ found in the scriptures, and then

God worketh with his worde and in his worde, and whan his word is preached, fayth worketh her selfe in [the] hertes of the electe: and as fayth entreth and the word of God is belued, the power of God loseth the hert from captiuitie and bondage vnder synne, and knitteh and couplet him to God and the wyll of God, altereth hym and chaungeth hym cleane, fassioneth and forget hym a new, geueth hym power to loue and to do that which before was vnpossyble for hym...and turnneth hym in to a new nature...²⁹

For Tyndale, justification comes about through the preaching of God's law and his promises through the scriptures; preaching, then, has a cosmic significance and resides at the heart of evangelical practice. He anticipates his detractors who would argue that simple faith, on its own, cannot be enough for justification. True faith, Tyndale explains, will bring forth good works; if a person does not perform good works, their faith "is no doubt but a dreame and an opinion or fayned fayth."³⁰ Furthermore, works in and of themselves do not account for much outside of true faith, a point he illustrates through the Pharisees:

For the outward workes can neuer please God nor make frende, excepte they springe of fayth. For as muche as Christe hym selfe...dysaloweth and casteth away the workes of the pherises: yea prophesyenge and workynge of miracles & castynge out deuels, whiche we counte and esteem for very excellent vertues. Yet make they no frendes wyth their workes, while their hertes are false and vnpure and theyr eye double.³¹

The inclusion of the Pharisees here, however, does not express an explicit polemic towards traditional religion like in the preface. Although he implicates traditional religion, his primary objective seems to be one of instruction and exhortation about a proper evangelical understanding of works as they relate to faith. For much of the treatise

²⁹ Ibid., sig. B5r.

³⁰ Ibid., sig. B6v.

³¹ Ibid., sig. C3r-v. Tyndale cites Matthew 6-7.

Tyndale's approach is largely constructive: he employs images of Jews and Judaism to advance his vision of justification and works to instruct, persuade, exhort and inform his readership, clearly in contrast to Roye and Barlowe's *rayling rimes*. While they may implicate traditional religion, these images provide contrast with which Tyndale can convince readers that his evangelical vision of faith and practice reflects biblical principles. I will discuss several examples that emphasize some of the major themes of Tyndale's vision of orthodoxy.

Tyndale emphasizes the relationship between faith and works again. He does so through two biblical examples about love: the figure of Mary from Luke 7 and Paul from Romans 9. In Luke 7, Mary cleans Christ's feet with her hair and her tears in the home of Simon the Pharisee out of a deep love and thus deeds "are the fruites of loue, and loue is the fruit of fayth."³² In fact, having received such grace as a terrible sinner she became so intoxicated with love that she cared not about "the curyouse hypocrisie of the pharisies which euer dysdayne weake synners, nether to the costlynes of hyr oyntment..." Her love, Tyndale points out, reflects Paul's love in the beginning of Romans 9, who "wished hymselfe banished from Christe and dampned, to saue the Iewes, yf it might haue ben. For as a man feleth God in him selfe, so is he to hys neighbour."³³ These examples of love, Mary towards Christ and Paul towards the Jews, springs from the well of faith. For Tyndale, love bears fruit in the form of good works, but love itself grows out of a true faith in Christ. Works, then, "muste be done freli with a single eye, without respecte of any thing, and that no profyte be sought thereby."³⁴

³² Ibid., sig. B7r.

³³ Ibid., sig. B8r.

³⁴ Ibid., sig. C3v.

For critics who point to scriptural passages that seem to suggest that works do merit salvation, Tyndale argues that they misunderstand true faith and put the promise of reward as the impetus to do good deeds. For Tyndale, that view indicates a worldly and unscriptural faith, much like the Pharisees:

For they ymagen that it is in the kyngdome of Christe, as it is in the worlde amonge men, that they must deserue heauen with theyr good workes. How be it their thoughtes are but dreams and false imaginacions... These are seruauntes, that seke gayness and auauntage, hyrelynges and daye labourers which here on earth receyue their rewardes, as the pharyses with ther prayers, and fastinges.³⁵

After Tyndale explains the contentment in Christ and the nature of mammon, he exhorts his audience to remain faithful in the face of persecution, love one's enemies and reiterates his point about works: "before al workes therfore we muste haue a righteousness wythin in the herte, the mother of all workes, and from whence they spring."³⁶ That view contrasts with the hypocrites from Matthew 6 who display their piety in the synagogues and streets to be noticed by others rather than doing good deeds in secret so that God can reward those deeds openly. Specifically, those outward displays of righteousness resemble the "righteousness of the scribes and Pharises, and of them that haue the spirit of this worlde" who display "the glorious showe and outward shynyg of workes."³⁷ He then explains Christ's statement that one's righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees from Matthew 5. But that kind of righteousness merely reflects the world's righteousness: if one does not murder, that prohibition only expresses the righteousness of the world; a Christian, however, is called to loves one's enemies, "euen when he suffeth persecucion... and the paynes of death, and morneth

³⁵ Ibid., sig. C4v.

³⁶ Ibid., sig. D4r.

³⁷ Ibid., sig. D3r-D4r.

more for his aduersaries blindness that for his owne payne.”³⁸ Although the law of God condemns the Christian as a sinner, in the promises of God “he is euer righteous thorowe fayth in Christe.”³⁹

Tyndale then launches into a series of exhortations for his audience: forgive others, remain unrestrained by the pull of the world and its riches, live out what the scriptures teach faithfully, love others without hypocrisy, eschew idolatry in relation to fasting, frequent reminders that one’s righteousness is only found in Christ and instructions about duties for both family and society. He also includes a final exhortation which seems to signal a change in tone: seek “the worde of God in all thinges, and wyth out the worde of God do nothings, though it appere neuer so gloryouse” for whatever “is done with out the worde of God, that counts ydolatry.”⁴⁰

For Tyndale, the traditional church, a worldly church, fixates itself on outward appearances, the “outward showe and glorious appearance and shininge of hypocrisie and of fained and visured fasting, praing, watching, offering, sacrificinge, hallowing of superstitious ceremonies and montrouse disgising.”⁴¹ The appearance of piety, however, can be grossly misleading. To illustrate that point Tyndale explains how the Jews were deceived by the figure of John the Baptist because they saw his outward piety and thought he could be the Christ. But John the Baptist was not the Christ; he was sent to preach, to “restore the lawe and the scriptur vnto [the] right sence and understanding, which the pharyseis partli had darkened and made none effecte, thorowe their owne

³⁸ Ibid., sig. D4r.

³⁹ Ibid, sig. D5r.

⁴⁰ Ibid., sig. E3r-G2v.

⁴¹ Ibid., sig. G2v-G3r.

tradicions.”⁴² Tyndale, never one to shy away from an opportunity to associate his opponents with the scribes and Pharisees, chooses Matthew 15 and returns to Matthew 23 again to further illustrate his point. In those passages Christ condemns the Pharisees who break the commandments, corrupt the scriptures “with gloses & false interpretations” and block entrance into the kingdom of heaven. Tyndale then reminds his audience of an earlier condemnation from Christ on how the Pharisees mocked people “with hypocrise of false holiness in fasting, prainge and almes giuinge and this did thei for luker to be in autorite, to sit in [the] consciences of [the] people and to be counted as God hymselfe, that the people should trust in ther holynes and not in God.”⁴³ Those pharisaical practices and imperfections craftily resemble aspects of traditional religion. He then instructs his audience to beware of the notion of “good intent” because one’s intent might not be the will of God at all; examples include Peter, the sons of Zebedee, Malchus and the Jews who “of a good entente & and of good zele slew Christ & persecuted the apostles” as well as Stephen. Tyndale exhorts his audience to seek “for knowledge that thou maist knowe goddes wyll and what he haue the[e] to do” rather than one’s affections or zeal, which “are blind, and al that we do of them is damned of God.” Hence, that is the reason why God has given his people the scriptures.⁴⁴

As he begins to bring his treatise to a conclusion Tyndale includes several more statements that implicate traditional religion and its proponents through images of Jews and Judaism. At one point he attacks the doctrine of meritorious works through the image of the Pharisee. He describes those who

⁴² Ibid., sig. G3r-v.

⁴³ Ibid., sig. G3v-G4r.

⁴⁴ Ibid., sig. G4r-G5r.

ascribeth eternal life vnto the deseruinge & merite of workes must falle in one of two inconueniences, either must he be a blynde pharise not seinge that the lawe is spiritual and he carnall, and in respect of them Iustify him selfe. Or else if he se howe that the lawe is spirituall and he vnable to ascende vnto that thiche the lawe requireth he must nedes dispayre.⁴⁵

Tyndale's rhetorical strategy not only maligns proponents of meritorious works, i.e. the traditional clergy, but it condemns the doctrine itself: it causes either pharisaical self-justification or despair, quite the contrast from his evangelical model of justification.

At another point Tyndale compares prelates to the scribes and Pharisees, again alluding to Matthew 23, with some of the strongest, most pointed language since the preface:

As oure prelates confesse there sinnes sayenge: though we be neuer so euill, yet haue we the power. And agayne, the scribes and the pharises, say they, sate in Moises seate, do as they teach but not as they do. Thus confesse they that they are abhomynnable. But to the seconde I answere, if they sate on Christes seate they woulde preache Christes doctryne, now preach they their owne tradicions and therefore not to be hearde. If they preached Christ we ought to here them though they were neuer, so abhominable, as thei of them selues confesse and haue yet no power to a mende nether to let lowese Christes flocke to serue God in the spirite whiche they hold captiue compellinge them to serue theyre false lyes.⁴⁶

This portrait of the prelates not only associates them with the scribes and Pharisees, but like previous statements in the preface seeks to de-legitimize their authority. For Tyndale, at least, the scribes and Pharisees taught the scriptures despite their hypocrisy; his opponents do not even do that.

Wicked Mammon begins with Tyndale distancing himself from the Roye and Barlowe's style of polemic but clearly throughout the treatise he develops his own, an exegetical polemic that refutes, condemns and de-legetimizes his opponents through images of Jews and Judaism. Although defenders of traditional religion who read both

⁴⁵ Ibid., sig. H3v.

⁴⁶ Ibid., sig. I3r.

Tyndale's *Wicked Mammon* and Roye and Barlowe's *Rede me and be not wroth* would view both works with the same amount of opprobrium, they would probably consider Tyndale's work a more convincing threat to traditional religion. Tyndale does not merely condemn traditional religion and its ecclesiastical authorities, he also provides a viable alternative to traditional religion: exhortations for Christians to live out their faith authentically and a vision of orthodoxy based on an evangelical interpretation of the scriptures that promotes Lutheran justification by faith, a proper understanding of works in relation to that faith, and the primacy of the scriptures to guide faith and practice. Those exhortations, that vision of orthodoxy, become even more viable when one considers how it stood in sharp contrast to what Tyndale viewed as the unscriptural traditions and practices of an ecclesiastical establishment rife with corruption and hypocrisy, a contrast accentuated by images of scribes and Pharisees.

At the end of the treatise Tyndale offers a theory about corruption in the church and specifically why ecclesiastical authorities do not preach Christ's doctrine. He explains that the ecclesiastical authorities do not represent Peter's successors after all but instead the somewhat enigmatic figure (and false prophet) Simon Magus from Acts 8. In a marginal note Tyndale writes, "Oure spiritualtie are the successors of Simon not Peter." He argues that if they were Peter's successors they would preach Christ as Peter did, but because they do not they must be the successors of Simon Magus. But then Tyndale alludes to how papal succession connects to the Jews. He explains that Peter prophesied in the epistle of 2 Peter that "there were false prophettes among the people (meaninge of the Ieues) euen as ther shalbe false teachers or doctors amonge you which priuely shall

brynge in sects damnable.”⁴⁷ He does not give a further explanation about this idea here, but in later works he develops this theory. One of those works is *The Obedience of the Christian Man*, also written in 1528, which we will examine next.

II

In his lengthy 1528 treatise *The Obedience of a Christian Man*, Tyndale exhorts his readers to obey both the scriptures and their earthly masters, namely the king, as opposed to the ecclesiastical hierarchy under the pope.⁴⁸ At several points in the treatise, similar to *Wicked Mammon*, Tyndale associates his opponents with images of Jews and Judaism, namely the scribes and Pharisees. But Tyndale goes further in *Obedience* than he does in *Wicked Mammon*. Although he condemns his opponents through an association with Jews as in his previous treatise, at some points he intentionally blurs the distinction between his opponents and Jews, which supports his contention that both the Jews and the traditional church share a common thread under the influence of Antichrist.

In the preface he forbids Christians to upset the king’s peace or commit treason, a response to critics who associated Lutheran ideas with rebellion, likely in the wake of the Peasants’ War a few years earlier. Tyndale contrasts evangelical faith, based on the authority of the scriptures, with the religion of the pope. The pope’s religion not only promotes the accumulation of temporal wealth, power and influence, but does violence to the scriptures and drives Christians from them through distortion and excommunication. But he reminds his readers what Christ said to his disciples in John 15: “Yf ye were of the worlde, the worlde wolde love his awne. But I have chosen you out of the worlde and

⁴⁷ Ibid., sig. I4r.

⁴⁸ William Tyndale, *The obedience of a Christen man and how Christen rulers ought to governe, where in also (if thou marke diligently) thou shalt fynde eyes to perceave the crafty conveyance of all iugglers* (Antwerp: J. Hoochstraten, 1528; STC 24446).

therefore the worlde hateth you.”⁴⁹ One should also take comfort to know that just as “the weake powers of the worlde defende the doctrine of the worlde so the mighty powere of God defendeth the doctrine of God.”⁵⁰

Tyndale explains that hypocrites have always had the world on their side contending against God. During the time of Christ, hypocrites had the elders of the Jews on their side along with Pilate, the emperors and Herod, and “they brought all their worldly wisdom to passe and all yt they coule thinke or imagen to serve for their purpose.”⁵¹ Their agenda included excommunication from the temple, the condemnation of Christ so that allegiance to him would amount to treason, and finally the execution of Christ himself. Tyndale, undoubtedly, alludes to not only his own situation but that of many fellow evangelicals who faced a similar climate of hostility in England and elsewhere. He explains that since false prophets have come claiming the name of Christ, one must look at their deeds to discern whether they belong to Christ or Antichrist. Tyndale’s false prophets, surely his ecclesiastical opponents, resemble the scribes and the Pharisees: they “juggle” with the scriptures and “begile the people with false interpretacions as all the false prophetes, scribes and pharises did in ye olde testamente.”⁵² But their deeds will reveal their true nature, and the deeds of the pope’s church include that they have not only separated themselves from the laity but have established their own kingdoms with their own laws, charge for money what Christ has made freely available and conduct secret councils, all of which contend against Christ. Tyndale then rehearses a series of faults with the church, namely its lack of a teaching

⁴⁹ Ibid., 2v.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 2v.

⁵¹ Ibid., 3r.

⁵² Ibid., 14v.

ministry, sermons given in Latin rather than the vernacular, philosophy's influence on church doctrine, the variety and inconsistency of doctrinal views among religious orders and the denial of scripture to the laity.

In the prologue Tyndale responds to critics and accuses his opponents of inciting insurrection and disobedience. Rather than defending the scriptures, which promote obedience, they “speake evyll of it and doo all ye shame they can to it, and rayle on it...”⁵³ Hypocrites, according to Tyndale, wrongly blame reformers for inciting upheaval because they preach God's word; in actuality people's refusal to repent causes upheaval, not the preaching of the truth. It was so during the days of Jeremiah, the apostles, St. Cyprian and St. Augustine, and of course Christ, for the “scribes and the pharises layd also to Christes charge...that he moved the people to sedicion.”⁵⁴ Tyndale explains that God sends trouble into the world after God's word is preached but not received, “partly to avenge him selfe of the tyrauntes and persecuters of his worde and partly to destroye those worldly people which make Gods worde no thinge but a cloke of their fleshly libertie.”⁵⁵ The latter justify rebellion and strife since the word condemns ecclesiastical authorities, but Tyndale warns his readers that God will not only destroy the corrupt but the seditious. In sum, neither God's word nor its preachers can be blamed for insurrection. After all, Christ “taught all obedience, how that it is not lawfull to resist wrong...[that] a man must love his very enemy and praye for them that persecute hym...and that all vengeaunce must be remitted to God.”⁵⁶ Tyndale confronts people who

⁵³ Ibid., 21r.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 21v-22r.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 22r.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 23r.

always seems to be “ready to ryse and to fyght” on the one hand, but he concentrates his condemnation on both pope and church:

Ye in as moch as we be taught even of very babes, to kyll a turke, to slee a Iewe, to burne an heritike, to fight for ye liberties & right of ye church as they call it: ye and in as moch as we are brought in belefe yf we shede the bloude of oure even christen or yf the sonne shede ye bloude of his father that begate him, for the defence, not of the popes god heed only, but also for what so ever cause it be... This seist thou, that it is the bloody doctrine of the Pope which causeth disobedience, rebellion and insurreccion. For he teacheth to fighte and to defende his tradicions & what so ever he dreameth with fyre, water & swerde & to disobeye father, mother, master, lorde, kynge & Emperoure: Ye & to invade what so ever londe or nacion yt will not receave & admitte his godheed.⁵⁷

Christians who obey the word of God, on the other hand, will eschew this type of violence and obey all earthly masters, from parents and husbands, to masters, kings, princes and rulers of the land.

Throughout his treatise, Tyndale deploys images of Jews and Judaism at crucial junctures to emphasize his points of contention and provide contrast between his vision of orthodoxy and the corruption of ecclesiastical establishment. After Tyndale advises kings to judge their subjects without partiality, he turns his attention to judges, who should not follow the pattern of bishops who compel people to accuse themselves or testify against themselves. Rather than merely criticize the practice, Tyndale deploys a searing polemical statement. Bishops who treat the accused in this manner are an abomination, a practice which “oure prelates lerned of Cayphas...”⁵⁸ Caiaphas, of course, was the infamous Jewish high priest who condemned Christ to death in the Gospels. The statement reflects earlier lollard condemnations of ecclesiastical authorities, even as far back as one witness under trial in Norwich the late 1420s. Tyndale did not have to associate his opponents with such a widely-accepted notorious figure; he could have just

⁵⁷ Ibid., 23v-24r.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 52v.

simply condemned the practice as an abomination. But he does so here because the figure of Caiaphas provides a perfect biblical illustration about anti-Christian persecution and corruption, a figure widely known at the time for anyone familiar with the narrative of Christ's arrest, trial and execution.

Tyndale also confronts the authority of the pope regarding the power to remit sin and uses this issue to reinforce his vision of evangelical orthodoxy, namely the importance of preaching the scriptures. The keys to heaven are not found in the authority of the pope but rather the "knowledge of the lawe and of the promyses of the Gospell" to which numerous scriptures attest. Tyndale explains that Peter, representing all believers, was given authority to preach God's word, not remit sin. Preaching will bring about both repentance and salvation: repentance when one hears the law, saving faith when one hears the promises of God. Thus for Tyndale, the pope too only has the authority to preach God's word, not the power to remit sins. For contrast, Tyndale provides a marginal note that reads "Beware of the nett and of the leven and of the counterfeit keyes of oure holy father" and then associates his opponents with the Pharisees:

I mervell therefore that they bost not them selves of their nette and leven, as wel as of their keyes, for they are all one thinge. But as Christe biddeth vs beware of ye leven of the pharises, so beware of their counterfeted keyes & of their false nette (which are their tradicions & cerimonies their ypocrisy and false doctrine) where with they ketch, not soules vnto Christe, but auctorite and riches vnto them selves.⁵⁹

The association of Tyndale's opponents with the Pharisees, of course, signals to readers notions of corruption, impurity and false religion. It supports Tyndale's primary contention that ecclesiastical authorities should only concern themselves with the preaching of God's word rather than interfere with the temporal world. But they do so

⁵⁹ Ibid., 54v-55r.

because the magisterium has been infected by *leaven*, something counterfeit and hypocritical much like the Pharisees. He asks, “Is it not a shame above all shames and a monstrous thinge yt no man shulde be founde able to governe a worldly kingdome save Bsishopes and prelates that have forsaken the worlde and are taken oute of the worlde and apoynted to preach the kyngdome of God?” He answers that one cannot both preach God’s word and manage a temporal kingdom, for he “that avengeth him selve on every tryfell is not mete to preach ye the pacience of Christ.”⁶⁰ But this argument only scratches the surface. We should not miss Tyndale’s view of the cosmic struggle between good and evil: *Obedience* includes revelations about the nature of the pope and his church and how it represents the forces of Antichrist.

The signs of Antichrist include those who have been “falsely anynynted” in like manner as Jews and pagans: Antichrist “anoynteth them [with oil] after the maner of the Iewes and shaveth them and shoreth them after the maner of ye hethen prestes which served the ydoles.”⁶¹ Tyndale then proceeds with a long list of other *signs* of Antichrist: concubinage among priests and bishops, accusations of heresy to anyone who challenges their authority, oppression through imprisonment which leads to treason, unscriptural rites and practices that keep people in darkness, the use of Latin which obscures understanding among the laity, the incitement of war, covetousness, the lack of preaching among bishops, the attainment of land and wealth, the independence of canon law and therefore the independence of the church from secular authority and tyranny over secular authorities, namely the king. On that last point Tyndale compares the pope and bishops to the scribes and Pharisees: “The Emperoure and kynges are no thinge now a dayes but

⁶⁰ Ibid., 55r-v.

⁶¹ Ibid., 73r.

even hangmen vnto the Pope and Bisshopes to kyll whosover they condemne, with out any moare a doo, as Pilate was vnto the scribes and pharises and the hie Bisshopes, to hange Christ.”⁶² Tyndale then launches into a long indictment of his ecclesiastical opponents refracted through, unsurprisingly, Matthew 23.

To the question regarding who killed the prophets, Christ and the apostles, Tyndale reveals that they were killed by temporal rulers at the behest of false prophets, namely because they rebuked those false prophets through God’s word. Christ was killed because of his statements in Matthew 23, “wo be to you scribes and pharises ypocrites, for ye shut vp the kyngdome of heven before men.”⁶³ According to Tyndale, ecclesiastical authorities bind up God’s law and his promises contained in the scriptures, thereby thwarting entrance into heaven. Thus they “will soffre no man to know Gods worde but burne it and make heresie of it: yee and because the people begynne to smell their falshed they make it treason to the kyng and breakynge of the kinges peace to have so moch as their pater noster in englisshe.”⁶⁴ Tyndale then repeats another of Christ’s condemnatory *woes* against the scribes and Pharisees, how they devoured the houses of widows “vnder a color of long prayer.” But Tyndale adds an additional marginal note: “For rebukynge this was christe slayne And for the same cause are we persecuted.”⁶⁵ He then explains how his opponents not only rob widows but everyone: they teach people to trust in their prayers rather than Christ himself, specifically as it relates to intercessory prayers for those in purgatory.

⁶² Ibid., 80v.

⁶³ Ibid., 81r-v.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 81v.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 82r.

Tyndale also confronts his opponents' vanity and ostentation through a further image from Matthew 23:

The scribes and pharises doo all their workes to be sene of men. They sett abrode their philateries and make longe borders on their garmentes and love...to have the chefe seates in the synagoges, that is in the congregacions or counceles, and to be called raby, that is to saye masters...Beholde the deades of oure spiritualte, and how many thousande fascions are amonge them to be knowen by?...For every one of them supposeth that all other poll to fast and make to many captives: yet to resist Christe, are they al agreed lest they shuld be all compeld to deliver vp there prisoners to him...Beholde the monstres how they are disgised, with miters, croses and hates, with crosses, pillers, & pollaxes, & with thre crownes. What names have they? My lorde prior, my lorde abbot, my lorde Bisshope, my lorde Archbisshope, Cardinal & legate: yf it please youre fatherhode, yf it please your lordschip, yf it please your grace, if it like your holynes and innumerable soch like. Beholde how they are esteemed, and how hie they be crept vp above all, not in to worldly seates only: but in to the seate of God the hertes of men, where they sitt above God him selfe.⁶⁶

Here Tyndale collapses two images that have typically been regarded as opposites: church and synagogue, *ecclesia et synagoga*. The collapse of those two opposites conveys strikingly harsh rhetoric. Both groups give the appearance of piety: the scribes and Pharisees, the Jews, wore their phylacteries and displayed the long borders of their garments; the bishops now wear miters, crosses and crowns. Both groups seek status: the scribes and Pharisees sought to be called rabbi and sit in the most honorable seats in the synagogue; ecclesiastical figures now seek titles of respect and honor both within the church and throughout the realm.

Tyndale hopes his construct will convince readers about the similarities between the scribes and Pharisees and his ecclesiastical opponents. In a larger sense it reveals why

⁶⁶ Ibid., 83v-84r. For implications regarding Henrician reformers' views on temporal and spiritual authority, see Karl Gunther, *Reformation Unbound: Protestant Visions of Reform in England, 1525-1590* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 24. Gunther cites this passage as an example of Tyndale's views about the illegitimate authority ecclesiastical figures exercised within the church. Although this may have implications regarding church governance, Tyndale specifically identifies his opponents with the scribes and Pharisees, in the context of Matthew 23, which Gunther omits.

Matthew 23 has had such a long legacy among dissidents of the church and why Tyndale finds it compelling too: it provides a series of indictments from scripture, from Christ himself, directed specifically at familiar Jewish opponents condemned for vainglory, hypocrisy and their adherence to false religion, which in turn promotes scriptural authority, justifies condemnation of opponents and associates those opponents with the Jews, particularly a well-known and vilified group of Jews.

We should not be surprised that Tyndale includes another *woe* refrain again in relation to another issue: how his ecclesiastical opponents falsely lie through their doctrine for nothing else but worldly gain. Tyndale then calls his opponents blind guides, just as Christ called the scribes and Pharisees blind guides because they prioritize the correct manner of rites and ceremonies, in Tyndale's mind "trifles," and ignore more weighty, moral issues: "But to hold an whore or a nother mans wife, to bye a benefice, to sett one Realme at variaunce with a nother and cause .xx. thousand men to die on a daye ys but a trifle and a pastime with them."⁶⁷

Tyndale also associates his opponents with the Jews for how both groups regard their lineage. "The Iewes bostet them selves of Abraham. And Christ said vnto them... Yf ye were Abrahams childern ye wolde doo the deades of Abraham. Oure ypocrites bost them selves of the auctorite of Peter and of Paul and the other Apostles, cleane contrary vnto the deades and doctrine of Peter, Paul and of all other Apostles."⁶⁸

At one point Tyndale meanders from his discussion of the signs of Antichrist to remind his readers again that the persecution he and other evangelical-minded reformers have endured is the result of confronting hypocrisy, just like Christ and the apostles. He

⁶⁷ Tyndale, *Obedience*, 85r-v.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 85v. Tyndale references John 8.

argues that if Christ had not rebuked the Pharisees, he would not have been crucified. Of course, Tyndale describes the Pharisees in terms of traditional religion: “they taught the people believe in their tradicions and holiness and in offereinges that came to their vantage, and that they taught...that thorow their prayers the deed shulde be saved...”⁶⁹ It was the same for Paul the Apostle, who if he “had not preached agenst circumcision, that it iustified not and that vowes, offerings and cerimonies iustified not, and that righteousness and forgevenes of synnes came not by any deserving of our deades but by faith or belevinge the promyses of God and by the deserving and merites of Christ only, he myghte have lyved vnto this houre.”⁷⁰ And so likewise, Tyndale argues, if he and other evangelicals would refrain from preaching against pride, covetousness, lechery, extortion, usury, simony and evil living among both spiritual and temporal authorities, they might endure as well and not be declared heretics in league with the devil, the breakers of the king’s peace and traitors.

At one point it seems that Tyndale becomes unnecessarily fixated on associating his opponents with Jews and Judaism. In a comment about other *false signs* of Antichrist, he points to the ecclesiastical symbol of pollaxes “borne before hye legates a latere.” Tyndale argues that whatever signification they have now, he is sure that they signify “the olde ypocrites when they had slayne Christe, sette pollaxes to kepe him in sepulcre yt he shout ryse agayne” much like “our ypocrites buried the testament that God made vnto us in Christes bloude, and to kepe it doune, that it ryse not agayne...”⁷¹ Most Christians, of course, would have understood that the *olde ypocrites* who killed Christ were the Jews.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 87v.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 87v-88r.

⁷¹ Ibid., 88v.

In the next section Tyndale addresses sacraments, rites and practices; he retains the body and blood of Christ and baptism as sacraments because they are signs attached to a promise to which the scriptures attest. For the others, namely marriage, orders, penance, contrition, satisfaction, absolution, confirmation and last rites, Tyndale expresses varying degrees of hostility while advancing his vision of evangelical orthodoxy. Marriage, for example, does have a promise attached to it, that one does not sin in a state of marriage, but Tyndale argues that it does not “signifie any promise that ever I herde or redde of in ye scripture.” Of course, Tyndale points out what he considers glaring hypocrisy: in a maringal note he writes, “if wedlock be holy why had they lever have whores then wives.”⁷²

For orders, Tyndale argues that they are offices, not sacraments, and priests should not be anointed with oil because that was an Old Testament practice. Furthermore, there should be no ceremonies for making spiritual officers; one should just choose “an able person and then to rehearse him his dutie and geve him his charge and so to put hym in his rowme.” But Tyndale cannot seem to resist addressing an apparent doubt some of his opponents had regarding the figure of Judas as to whether he was a priest. “And as for that other solenne doute,” he writes, “as they call it wether Iudas was a prest or no, I care not what he then was: but of this I am sure, that he is now not only prest, but also Bisshope, Cardinall and Pope.”⁷³ Judas, of course, the infamous Jew who betrayed Christ, evokes a range of unchristian images, including greed, perfidy and the diabolical.

On the issue of contrition, Tyndale again finds an opportunity to associate his opponents with the Pharisees. He explains that contrition and repentance are synonymous

⁷² Ibid., 90r-v.

⁷³ Ibid., 94r.

and reflect a “sorrofull and a mornynge herte” to which “God hath promised mercy vnto a contrite herte.” For Tyndale, one’s genuine posture towards God is sufficient, and if doubt remains “one ought to open his mynde vnto some faythfull brother that is lerned, and he shall geve him faythfull counsell to helpe hym with all.” But Tyndale argues that the traditional church has created a “weked tradition” with the practice of penance because apparently one would not know if they are truly contrite unless they undergo penance. Tyndale responds with the indictment, “Oh foxy pharesay, that is thy leuen, of which Christe so diligently hade vs beware...with soch gloses corrupte they Gods worde, to sytte in the consciences of the people, to leade them captive and to make a praye of them: byenge & sellinge their synnes, to satisfie their vnsaciable covetousnes.”⁷⁴ Here, Tyndale cites Matthew 6, likely inspired by Christ’s warning that a Christian cannot serve both God and money.⁷⁵

Satisfaction, likewise, offers and opportunity for Tyndale to include the Pharisees again. Christ represents a perpetual satisfaction toward God; between human beings one must ask for forgiveness from a person one has offended as commanded in I John 4. If a Christian stumbles, Tyndale encourages him, in view of the prodigal son from Luke 15, to “repent and come agayne and thou art safe and welcome, as thou maist se by the similitude of the riotous sonne...and the angels of heven shall reioyse at thy comynge...” Tyndale encourages repentance even if one might experience persecution or abuse, just as sinners experienced from the scribes and Pharisees in the beginning of Luke 15. “Yf any Pharisey envye thee, grudge at thee or rayle upon thee,” he writes, “thy father shall make

⁷⁴ Ibid., 98v-99r.

⁷⁵ See Matthew 6.19-24.

answere for thee, as thou seist in the fore rehersed lykenes or parable.”⁷⁶ For Tyndale, the Pharisee clearly represents ecclesiastical authorities who begrudge and abuse those who join Tyndale’s fold, much like the Pharisees who begrudged Christ.

Before Tyndale ends this section on the sacraments, he addresses absolution, confirmation and extreme unction. He argues that absolution justifies no one from sin and that neither the pope nor priests have the power to grant absolution. He cites St. Jerome who argued that priests and bishops “take a little presumption of the pharises upon them” when they interpret Matthew 16 as granting the power to absolve sin.⁷⁷ For confirmation he condemns all the rituals surrounding the sacrament and even includes a satirical rhyme referring to the sacraments he finds extraneous and unscriptural: “Contrary wise Antychristes Bisshopes preach not and their sacramentes speake not, but as disgysed Bisshopes mum, so are their supersticious sacramentes doume.”⁷⁸ For extreme unction, or *anoylynge*, Tyndale has little to say other than it is unfruitful and superstitious.⁷⁹ He then concludes this section with a searing critique of traditional religion and its practices:

The sacramentes which they have imagined are all without promise, and therefore help not. For what so ever is not of fayth is sin... The sacramentes which Christ him selfe ordeyned, which have also promyses and wolde save vs if we knew them and beleved them, them minister they in the latyne tonge. So are they also become as vnfrutefull as the other. Yee make vs believe that the worke selfe without the promise saveth vs which doctrine they lerned of Aristotell. And thus are we become an hundred tymes worse then the weked Iewes which beleved that the very work of their sacrifice iustified them.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Tyndale, *Obedience*, 99v-100r.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 100v-101v. Matthew 16 refers to Christ’s announcement to Peter that he will have the power to ‘bind and loose’ on earth and that will be replicated in heaven. Proponents of traditional religion argued that this gave the pope and his representatives the power of absolution. Tyndale, of course, does not accept that traditional interpretation.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 105v.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 107v.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 107r.

We should not miss Tyndale's rhetorical strategy here when he condemns the traditional church is *worse* than the Jews. We recall, for example, Roye and Barlowe's *Rede me and be nott wrothe* in which the figure Jeffrey condemns the Observants as being far worse than the Pharisees. We do find a less explicit allusion in *Wicked Mammon* in which Tyndale remarks that the ecclesiastical authorities do not even fulfill the role in their authority to preach Christ's doctrine, something even the Pharisees did regarding the law of Moses. But here Tyndale becomes explicit. Most Christians in 1528, of course, viewed Jews and Judaism with opprobrium and antipathy. Those images served as a benchmark for what Christians and Christianity were not supposed to be: full of malice, hypocrisy, superstition, false teaching, idolatry, and cruelty. And the Jews were still widely understood to be the torturers and murderers of Christ and Christ's principle opponents, a view to which Tyndale subscribes. More than Roye and Barlowe, Tyndale moves the benchmark of wickedness to include everything traditional religion represents, not just a few friars. That traditional religion and its practices could be *worse* than the Jews makes Tyndale's indictment exceedingly inflammatory. But we should not miss Tyndale's rationale either: he regards traditional religion as worse than the Jews because he believes they have built a system of religious beliefs and practices that do not reflect authentic biblical doctrine and in the end prevent people from experiencing true, biblical faith and the promise of heaven. The stakes could not be higher. For him, only a church governed by Antichrist *is* worse than the "weked Iewes" who contended with and murdered Christ.

Tyndale's remaining statements that include images of Jews and Judaism address certain practices of traditional religion, which provide him with an opportunity to promote important evangelical notions of orthodoxy. He returns to a discussion about

preaching again, citing Romans 10 as it relates to who has the authority to preach.

Tyndale accuses his opponents of exercising improper authority in the way they authorize who can preach, for “whosoever presume to preach without the auctorite of ye bisshopes is excommunicate in the deade doinge.” Unsurprisingly, this type of control reminds Tyndale of the Pharisees: “The old pharises had ye scripture in captivite lyke wise, and axed Christ by what auctorite doist thou these thinges?...We are pharises & thou art none of our order nor hast auctorite of vs. Christ axed them a nother question and so wil I doo our ypocrites. Who sent you? God? Naye he yt is send of God, speaketh Gods word.”⁸¹ For Tyndale, preaching God’s word unhindered under girds the entire evangelical mission. Without a declaration of the scriptures people will not will not hear the law and become convicted nor the promises of God and come to saving faith in Christ. He castigates his opponents for preaching nothing but lies “and therefore are of the devyll the father of al lyes and of him are ye sent.”⁸²

Another issue Tyndale raises relates to miracles and the saints. For Tyndale, Antichrist uses miracles “to pull thee from ye worde of God and from belevinge his promyses & from Christ & to put thy trust in a man or ceremony wherein Gods worde is not.”⁸³ He argues that the cult of the saints diminishes the mercy and truth of God and that one should not “put thy trust in the sainte, but in the worde which the saynte preached, which worde yf thou belevedest it, would save you.”⁸⁴ Rather than turn to saints and miracles, Tyndale exhorts his readers to turn to God and his mercy, and he uses Christ’s interaction with the Pharisees as an illustration. He explains that the “old

⁸¹ Ibid., 111v-112r. Tyndale cites John 3.

⁸² Ibid., 112r.

⁸³ Ibid., 116r.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 119v, 123r.

pharases” sought to drive people away from Christ in order to prevent them from receiving his mercy because they loved “sacrifice and offering for to fede that God your belyes with all, but God commaundeth to be mercyfull.” After he provides a maringal note which reads “Ipocrites love offerynges,” Tyndale then collpases the two images, the Pharisees and the priesthood:

Synners are ever captives and a praye vnto the pharases and ypocrites, for to offer vnto their belies, and to bye merytes, pardons and forgevenes of synnes of them, and therfore feare they them away from Christ with arguments of their bely wosdome... The pharases are righteous & therfore have no parte with Christ, nether neade they. For they are gods them selfe & savors. But synners yt repente pertayne to Christ.⁸⁵

Here we have evangelical orthodoxy interwoven with searing polemic. Tyndale encourages readers to repent and seek of God’s mercy through Christ alone; the Pharisees of old did not belong to Christ, nor do the *Pharisees* now in the church, and both drive sinners away from Christ.

Tyndale also addresses biblical hermeneutics, and promotes the primacy of a literal interpretation of the scriptures which “the pope hath taken it cleane away and hath made it his possession.”⁸⁶ Allegory, for its part, appears in the scriptures and has a purpose. After all, Paul used allegory in some of his epistles; Tyndale argues that the literal sense of scripture proves its allegorical statements but that the allegories themselves prove nothing.⁸⁷ To make his point further, Tyndale admits that he and other reformers draw from the allegories of scripture to explain present-day concerns: “And lyke wise doo we borrow likenesses or allegories of the scripture, as of Pharao and Herod

⁸⁵ Ibid., 121v.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 129r-v.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 132r.

and of the scribes and pharises, to expresse oure miserable captivite and persecucion vnder Antychrist the Pope.”⁸⁸

As for the method with which the church interprets scripture, Tyndale points out numerous examples of how his opponents distort the scriptures through allegory to support their doctrines. He even returns to Matthew 23 again as it relates to the authority of the priesthood, a similar point he made in *Wicked Mammon*. Tyndale explains that Christ told his disciples that the scribes and Pharisees occupy the seat of Moses and therefore one should submit to their teaching when they preach Moses (and eschew their hypocrisy). Tyndale tells his readers something similar but adds something new: “So if oure phareses sitte on Christes seate and preach him, we ought to heare them: but when they sitte on their awne seate, then we ought we to beware as well of their pestilente doctrine as of their abhominable livinge.”⁸⁹ The new point is that Tyndale explicitly describes the priesthood as *oure phareses*; he more or less no longer differentiates the Pharisees from the Gospels, the Jews who contended with Christ, and the Pharisees among the English clergy.

Before he provides a final summary of his main arguments, Tyndale addresses the practice of burning heretics, something apparently supported by the church fathers. In light of 1 Peter 3:15, which calls Christians to reply to outsiders with gentleness and reverence, Tyndale re-examines this doctrine and corners his opponents with a hypothetical scenario: If the burning of so-called heretics is right and just, then the

fathers of the Iewes and the bisshopes, which had as great auctorite over them as ours have over vs, condemned Christ and his doctrine. Yf it be ynough to saye the fathers have condemned it then are the Iewes to be holde excused: yee they are yet in the right waye and we in the false. But and yf the Iewes be bounde to loke

⁸⁸ Ibid., 132v.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 145v.

in the scripture and to se whether their fathers have done right or wronge, then are we lyke wise bounde to loke in the scripture whether oure fathers have done right or wronge, and ought to believe no thinge with out a reason of the scripture and auctorite of Gods worde.⁹⁰

True religion, according to Tyndale, a religion bound by the authority of scripture, does not seek to use violence to extirpate false believers or those in error. No Christian in the sixteenth century would support the view that the Jews were right when they condemned Christ, but Tyndale argues that if one carries his opponents' position to its conclusion, his opponents must agree to that very idea because they view the church fathers as ultimately correct as it pertains to the persecution of heretics. Tyndale's solution is simple: both the church fathers and the Jews were wrong, for neither had looked to the scriptures for guidance on how to treat those who oppose them, something his opponents should also do. Tyndale then launches into an exhortation about the preeminence of Christ and the scriptures, both of which should govern the life of every believer.

Tyndale's conclusion rehearses his main points and warns his readers of impending doom if not reformed. Those main points cover obedience within the family and society, that the scriptures provide guidance on how one should serve God, that God will avenge those who do not submit to temporal authority, that what Christ has set free ecclesiastical authorities have bound in order to profit from their own laws, that temporal rulers ought to govern according to Christian principles, that judges should not follow the pattern of bishops when they administer justice, an exhortation of the King himself to rid the realm of hypocrites and their tyranny or else England will suffer under God's scourge, as well as the numerous faults of church practices and doctrines, from the

⁹⁰ Ibid., 149v.

sacraments to saints. If the realm remains polluted by false doctrine under the dominance of the pope, Tyndale warns that

I se no other lykelyhode, but that the lond shalbe shortly conquered. The stares of the scripture promise vs none other fortune, in as moch as we denye Christ with the weked Iewes and will not have hym regne over vs: but wilbe styll childern of darknes vnder Antichrist and Antichristes possession, burnynge the Gospell of Christ and defendynge a fayth that may not stond with his holy testament.⁹¹

For Tyndale, the gravity of the situation could not be higher, a cosmic struggle between God and Antichrist over the soul of England. If England does not embrace the Gospel and the authority of the scriptures and rid itself of false religion, then it denies Christ in the exact same manner as the wicked Jews who denied Christ.

One might argue that Tyndale's inclusion of numerous images of Jews and Judaism merely reflect a polemical style not unlike other dissenters have used against the religious establishment. But Tyndale employs images of Jews and Judaism in *Obedience* not only as polemical refrains: they become centerpieces to his vision of true and false religion because they illustrate precisely, in very real terms, what Tyndale considers the most egregious features of the traditional religious establishment and its doctrines and practices. Both traditional religion and the Jews are connected, connected by the tissue of false religion under Antichrist. By the end of *Obedience*, Tyndale collapses images of the Jews, Antichrist and traditional religion into one monstrous force that contends against Christ and the Gospel. But he does not explain exactly how traditional religion developed from Jews and Judaism. He reveals the answer to that mystery in his treatise against Thomas More in 1531.

⁹¹ Ibid., 158r.

III

In 1531, Tyndale published *An Answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores dialoge* to refute Thomas More's 1529 treatise *Dialogue concerning heresies*.⁹² Although some debate about the authorship of *Answer* remains, recent scholarship points to Tyndale as the principle author of the treatise with varying degrees of assistance from John Frith.⁹³ In this section I will examine primarily Tyndale's long 'foundational essay' with a examples from the last two-thirds of the work. In those passages Tyndale employs a variety of images of Jews and Judaism against his opponents, much like in *Obedience*. Those images serve to reinforce a polemic designed to contrast reformers with traditional religion, but Tyndale develops a new line of argument as well: he actually traces the origins of traditional religion and its practices back to the Jews.

In the prologue Tyndale appeals to his audience directly as he endorses the authority of the scriptures. "Iudge therefore reader," he writes, "whether the pope with his be the church, whether their auctorite be aboue the scripture."⁹⁴ At one point he asks his readers to make the association between ecclesiastical leaders now and the Jews and their collaborators during the time of Christ: "Marke whether it were ever truer then now, the scribes, pharises, Pilate, Herode, Caiphaz & Anna, are gathered to gether agenst god & Christ."⁹⁵ In the foundational essay Tyndale addresses More personally; he compares him to Judas and implies that More's overseers remind him of various Jewish opponents of Christ from the Gospels:

⁹² William Tyndale, *An answer vnto Sir Thomas Mores Dialogue* (Antwerp, 1531), series: the Independent Works of William Tyndale, Volume 3, Anne M. O'Donnell and Jared Wicks, eds. (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000).

⁹³ *Ibid.*, xxv-xxvii. Most of the recent debate seems to be about *Answer*'s first part, after the foundational essay, which some argue is the work of John Frith.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 9.

But verily I thinke that as Judas betraid not Christ for any loue that he had vnto the hie prestes, scribes and phareses, but only to come by that wherfore he thirsted: euen so M. More (as there are tokens eident) wrote not these bokes for any affeccyon that he bare vnto the spiritualltie or vnto the opinions which he so barelie defendeth, but to obtayne only that which he was an hongred fore: I praie God that he eate not to hastely lest he be choked at the later end, but that he repent and resist not the spirite of god whych openeth light vnto the worlde.⁹⁶

These examples include some of the major themes of *Answer*: scriptural authority and the cosmic struggle between true and false religion, the latter illustrated by images of Jews and Judaism.

I should note from the outset that Tyndale does not solely refer to Jews and Judaism when he characterizes traditional religion. Tyndale, not alone among reformers, occasionally correlates his opponents with Turks, Jews and pagans. In the beginning of *Answer* he repeats what he wrote in *Obedience*, that the anointing of priests “is but a ceremonie borrowed of the Iewes, though they haue somewhat altered the maner, & their shauinge borrowed of the hethen prestes.”⁹⁷ But in *Answer* Tyndale explores these connections more thoroughly. At one point he argues that the church has erred in much the same way as both the Jews and the Turks by their longstanding traditions, but offers the hope that God reserves “a little flocke to call the other backe agayne and to testifue vnto them the right waye.”⁹⁸ He connects his opponents to Jews and Turks in his answer to More’s second book, as it relates to justification, in that “when they come vnto the saluacion that is in his bloude, they be but Iewes and turkes and forsake christ and runne vn to the iustifienge of ceremonies wyth the Iewes and turkes.”⁹⁹ In his answer to More’s fourth book, again as it relates to justification, the “turcke, the Iew and the popish bild

⁹⁶ Ibid., 14-15.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 18-19.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 52.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 113.

vppon frewyll and asscribe their iustifienge vn to their workes.”¹⁰⁰ All three groups have various ceremonies to purify sin, but true Christians follow true religion, and “goeth thorow repentaunce towarde the lawe, vn to the faith that is in Christes bloude.”¹⁰¹ But Turks and the religion of *Mahomete* remain somewhat peripheral to much of Tyndale’s polemic. Here, Tyndale fixates his argument on the connection between traditional religion and Judaism:

And the pope saith that the ceremonies of Moyses iustified not, compelled with the words of Paul. And how then shuld his iustifie? Moses sacraments were but signes of promises of fayth, by whych fayth the beleuers ar iustified, and euen so be Christes also. And now because the Iewes haue put out the significacions of their sacramentes and put their trust in the workes of them, therfore they be Idolaters, and so is the pope for like purpose. The pope sayth that Christ dyed not for vs but for the sacramentes, to geue them power to iustifie. O Antichriste.¹⁰²

As Tyndale offers a series of scathing critiques on both ecclesiastical figures and traditional religion, images of Jews and Judaism serve as a consistent reference point to illustrate what he considers monstrous errors.

In the heart of the foundational essay, Tyndale constructs a series of criticisms of those monstrous errors. Those critiques begin with such issues as whether the papacy represents the Christ’s true church at all in terms of doctrine and practice. On doctrinal grounds, he argues that the pope teaches that salvation comes through a “trust in holy workes” rather than through Christ himself, which amount to “a thousand such supersticiousnesses” instead of Christ and scripture, which “are all the denyenge of Christes bloud.”¹⁰³ In terms of practice, Tyndale describes the pope “as a temporall tirant with laws of his awne makynge.” Because the church forbids priests to marry, for

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 193.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 193.

¹⁰² Ibid., 193-194.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 38.

example, the pope has “graunted vnlawfull horedom” for those who can pay their superiors to look the other way, a practice that stretches across Christendom, including England. As for England, Tyndale reminds readers that these deeds of lust “were rebuked by the preachynge of wicleffe” but to no avail.¹⁰⁴ While a true Christian repents of sin when it has been pointed out by another, English churchmen not only refuse to repent but “persecute both the scripture wherewith they be rebuked and also them that warne them to amend & make heretikes of them and burne them.”¹⁰⁵ This tyranny stems from the pope himself who violently compels people to honor him, accept the sacraments of the church without investigation into their validity, and pay questionable tithes, all of which are “contrarie vn to Christes doctrine.”¹⁰⁶

Tyndale then offers further refutation as to why the pope cannot be the head of a true church that cannot err, a position resolutely affirmed by his opponents. Tyndale characterizes the argument of his opponents as sophistry, a sophistry that apparently holds the view that since the church existed long before heretics emerged and departed from it, the church that has always remained and has always existed represents the true church. Therefore, Lutheran heretics, or any heretic for that matter, could never represent a true church because they departed from what God already established. Tyndale, however, carries that proposition to what he considers its logical conclusion, but he arrives at that conclusion through an expanded view of redemptive history. The notion of the church must go back to the Old Testament rather than the advent of Christ. This rhetorical move allows Tyndale to identify the true, or “right” church as the one that began under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. As time passed, then, the church under

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 39-40.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 39.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 39.

Moses and Aaron became corrupt under the authority of scribes, Pharisees and high priests. When Christ came, Christ and his apostles broke away from that corrupt church as something new and holy. But by the logic of his opponents, since they came out of the church of the Pharisees and their fellow Jewish rulers, that would then make “the scribes phareses and hie prestes” the “right church, and Christ and his apostles and disciples heretikes and a damnable secte. And so the Iewes ar yet in the right waye and we in erreure.” And of course Tyndale regards this argument as preposterous and remarks, “if their blynde reason be good, then is this argument so to.”¹⁰⁷

For any Christian of the sixteenth century, of course, it would be preposterous to regard Christ and his apostles as heretics and even more preposterous that the scribes, Pharisees and Jewish high priests somehow represented the true church and were right all along. Tyndale’s refutation on that point becomes much more convincing through the example of the Jews. This leads him to address the nature of the church from which Christ and Lutherans emerged, a point Tyndale examines through a re-examination of redemptive history from the scriptures.

Tyndale explains that under Abraham, Isaac and Jacob the church was small in number and great in faith, but during the time of Moses the church increased in number but decreased in faith, to the point that many fell into idolatry. Eventually, after chastisement from God, Christ appeared, but the church under Moses had been lost, for

the scribes, Phareses, Caiphas, Anna and the elders, were crepte vpp in to the sete of Moses, Aaron and the holy prophetes and patriarkes and succeded them lineally and had the scripture of god but euen in captiuite, to make marchaundice of it and to abvse it vn to their awne glorie & profit.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 40.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 40-41.

As for the nature of idolatry, Tyndale explains that these Jews kept people from outward forms of idolatry but “brought them in to a worse inward Idolatrie of a false fayth & trust in their awne dedes and in vayne tradicions of their awne faynynges.”¹⁰⁹ He reminds his audience that Christ warned his disciples about the “leuen of the pharises which was their false doctrine and gloses” and that he rebuked the scribes and Pharisees because they “had shut vpp the kingdome of heven...with their tradicions and false gloses whych they had sowed to the scripture in playne places and in the takyng a waye the meaninge of the ceremonies and sacrifices and teaching to beleue in the worke.”¹¹⁰

While these descriptions explain Jewish opposition to Christ, Tyndale uses them to launch a rhetorical attack on traditional religion and define the boundaries of a reformist orthodoxy, much like he does in *Obedience*. He writes that just like the scribes and Pharisees, “oure ypocrites are in like maner crept vpp in to the sete of Christ and of his apostles, by succession.”¹¹¹ Similar to Christ’s Jewish opponents, defenders of traditional religion seek monetary gain instead of fulfilling the deeds of Christ and his apostles, corrupt scripture with their own interpretations and gloses, emphasize ceremonies and sacraments at the expense of their significance “to make vs beleue in the worke of the sacramentes first” and exchange the literal and plain meaning of scripture with a “false fayned sens of allegories.”¹¹²

Tyndale then pioneers a new line of attack in relation to heresy, succession and the Jews. He explains that although the Pharisees succeeded the patriarchs and prophets and had the scriptures, they became heretics themselves and fell from the faith. That was

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 41.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 41.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 41.

¹¹² Ibid., 41-42.

why Christ, his apostles and John the Baptist “departed from the phareses which were heretikes” and rebuked them and instead embraced “the right sens of the scripture & vn to the faith & liuinge of the patriarkes & prophetes.”¹¹³ For Tyndale then, the same pattern has occurred again:

And aftir the same maner, though oure popish ypocrites succeed Christ and his apostles and haue their scripture, yet they befallen from the faith and liuinge of them and are heretikes and had need of a Ihon Baptist to conuerte them. And we depart from them vn to the true scripture and vnto the faith and liuyng thei of, and rebuke them in like maner. And as they which departe from the faith of the true church are heretikes, even so they that departe from the church of heretikes and false feyned faith of ypocrites, are the true church, which thou shalt all waye know by their faith examined by the scripture and by their profession and consent to liue acordynge vn to the laws of god.¹¹⁴

Just as the scribes and Pharisees usurped the seat of Moses and set up a derelict faith, so too has the traditional church usurped the seat of Christ and the apostles. Not only does hypocrisy abound in both groups but also both distort the scriptures. And just as John the Baptist and Christ rebuked the scribes and Pharisees, so too now do reformers rebuke the defenders of traditional religion. But Tyndale’s rhetoric does not just condemn traditional religion: it also defines true religion, a Christianity informed by the scriptures as the principle authority that governs one’s life. We should not view this connection between Christ’s Jewish opponents and Tyndale’s opponents simply as polemic designed to denigrate and de-legitimize the traditional church. Although Tyndale utilizes highly inflammatory rhetoric, which seeks to offer a sharp contrast between the *newe learning* and the traditional church, the rhetoric should not be considered an end to itself. Rather, these images of Jews and Judaism, particularly scribes and Pharisees here, occupy a central role in how Tyndale envisions reformist orthodoxy and how the evangelical

¹¹³ Ibid., 42.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 43.

movement, in light of redemptive history and especially Christ and the apostles, represents a legitimate and authentic movement of God. Tyndale connects Judaism with traditional religion precisely to inform his audience that God's redemptive history includes movements of God that have departed from something that has been previously corrupted. And that pattern supports the evangelical cause: reformers like Tyndale are part of an authentic movement of God, connected to Christ and the apostles, who advocate truly biblical and unadulterated orthodoxy. That orthodoxy includes the role of the scriptures, its proper interpretation, the notion of authentic faith and the nature of the true church.

For instance, a proper reformist orthodoxy would include the role of scripture and its proper interpretation. Throughout his *Answer*, Tyndale advances the notion of scriptural authority and a particular evangelical interpretation of the scriptures. Despite the fact that churchmen "had destroyed the right sens" of the scriptures for the sake of lucre, the church has kept the scriptures because of the mercy of God alone. But the use and interpretation of those scriptures has been distorted and muddled "with their leuen" and "they destroye dayly the trewe preachers of it."¹¹⁵ On this point Tyndale curiously enough associates his opponents with the Jews and their use of the Talmud. He explains that the traditional church has not only corrupted hagiographical and patristic texts and has used them instead of scripture, they have falsified or distorted the meaning of scripture itself in a similar fashion to the way the Jews use the Talmud:

And as the Iewes haue sett vpp a boke of tradicions called talmud, to destroye the sens of the scripture, Vn to whych they geue faith & vn to the scripture none at all be it never so playne, but saye it can not be vnderstonde, saue by that talmud: even so haue oures set vpp their dunce, their Thomas & a thousand like draffe, to stablish their lies, thorow falsifienge the scripture, & saye that it can not be

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 46.

vnderstonde with oute them, be it never so playne. And if a man allege an holy doctoure agenst them they glose him out as they doo the scripture, or will not heare, or saye the church hath other wise determined.¹¹⁶

Tyndale's pre-occupation with the preservation and correct interpretation of scripture, and its primacy over traditions and the sacraments leads him to examine two kinds of faith, one historical and the other, as evidenced by the scriptures, which he calls a "felynge faith." A historical faith "hangeth of the tueth and honestie of the teller" and therefore is true only because the church said it was true: even if, as a preposterous example, "they had told me that roben hode has bene the scripture of God." Tyndale's vision of reformist orthodoxy, however, argues that the scriptures testify of a different kind of faith, a "felynge faith...taught of God [who] write it on their hertes with his holy spirite." Tyndale illustrates the difference of the two types of faith through an examination of John 4 and the Samaritan woman at the well. Her initial testimony of Christ, how he had told her everything she ever did, sparked curiosity among her fellow Samaritans to seek out Christ, a faith that "was but an opinion and no faith that coude haue lasted or haue brought out frute." But when the Samaritans heard Christ's teaching *themselves* "the spirit wrought and made them fele."¹¹⁷ For Tyndale, reformers preach the word as Christ did while ecclesiastical authorities resemble the scribes and Pharisees, for "christes preaching was with power and spirite that maketh a man feale and knowe and worke to, and not as the scribes and phareses preached and as oures make a man ready to cast his gorge to heare them raue and rage as mad men."¹¹⁸

On the issue of the nature of the true Church, Tyndale interprets Romans 9 to mean that true Israelites are only those who "folow the faith of Abraham" and that those

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 46-47.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 49-50.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 50.

who base their faith upon their elders, like “Master Mores fayth, the popes fayth and the deuels fayth” do not have true faith nor are they a part of Christ’s church.¹¹⁹ Thus, a division exists between spiritual Israel and carnal Israel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, and both Ishmael and Esau persecuted their spiritual counterparts, much like when “paul complayned in hys tyme persecuted of hys carnall brethren, as we doo in oure tyme and as the electe dyd and shall doo tyll the worldes ende.”¹²⁰ Tyndale associates the six hundred thousand Israelites who perished in the wilderness for their unbelief with “the childern of Master Mores faythlesse fayth made by the persuasyon of man.”¹²¹

Tyndale addresses various doctrines and practices of traditional religion in which he finds abuse. These include the sacraments, ceremonies, images, relics and pilgrimage. He argues that if images or relics or the sacraments remind the faithful of a true devotion to Christ or Christ’s sacrifice, then they serve the purpose originally intended. However, he distinguishes between the proper use of images and sacraments and their abuse, the latter of which represents a false faith. For him, the abuse of a cross around the neck, for example, would entail that one places faith in the actual symbol itself rather than what it represents, primarily done so for protection against injurious acts of fate that might befall an individual in life. But this trust in the actual object, the cross itself, “ys playne ydolatrie, and here a man ys captyue, bonde and seruant vnto a false faith and a false ymaginacyon, that ys nother god ner hys worde.”¹²² Tyndale expands this argument with examples that include parishioners crossing themselves upon hearing the Gospel of St. John, the wearing of holy wax, the declaration of the Gospels to women during childbirth

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 52.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 52-53.

¹²¹ Ibid., 53.

¹²² Ibid., 59.

or to corn in a field during a procession, and the use of holy bread, holy water and all other ceremonies and sacraments “with out significacion.”¹²³ For Tyndale, these acts of devotion express superstition since he assumes that the people “know not the true meaning” and neither will the “prelates sofre any man to tell them: yee and the very meanyng of some and right vse no man can tell?”¹²⁴

Furthermore, as an ancillary charge against images and relics, Tyndale argues that the riches used to adorn such images and relics “is abhominable, as longe as the pore are dispised and vncared for and not first serued, for whose sakes and to fynd preachers, offerings tithes, londes rentes and all that they haue was geuen the spiritualltie.”¹²⁵ Rich adornment of relics and images, Tyndale argues, do not “helpe to moue thy mind, to folow the ensample of the saint” nor “teach thy soule any godly lernynge” or “moue you and to put you in remembraunce of the law of god & the promises which are in his sonne.” Instead they magnify participation in ceremonies: to seek the favor of saints and exhort the faithful to serve images as an act of idolatry at the expense of devotion to God’s commandments.¹²⁶ As for pilgrimage, Tyndale argues that the idea that God resides in one specific place more than another, or that an image in that place allows the penitent to hear God more than without it, exhibits a “false faith and Idolatrie or imageseruice.”¹²⁷ But Tyndale does not just denounce what he regards as abuses of images, sacraments and ceremonies. He locates the roots of these abuses, the root of idolatry and false worship. And for those roots he turns to the history of Israel and the Jews.

¹²³ Ibid., 60.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 60-61.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 61.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 61.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 62.

Tyndale explains that the sacrifices, ceremonies and ordinances in the Old Testament were sacraments or preaching signs for the people of Israel to remind them of their commitment to and their relationship with God. These sacraments in and of themselves did not justify, but “the preachynge only did iustifie them that receaved the faith theroffe.”¹²⁸ Circumcision, therefore, reminded the Israelites that they were chosen by God, that God would defend and bless them, and in turn reminded them that they were to keep God’s commandments. The act of circumcision itself did not justify, but it would justify “the circumcised of faith” according to Tyndale’s interpretation of Paul in Romans 3.¹²⁹ Other preaching signs included the paschal lamb, the offering of the first fruits during harvest and various animal sacrifices, all designed to promote repentance, faith and love for God. But Tyndale explains that Israel and the Jews “latt the significacions of their ceremonyes goo and lost the meanyng of them and turned them vn to the workes to serue them” and thereby adherents would find justification and the forgiveness of sins through those works. Thus, the Jews trusted in the acts of piety themselves and therefore “became captiue to serue and put their trust in that which was nether god ner his worde.”¹³⁰ Examples of these works include the observance of the Sabbath, fasting and the temple in regards to effectual prayer, all of which amount to “blynde imageseruike” and a “false fayth.”¹³¹

If Tyndale’s readers wonder why he discusses the roots of Jewish *imageseruike*, he provides a rather inventive and explosive explanation. This discussion of Jewish error directly relates to how error arose in traditional religion. What Tyndale may have alluded

¹²⁸ Ibid., 64.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 64.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 65.

¹³¹ Ibid., 67.

to in *Wicked Mammon* and his merging of the church and the synagogue in *Obedience* comes to maturity in *Answer*: the origins of traditional religion's corrupt practices can be traced back to the Jews.

His theory explains that before Christ's arrival, God scattered the Israelites and the Jews in all directions as a punishment for their *imageservice*, as the Old Testament attests. When Christ arrived in the New Testament era, thousands of Jews came to faith in Christ in Jerusalem and many other places but were scattered like their forebears in all directions, namely due to Paul's persecution. But when they scattered they took the message of Jesus with them, so "that agreate parte of the Iewes came to faith euery where."¹³² Tyndale then explains what happened next:

Now the Iewes being born & bred vp, roted and noseld in ceremonyes as I haue shewed and as ye maye better se in the .v. bokes of Moses, if ye wold reade them, coude but with greate difficultie, depart from them as it is to se in al the epistles of paul, how he fought agenst them. But in processe they gatt the vpperhand. And therto the first that were christened and all the offycers and bisshopes of the church, euen so moch as the greate God of Rome, were Iewes for the most parte a greate season.¹³³

According to Tyndale, then, Jews who had converted to Christ occupied leadership positions in the church at its foundation but were unable to sever themselves from the ceremonies they practiced in Judaism. For Tyndale, Romans 9 makes perfect sense: "not al that came of Israel are right Israelites nether are al they Abrahams sonnes that are Abrahams seed" because "they followed not the steppes of the fayth of their graundfathers."¹³⁴ Many of these Jews, therefore, converted to Christ out of violent compulsion, "not off any inward fealinge that the spirite of god gawe them" but with a

¹³² Ibid., 68.

¹³³ Ibid., 68-69.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 69.

storifaith, a popish faith, a faithlesse faith & a fayned faith of their awne making, and not as God in the scripture describeth the faith, so beleuinge in Christ, that they woldbe iustified by theyr awne deeds, which is the denieng of christe. As oure papistes beleue. Which moare mad then those Iewes, beleue nothyng by the reason of scripture, but only that soch a multitude consent therto, compelled with violence of swerde, with falsyfieng of the scripture and fayned lyes.¹³⁵

Tyndale then connects traditional religion with this Jewish form of faith, a faith that follows “the ensample of the faith of their father the deuell” and lacks true repentance and submission to God’s law:

which popish therto so beleue in Christ, and so wilbe his seruauntes, that they wilbe bond vn to domme ceremonies and deed workes puttyng their trust and confidence in them & hoping to be saued by them and ascribyng vn to them the thanke of their saluacion and righttewysnesse.¹³⁶

Thus, Tyndale argues that the origins of traditional religion reside in an early contamination of the church by Jews who converted to Christ only out of compulsion and established a devilish faith contrary to scripture and true biblical faith. Since the Jews and pagans “were so accustomed vn to ceremonies and because soch a multitude came with a faithlesse faith, they went and cleane contrary vnto the mynde of paul, set vp ceremonies in the new testament, partely borrowynge them of Moses and partely imageninge like, as ye now se, and called them sacramentes.”¹³⁷ In the remainder of Tyndale’s foundational treatise he describes the practices and beliefs of traditional religion in England, the consequences of a faith dominated by ceremonies, brought into the church originally by Jewish converts. For Tyndale, then, it was no wonder that there were so many similarities between pharisaical Judaism and traditional religion.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 69-70.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 70.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 70.

IV

Tyndale's devotional material included two major works, a commentary on Matthew 5-7 and another commentary on the Johannine epistles. In this section I will examine his commentary on Matthew. In *An exposition upon the V. VI. VII. chapters of Mathew*, published in 1532 or soon afterwards, Tyndale exhorts his readers to authentic Christian faith and addresses the topic of biblical exegesis; at several points in his examination he associates his papal opponents with the scribes and Pharisees, the latter who appear frequently in the Gospel.¹³⁸

In the prologue Tyndale explains in quite familiar terms that the scribes and Pharisees distorted the scriptures with “false expositions” and “false glosses” and “pharisaical glosses” but that Christ “restoreth the key of knowledge” and “weedeth out the thorns and bushes” that have obscured the truth. Tyndale wants to clear up any confusion about the role of the law of Moses in the life of a Christian. The law of Moses not only teaches Christians about sin but also condemns them as sinners. What it does not do is justify; it does not “forgive and remit sin, and to heal the conscience, and certify a man, not only that he is delivered from eternal death, but also that he is made a son of God and heir of everlasting life.”¹³⁹ A false interpretation of the law, then, would argue that one can uphold the law by one's strength or freewill and thus achieve the forgiveness of sins, which makes Christ's death meaningless. If true, argues Tyndale, then Christ cannot be “taken or esteemed of christian men, for all his passion and promises made to

¹³⁸ William Tyndale, *An exposition upon the V. VI. VII. Chapters of Mathew, which three chapters are the keye and the dore of the scripture, and the restoring agayne of Moses law corrupte by the scribes and pharises. And the exposition is the restoring agayne of Christes lawe corrupte by the papistes*, (Antwerp: 1532?) in G. E. Duffield, ed. *The Work of William Tyndale* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), 180-304. The text in Duffield's edition seems to be an earlier copy from Lambeth and John Day's 1573 edition (editor's note).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 181-182.

us in his blood, than he is of the Turks: how that he was a holy prophet, and that he prayeth for us as other saints do...and that he hath also a higher place in heaven.”¹⁴⁰ In other words, Tyndale argues, if religion disconnects Christ’s passion from the law, then “the scripture is locked up, and henceforth extreme darkness, and a maze, wherein if thou walk, thou wettest neither where thou art, nor canst find any way out.” And this is how the scribes and Pharisees “locked up” scripture, so that the “Jews could not see Christ when he came, nor yet can.” But Christians have lost Christ again: for “the hypocrites, whatsoever seemeth impossible to their corrupt nature, unrenewed in Christ, that they cover over with the mist of their glosses, that the light thereof should not be seen.”¹⁴¹

In Tyndale’s view, the fundamental problem with his opponents relates to the role of the law in the life of the Christian. Although he argues that the law cannot justify, Tyndale also eschews any notion of antinomianism. He rehearses some of the arguments of his opponents who draw from Matthew 19, Romans 2 and 2 Corinthians 5, all of which seem to support the view that the deeds of the law justify. “These, and all such, are naughty arguments” because, for example, “a king pardoneth no murderer but on a condition, that he henceforth keep the law...and yet ye know well enough that he is saved by grace, favour and pardon, ere the keeping of the law to come.”¹⁴² In other words, the offender who has broken the law finds grace only after committing an offense. On the other hand, this does not mean that the law has no place in the life of a Christian. He describes a life in which a Christian experiences grace by keeping the law; if one breaks the law one can seek a pardon and find restoration and thus “a new fight against sin, hell, and desperation, ere we can come to a quiet faith again, and feel that the sin is forgiven.”

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 182-183.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 183.

¹⁴² Ibid., 184-185.

Christians, therefore, should never live as if they have reached some sort of spiritual pinnacle devoid of sin entirely but rather the assurance that when one sins, one should “endeavour thyself to sin no more” because “the promise of mercy and forgiveness made unto thee.” The crux of Tyndale’s argument, then, emphasizes the law’s importance: “And as thy love to the law increaseth, so doth thy faith in Christ.”¹⁴³

Tyndale argues that those who do not love the law do not have faith in Christ at all but rather a “wicked imagination, that God is so unrighteous that he is not offended with sin” and it is to those people that the scriptures remain “locked up, and made impossible to understand.”¹⁴⁴ And although someone may understand the content of the scriptures, and even try to refute it, like the Turks or his papal opponents for example, they cannot “apply one sentence thereof to their soul’s health, or fashion their lives thereby for to please God...or love the law, or understand it.” Nor can they “feel the power of Christ’s death, and might of his resurrection, and the sweetness of the life to come.” For Tyndale, people who do not exhibit certain characteristics such as these, especially in terms of a *feeling faith*, “ever remain carnal and fleshly; as thou hast an ensample of the scribes, Pharisees, and Jews, in the New Testament.”¹⁴⁵

Tyndale then describes two different types of faith, a true faith and the faith of hypocrites. True faith refers to the belief or trust that “God justifieth or forgiveth; and Christ deserveth; and the faith or trust in Christ’s blood receiveth, and certifieth the conscience thereof, and saveth and deliver her of death and damnation.” The faith of hypocrites, on the other hand, refers to a faith wherein “God forgiveth, and works deserve

¹⁴³ Ibid., 185.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 185.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 185-186.

it: and that same false faith, in their own works, receiveth the mercy promised to the merits of their own works; and so Christ is utterly excluded.”¹⁴⁶

Tyndale describes the true church of Christ to be those who believe in Christ for the remission of sins and thank God for his mercy and love the law “purely and without glosses.” Christians who have had their hearts “washed with this inward baptism of the Spirit” and who have the “keys of the scripture” represent the church that does not err. Tyndale reserves his harshest polemic near the conclusion of his prologue. He launches into an indictment of the doctrines, practices and representatives of the traditional church as members of Satan, which up to this point he identifies them as *hypocrites*. These indictments include those who not only heed the warnings of sin but instead use their liberty as a license to sin more, those who obscure commandments in the scriptures and those who undermine faith in Christ through various ceremonies and traditions. Not only does Tyndale regard all their doctrine as poison, “error and darkness,” but he identifies all the malefactors, from the pope down to curates and scholars in the universities. Tyndale accuses his opponents of obscuring Christ’s passion by omitting the law. He writes,

yea, though they be popes, bishops, abbots, curates, and doctors of divinity, and though they can rehearse all the scripture without book...and preach Christ and the passion of Christ...that they should minister Christ’s passion unto salvation of our souls, there they poison altogether and gloss out the law, that should make us feel our salvation in Christ, and drive us in that point from Christ, and teach us to put our trust in our own works for the remission and satisfaction of our sins, and in the apish play of hypocrites, which sell their merits instead of Christ’s blood and passion.¹⁴⁷

Here Tyndale establishes how one should view the law in its proper, biblical context. The law is good because it leads one to a feeling faith, a faith that seeks out the mercy of God and includes both interior and exterior dimensions: that the Spirit quickens the soul or

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 189.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 189-190.

heart, which leads to an exterior consistency wherein the Christian lives by the law without hypocrisy. Thomas Cranmer would later call this kind of faith a ‘lively faith.’ For Tyndale, the scribes and Pharisees, like his religious opponents now, do not display this kind of faith.

Tyndale’s *Exposition* of Matthew 5-7 includes both exhortation and polemic. I will provide a few examples. For Christ’s Beatitudes from Matthew 5, Tyndale offers readers a “right understanding” of the Decalogue as Christ intended, over and against the scribes and Pharisees, “which were hypocrites, false prophets, and false preachers, and had corrupt the scripture with the leaven of their glosses.”¹⁴⁸ He explains that God determines whether his children have poverty or riches, but the poor in spirit trust God irrespective of their material wealth. For Tyndale, covetousness corrupts Christians: wealthy Christians place their trust in riches instead of God; poor Christians seek riches for consolation. He then warns his readers of the covetous preacher, churchmen who “be covetous and gape for promotion...he be a false prophet, and leaveneth the scripture, for all his crying, ‘fathers, fathers,’ ‘holy church,’ and ‘fifteen hundred years,’ and for all his holy pretences.”¹⁴⁹

Tyndale’s exposition of Matthew 5.17-20 contains a long passage on the faults and abuses of the scribes and Pharisees, intermingled with exhortation on the one hand and polemic against traditional opponents on the other. He offers a series of contrasts between Christ’s teaching and those of the world and the Pharisees: true knowledge as opposed to “false opinions and sophistical persuasions of natural reason” on the part of

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 194. The Beatitudes are found in Matthew 5.3-12.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 195-196.

the world and “the captivity of false glosses” on the part of the Pharisees.¹⁵⁰ Tyndale imagines Christ’s exposition of his own words from Matthew 5.17. In those statements Christ wipes “away the filthy and rotten glosses wherewith the scribes and the Pharisees have smeared the law, and the prophets” and rebukes their unholy living which they draw from their own interpretations of the law; not only do they mock the law of God and lead the world astray in blindness, but they accuse Christ of destroying the law “to set the people at a fleshly liberty...to despise their spiritual prelates, and then to rise against the temporal rulers...”¹⁵¹ For Matthew 5.20, in which Christ calls his disciples to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, Tyndale explains that the scribes and Pharisees do not have the righteousness necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven because they do not have the true knowledge of God. Furthermore, because they do not have the knowledge of God they cannot obey God’s will, and as a consequence cannot seek the glory of God. Instead they seek their own glory and “preach their own doctrine” and, citing Matthew 23, do their deeds to be seen by men; they also “alter the word of God for their own profit and glory.”¹⁵² Tyndale then asks: “What were the scribes and Pharisees?” His answer, after all that has been written about the scribes and Pharisees in this section, allows readers to associate them with ecclesiastical figures and traditional religion in the sixteenth century:

The scribes, besides that they were Pharisees, as I suppose, were also officers; as our bishops, chancellors, commissaries, archdeacons, and officials. And the Pharisees were religious men, which had professed, not as now, one Dominick’s, the other Francis’, another Bernard’s rules, but even to hold the very law of God, with prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds; and were the flower and perfection of all the Jews...Now seeing they kept the uttermost jot of the law, in the sight of the world, and were faultless...What then was the wickedness of the Pharisees? Verily the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 216.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 217.

¹⁵² Ibid., 218-219.

leaven of their glosses to the moral laws, by which they corrupted the commandments, and made them no more God's; and their false faith in the ceremonies...false righteousness in their prayers, fastings, and alms-deeds, that such works did justify a man before God...¹⁵³

We should note Tyndale's polemical strategy: if the Pharisees practiced righteousness without fault and yet were morally corrupt, what does that say about friars and their morality when they do not even measure up to the Pharisees in terms of practice? What follows these statements contextualizes the Pharisees and their false religion for Tyndale's readers. Tyndale explains why *true preachers* undergo persecution. They preach against the false righteousness of church officials and as a result are considered heretics, seditious, in league with the devil and worthy of persecution.

In Tyndale's exposition of Matthew 6.5-6, Christ's instructions regarding prayer, Tyndale establishes the role of works in general as it relates to the scriptures. A Christian's good works can never please God unless "thou have the true knowledge of God's word to season they deeds withal."¹⁵⁴ For Tyndale, the scriptures establish a rule for good works "without which thou canst not move an hair of thine head, but that it is damnable in the sight of God."¹⁵⁵ In other words, having zeal to do good works without knowledge of God's word amounts to something God considers damnable. He then provides illustrations that comprise of Jews and ecclesiastical figures. "As it is of the Jews," he explains, "though (as Paul beareth then record) they have a fervent zeal to God, yea, and have the scripture thereto; yet because they have not the true understanding, all

¹⁵³ Ibid., 220-221. For n. 1, 220, Duffield notes that the term 'religious men' was used by Tyndale "to taunt the monks." But it is more than a taunt: Tyndale intentionally associates Pharisees with friars both in terms of practice and doctrine, and traditional religion in general.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 255.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 255-256.

is damnable that they do.”¹⁵⁶ He then references the familiar Matthew 23 and speaks about hypocrites. Although Matthew 23 concerns Christ’s condemnation of the scribes and Pharisees, Tyndale seamlessly launches into a exposition about hypocrites in the church as it relates to almsgiving, fasting, and especially prayer. When a hypocrite practices those deeds they do not exist “in the sight of God.”¹⁵⁷ Prayer, for example, should be to honor God and his name so that all will fear him, keep his commands and believe in him, but hypocrites in the church “seek their own honor, that men should fear them and keep their ordinances, and believe in their sweet blessings, prayers, pardons, and whatsoever they promise.”¹⁵⁸ The consequences for not obeying the priesthood results in condemnation, for “thou must obey, or else thou art damned, and an heretic, because thou dost not believe in holy church.”¹⁵⁹

Tyndale’s exposition of Matthew 5-7 provides him an opportunity to promote important evangelical dimensions of orthodoxy in contrast to traditional religion. That contrast often includes images of Jews and Judaism. But Tyndale also exhorts his readers to live authentic, biblically-informed Christian lives through a proper understanding of true faith and its relationship to the law, both of which have the upmost importance for the Christian. Tyndale’s polemic is present but goes beyond merely denigrating traditional religion. The images of Jews and Judaism, how those images illustrate aspects of traditional religion and its ecclesiastical defenders, serve the larger goal of promoting an evangelical orthodoxy that explains what true faith looks like and that the law has an important role in the life of a Christian despite what critics claim. In essence, Tyndale’s

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 256.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 256.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 256.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 256.

vision of orthodoxy achieves a new level of perspicuity when one compares it to traditional religion, and the religion of the scribes and Pharisees no less.

CONCLUSION

Tyndale's evangelical career came to an abrupt end in 1535 when he was arrested in Antwerp. He was executed in 1536. He outlived his principle opponent Thomas More by a little over a year and left behind a series of writings that not only defined evangelical orthodoxy but also characterized traditional religion in highly negative ways, often with images of Jews and Judaism. Tyndale, however, thought with Jews about traditional religion on a much deeper level in that he argued that the church's original seeds of corruption could be traced back to Jews who converted to Christ under compulsion. For him, traditional religion's fundamental problem was that it never really excised what it inherited from the corrupted Judaism of scribes and Pharisees, a Judaism that he understood Christ had confronted and condemned. Tyndale would inspire other reformers in England as well as provoke Thomas More to compose a long confutation against his ideas, which I examine in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Defenders of Traditional Religion during the Early Reformation

The onslaught of evangelical rhetoric beginning in the 1520s produced spirited reactions from defenders of traditional religion, led principally by Thomas More. The church's defenders occasionally drew upon images of Jews and Judaism in their struggle to defend and promote traditional orthodoxy and preserve the doctrinal and practical boundaries of traditional religion; those images were also used to amplify the dangerous and diabolical threat evangelicals posed as heretical enemies of the church. Ecclesiastical authorities in England had long contended against heresy with varying degrees of intensity and success but the threat posed by evangelicals that began in the 1520s constituted a much more serious threat than its lollard predecessors ever did. Thomas More occupies a prominent place among a list of defenders of traditional orthodoxy during this period and so I devote much of this chapter to an examination of his most prodigious work, *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, published in the early 1530s. Before I examine More's work I will consider one the most important defenders of traditional religion in the 1520s: John Fisher.

I

Thomas More was not the only defender of traditional religion to employ images of Jews and Judaism in the struggle for orthodoxy. When Luther's ideas began to reach the shores of England, certainly by the early 1520s, John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, responded. In 1521 he published *The sermon of Iohan the bysshop of Rochester made*

*agayn[st] the pernicious doctryne of Martin Luther.*¹ Fisher's polemic against Luther does not, however, contain associations between Jews and heretics although he does employ images of Jews and Judaism. Those images largely serve a didactic purpose not a polemical one in defining traditional concepts of orthodoxy.

In the beginning of the sermon, Fisher describes Luther's movement as a "hydeous tempest...clowdes withouten the moyster of grace whiche be moued with the blast of wicked spyrytes" which "thonderyth agaynst the popes authoritie."² He recalls John 15 that promises the spirit of truth for the church and sets out to affirm the concept of a universal church, the pope's authority over that church and condemn Luther for not having the spirit of truth.³ Through an illustration of a large tree with large branches that cast shadows, Fisher explains that "the lawe of Moyses & the gouernaunce of the synagoge of the Jewes was but a shadowe of the gouernaunce of the vnyuersall chirche of Christ" and that the "people of the Jewes was shadow of the christen people."⁴ Under God's authority there exists two heads, Moses and Aaron in the Old Testament and Christ and Peter in the New Testament. Peter, according to Ambrose and Jerome, "is called Petra bycause that he fyrste amonge the gentyles dyd establishe the ground of our fayth...[and] was chosen out amongst twelfe to thentent that he beyng theyr heed all occasyons of schysmatyke diuysyon shold be take awaye."⁵

Fisher's characterization of the Mosaic law and the synagogue as shadows, replaced by Christ and the church, reflects a typical sixteenth-century Christian premise

¹ John Fisher, *The sermon of Iohan the bysshop of Rochester made agayn[st] the pernicious doctryn of Martin luther within the octaues of the ascensyon by the assignement of the most reuerend fader in god the lord Thomas Cardinal of Yorke and legate ex latero from our holy father the pope* (London: Wynkyn de Worde, 1521; Cambridge University Library, STC/10894).

² *Ibid.*, sig. A2r-v.

³ *Ibid.*, sig. A3r-v.

⁴ *Ibid.*, sig. A4r.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. B2v-B3r.

about the relationship between Jews and Judaism and Christianity. But his primary objective seeks to condemn Luther's rejection of the pope's authority, and for that he utilizes scriptural images of Jews and Judaism to advance a view about the arc of redemptive history: the Jews and synagogue serve as shadows of Christians and the church to come; the scriptures reveal that Moses and Aaron precede the church's two heads under Christ and Peter, and the successor of Peter. He affirms the pope's authority because the vicar of Christ not only reflects legitimate biblical precedent but unifies the church from schism. Therefore Luther "hath deuyded hymselfe from the heed of this body, whiche is the vycare of chryste...with suche pryde, arrogancye & presumpcyon."⁶ Through an explanation of the arc of redemptive history as revealed in the scriptures, Fisher not only legitimizes the pope's authority but he delegitimizes Luther and his rejection of the vicar of Christ.

Fisher also attacks both Lutheran doctrines of *sola fide* and *sola scriptura*. For *sola fide*, of course, Fisher promotes the significance of good works in relation to faith and cites 1 Corinthians 13.2 and James 2.26, both of which reveal that faith cannot stand on its own without charity and good works.⁷ Furthermore, the epistle of James explains that even the demons have faith, which Fisher argues "yet no man maye say that the deuylls be iustfyed by theyr faythe."⁸ He then cites Christ's words from Matthew 5.20 in which Christ instructs his audience that their righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, or as Fisher states, "onlesse your iustyce or your maner of lyuynge

⁶ Ibid., sig. B4r.

⁷ Ibid., sig. B5r. Fisher cites part of 1 Corinthians 13.2, which reads '*Si habuero omnem fidem ita vt montes transferram charitatem autem non habuero sum*' or 'if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.' James 2.26 reads, '*fides sine operibus mortua est*,' or 'faith without works is dead.'

⁸ Ibid., sig. C1r; see James 2.19.

be more better and ample than was the iustyce and lyuyng of the Jewes and pharisees ye shal not entre in into the kingdom of heuen whiche is to be vnderstanded *de iustica operum*, of the iustyce of workes.”⁹ He includes more scriptural citations to affirm *de iustica operum*, including Matthew 7.26 and Romans 2.13, both of which emphasize the significance of works or deeds as they relate to wisdom and justification and exhorts his audience from James 1.22 to “be ye workers of the worde of god and not onely the herers for than ye disceyue yourself.”¹⁰

For Fisher, images of ‘Jews and Pharisees’ from Matthew 5.20 promote the traditional orthodox notion of *de iustica operum*. Fisher takes the words of Christ literally; he assumes, unlike later evangelical commentators, that the Pharisees have a certain degree of righteousness to be exceeded. In 1521 the reference to Matthew 5.20 seems unremarkable; evangelicals have not began their concerted effort to associate the scribes and Pharisees with the clergy until the later 1520s, unless one had access to old lollard texts. By 1530, however, Matthew 5.20 could be interpreted in a variety of ways, namely that since the clergy resemble the Pharisees, one could argue that the evangelical cause reflects Christ’s statement more authentically than the traditional notion of *de iustica operum*, especially in terms of justification by faith alone. One might think Fisher would refrain from citing Matthew 5.20 once images of the Pharisees become a feature of evangelical rhetoric. But Fisher remained undeterred: in 1532 he published two sermons

⁹ Ibid., sig. C2v.

¹⁰ Ibid., sig. C3r.

based specifically on Matthew 5.20.¹¹ For him, Christ's statement stands firm regardless of how heretics attempt to characterize the Pharisees or undermine *de iusticia operum*.

As for *sola scriptura*, Fisher also includes images of Jews and Judaism as part of his argument that God disseminates truth as the scriptures record but also through an oral tradition. God the Father spoke to the prophets, Christ spoke to the apostles and church fathers and the Holy Spirit spoke and still speaks to the church, transmitted in both in oral and written forms. He explains, citing Hebrews 1, that God the Father in "many diuers ways instructe our fathers by his prophetes" and that

saynt Paule meaneth here by our fathers the Jewes of whom we [spiritually] descended..whose prophecyes all be it they be written in scripture yet was there many moo thinges which they spook vnwrytten that was of as gret authoryte, as that it was written which the mayster of Jewes calleth cabala, which is deriued fro man to man, by mouthe onely & not by wrytng.¹²

The fact that Fisher includes *cabala* to support oral transmission of the truth in tandem to the written texts of the prophets seems unusual but it does support the notion of unwritten verities.¹³

If God the Father spoke to the Jews through oral tradition, Christ spoke to the apostles and church fathers through oral tradition as well. Fisher cites 2 Thessalonians 2.15, which instructs Christians to "be ye constaunt & kepe those instruccions & erudicyons that ye haue lerned of vs, ather by mouth or els by wryting" and through

¹¹ John Fisher, *Here after ensueth two fruitful sermons, made and compiled by the ryght Reuerende father in god Iohn Fysshier, Doctour of Dyuynte and Bysshop of Rochester* (London: W. Rastell, 1532; STC 10909).

¹² Fisher, *The sermon of Iohan the bysshop of Rochester made agayn[st] the pernicious doctryn of Martin luther*, sig. C3v-C4r. Again, as with many sixteenth-century commentators, Paul the Apostle was considered the author of the epistle to the Hebrews.

¹³ It is not clear whether Fisher actually means the Jewish mystical practice of *kabbalah*; contemporary Christian Hebraists such as Johannes Reuchlin imitated a kabbalistic method to interpreting sacred texts while at the same time rejecting the Talmud; see Heiko A. Oberman, *The Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Age of Renaissance and Reformation*, trans. James I. Porter (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 27.

Origen “many suche tradycyons were left vnto the christen people by Christ & his apostles, the whiche we must folowe notwithstanding they be not written in scripture.”¹⁴

The Holy Spirit, then, has instructed the church and continues to abide with the church, especially when “the storms & tempests of heresy do aryse & agaynst al floghteryng doutfulnes to teche vs the veray certayne trouthe, where vnto we shold rest.”¹⁵ Fisher recounts how the Holy Spirit governed the bishops and doctors through the councils of the church, especially when heresies arose, with the implication that the Holy Spirit will guide the church now in the face of Luther’s heresy.

After he summarizes his points again, namely that the Father instructed the prophets through unwritten *cabala*, that Christ taught the apostles which included unwritten traditions and that the Holy Spirit guided the doctors of the church through their expositions of scripture and church councils, he attacks Luther. “Yf there were a fourth persone in the trynyte or an other spyryte to be sent vnto vs from almighty god,” he surmises, “we might yet be in some doute wheder Martyn luther had met with this spyryte by the waye and conueyed hym from vs.”¹⁶ But of course, only three persons of the Godhead exist, and thus “we may be sure that Martyn luther hath not this spyryte whan he dothe teche vs agaynst the trouthe that be taught vs by this spyryte

for he cutteth away the tradycyons of the apostles, and refuseth the general councelles, and contemneth the doctryne of the holy father and doctours of the chirche, and laboureth to subuerte all the ordynance of the chirche & namely the .vii sacramentes. And taketh away the fredome of mans wyll... We may be sure therefore that he hathe some other wretched spyryte, some spyryte of errour & not the spyryte of trouthe.¹⁷

¹⁴ Fisher, *The sermon of Iohan the bysshop of Rochester made agayn[st] the pernicious doctryn of Martin luther*, sig. C4r-v.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. D1r.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. D2r.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. D2r.

Given the way God has communicated the truth through the ages through a trinitarian framework, Fisher attempts to corner Luther while he affirms the concept of unwritten truth, whether through *cabala*, traditions or church councils. But to thoroughly refute Luther, Fisher attempts to expose the violent nature of heretics. For that purpose, he argues that heretics represent a greater danger than the Jews and tyrants of old.

Adherents of Luther, argues Fisher, believe him to be erudite, courageous and zealous for God, but he espouses dangerous doctrines and therefore “a weyke soule hereth he is in peril anone to gyue faythe vnto it & to mistrust the doctrine of the chirche.”¹⁸ He then cites an important passage from John 16.2 in which Christ warns his followers, “This I haue tolde you before to the entent that ye shal not quale in your fayth. For they shall deuyde you from theyr synagoges & the tyme shal come that euery man that mordereth you shall thynke that he dothe therby grete seruyce vnto god.”¹⁹ Fisher explains that although some might argue that this statement only refers to the time of the Jews who expelled the apostles from their synagogues or to the time of the tyrants who killed many Christians, these words of Christ “perten vnto the tyme of the heretikes...bycause this persecucion lenger continued than the other twayne.”²⁰ The persecution of the Jews ended and the persecution by tyrants only lasted a season, “but the heretykes hath persecuted the chirche from the ascension of Christ & shall do vnto the comynge of antichryst.”²¹ And although the Jews and tyrants “were manyfest enemyes vnto chryst & abhorred his scryptures” the heretics are worse: they “pretend a special

¹⁸ Ibid., sig. D3v.

¹⁹ Ibid., sig. D3v-D4r.

²⁰ Ibid., sig. D4r.

²¹ Ibid., sig. D4r.

fauour vnto christ & colour all theyr heresydes with his scryptures.”²² When the Jews and tyrants killed Christians they sent their souls to heaven; heretics, however, by “misconstruyng the scriptures of god, by theyr false doctryne & erronyous opinyons & pestilent heresydes doth slee the soules of chrysten people & send them to euerlastyng damnacion.”²³

Fisher ends his sermon with grave warnings; the images of both Jews and tyrants emphasize the wickedness of Luther and his doctrines. To be worse than the Jews and more dangerous than tyrants marks the reformer with a “madness intollerable” and condemns his movement as the work of Satan, for “all other sembles that be not of this chirche be synagoges of sathanas & concylyables of the deuyll.”²⁴ Fisher explains that Christians should not be astonished about the intentions of heretics, that although they “do excommunicate and deuyde the true christianes from theyr synagoges” Christ did warn his faithful: “*absque synagogis facient vos.*”²⁵ He recalls the Donatists and their murderous activities and reminds his audience that although the disciples of Wyclif did not murder themselves, they did pass a bill in parliament which allowed temporal lords “to slee theyr aduersaryes that resisted agaynst them.”²⁶ In a final plea Fisher warns his audience not to give their trust over to Luther or any other heretic, but rather to Christ and the Spirit of truth “which is left in the chirche of chryst vnto the worldes ende.”²⁷

Overall, Fisher employs images of Jews and Judaism more for didactic purposes than polemic. He does not express a general hostility towards Jews and Judaism like

²² Ibid., sig. D4r.

²³ Ibid., sig. D4r.

²⁴ Ibid., sig. D5v.

²⁵ Ibid., sig. D6r; *absque synagogis facient vos*, they will put you out of their synagogues.

²⁶ Ibid., sig. D6r-v.

²⁷ Ibid., sig. D7v.

some contemporaries, save his statements about Jewish resistance to Christ and Jewish persecution of Christians towards the end of his sermon. Images of Jews primarily serve to bolster traditional orthodoxy in various ways, whether papal authority, the doctrine of good works or the legitimacy of unwritten truths passed down as part of redemptive history. He preaches at a time early in the Reformation in England when images of Jews and Judaism could support traditional claims to orthodoxy without risking evangelical exploitation of those images or confusing his audience. But as evangelical cause gained a small but stubborn foothold over the course of the late 1520s and 1530s, the rhetorical arena changed. Thomas More, for his part, becomes more radical in his mission to protect the soul of England and somewhat frantic in his fight with Tyndale; images of Jews and Judaism become typical, even popular polemical devices for evangelicals to negatively characterize traditional religion. Fisher, however, does not seem intimidated by evangelical rhetoric. His two sermons published in 1532, inspired by Matthew 5.20, indicate that despite how evangelicals have exploited the image of the Pharisee, Fisher continued to take Christ at his word and promoted the doctrine of *de iusticia operum* as well as providing a vision for what awaits the faithful.

II

Thomas More's most extensive refutation of the new learning, specifically Tyndale's ideas, was *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, published in parts in 1532 and 1533.²⁸ *Confutation* comprises of eight books and a fragment of a ninth book; it represents More's most comprehensive defense of traditional religion. More repeats himself often in a highly combative tone, most notably about how principle evangelicals

²⁸ Thomas More, *The Confutation of Tyndale's Answer*, vol. 8 of *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, eds. L. Schuster, R. Marius, J. Lusardi, R. Schoeck (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1973).

like Luther and Tyndale have broken their vows of chastity, distort the scriptures, breed sedition, usurp church authority and represent the forces of the devil. He seeks to refute evangelical claims about true religion with his own vigorous, somewhat systematic defense of traditional orthodoxy and the traditional church. Specifically, he provides a rationale for the sacraments, rites and practices of traditional religion, defends the historical existence and continuity of the church and affirms the legitimacy and authority of the clergy.

For More, the stakes could not be higher: he views the struggle with his opponents in cosmic terms of good versus evil, God versus Satan, Christ versus Antichrist. More's rhetorical arsenal includes various terms of abuse and criticism but he characterizes his opponents with the term *heretyke* more frequently than any other term. He repeatedly impresses upon his readers that Luther, Tyndale and other evangelicals do not represent a new movement of God but a heretical movement that threatens church, commonwealth and crown. Evangelical opponents do not simply espouse well-intentioned, alternative religious opinions but something diabolical: just as the devil "hath a deadly delight to bygyle good people, and brynge theyr soules into euerlastyng torment...so do these heretykes the deuyls dyscyples bysette theyr whole pleasure...in the traynyng of simple soules to hell by theyr dyuelyshe heresyas."²⁹ Those heresies, of course, have made their way to England in the form evangelical texts "full of pestilent errors and pernyciouse heresyas" which threaten the souls of English Christians even more than famine threatens the body.³⁰ More not only views himself as a defender of traditional orthodoxy but also a defender of the soul of England, a role in which the arrest

²⁹ Ibid., 13.

³⁰ Ibid., 3.

and destruction of both heretical books and unrepentant heretics seems a necessary measure for the preservation of a unified, unadulterated and peaceful Christian society.

Along with images of the diabolical and heresy, More occasionally associates his opponents with images of Jews and Judaism. But these images should not, by and large, be attributed to More's rhetorical inventiveness. Images of Jews and Judaism primarily serve to counter Tyndale's rhetoric: likely he would not be writing about Jews and Judaism at all if his opponents did not employ those images so frequently themselves. More exposes Tyndale's rhetorical strategy several times, most notably the strategy that associates the traditional church with the synagogue and the clergy with the Pharisees. That evangelical characterization simply cannot go unanswered. But More's responses often yield surprising results. At certain points in *Confutation* he carefully constructs arguments that challenge Tyndale's simplistic and categorical condemnation of the Jews, the Pharisees and the synagogue. Although More reveals some negative and even hostile attitudes towards Jews and Judaism that reflect a typical Christian view of the period, he also characterizes the Pharisees and the synagogue with a certain sensitivity and nuance that sets him apart from both co-religionists and opponents.

I do not suggest that More displays a certain level of tolerance towards Jews and Judaism that approaches any modern standards. On the contrary, negative attitudes about Jews and Judaism presuppose much of More's polemic against Tyndale. In the beginning of *Confutation*, for example, More associates his opponents who boast about martyrdom with "the false preachers yt were Iewes" who "labored to haue all crysten people circumcised, to thentent that as saynte Poule sayth they myghte glorye in theyr fleshe."³¹

³¹ Ibid., 13. Here, More cites Galatians 6 in which he considers Paul's primary opponents to be Jewish false preachers who insist upon circumcision of Christians.

Similarly, in his defense of the Eucharist More associates Tyndale with the Jews and the devil in that all of them deny the sacrament of the altar, the former “byleueth lesse then the one...and is as malycouse as any of them both.”³² In his argument that affirms the presence of miracles in the church he accuses Tyndale of the same sin “as the iewes dyd of olde...ascrybynge the myracles wrought by the goodnes of god to be done in goddes chyrch by the power of the deuyll.”³³ Later he explains that miracles have brought about the conversion of both Jews and heretics but also “to the confusion and burnynge vppe of obstinate iewes & heretykes, wyth the begynnyng of theyr hell euyn here in erthe.”³⁴

More also exploits the figure of Judas, the infamous and enduring symbol of Jewish hostility and betrayal, to characterize evangelicals. Just as the disciples slumbered while Christ prayed in Gethsemane and Judas “the traytor was wakyng and watchyng aboute hys detestable treason” these “Iudasys watche & study about the makynge of theyr vngracyouse books.”³⁵ In his refutation of Tyndale’s condemnation of transubstantiation, More calls Tyndale a *new Judas* for his “raylynge agaynst Chrystes blessed body the sacrament of the awlter” but can be assured that if he would repent and seek God’s forgiveness for his errors he would find purgatory instead of hell, which apparently was also possible for the *old Judas*.³⁶ More responds to Tyndale’s accusation in *Answer* that “where as Iudas and Balaam were not mete samples for me, that bere my self neyther for an apostle nor for a prophete:

I myghte here laye them bothe well for playne samples to hym that bereth hym selfe for a ryghte apostle that were sent to preche a new fayth to thys realme, and a newe euangelyste to, that maketh with his false translacyon newe scrypture of

³² Ibid., 116.

³³ Ibid., 245.

³⁴ Ibid., 252.

³⁵ Ibid., 36-37.

³⁶ Ibid., 549.

hys owne, & very proprely playeth he the parte of Balaam to, in that he laboreth to brynge maledyccyons vppon Hierusalem, that is the catholyke chyrche of Cryste.³⁷

At one point More addresses Tyndale's charge in the *Answer* that ecclesiastical authorities and magistrates resemble the scribes, Pharisees, Pilate, Herod, Caiaphas and Annas who war against God, Christ and the reformers. More recognizes Tyndale's tactic: no member of the traditional clergy would want to be associated with the characters on Tyndale's list. More responds with an *ad hominem* attack and then condemns Tyndale for promoting sedition. He explains that Tyndale has blinded people to a such a degree that they believe in diametrical opposites: heresy is the right faith and the right faith is heresy; black is white and white is black; God is the devil and the devil is God. That level of blindness, More argues, leads to a twisted logic that regards magistrates, ecclesiastical authorities "and euery kynde of crysten people that any thyng do or saye against heretyques" as "Pylates, Herodes, Cayphas, and Annas."³⁸ More then directs his readers to what has happened in Germany: those magistrates and ecclesiastical authorities confronted heretics who attempted to destroy the true faith of Christ with their heresies and good Christian people "wyth theyr traytorouse settinge forth of sedycyons to rayse rebellyons."³⁹ The charge that magistrates and ecclesiastical officials resemble Jewish conspirators and their collaborators reflects a blindness that does not even consider how they have protected true faith and true Christians from rebellion and heresy. More, for his part, exploits negative attitudes towards images of Jews and Judaism much in the same way as his opponents. However, as we shall see, he also thinks with Jews and Judaism with more nuance than these examples might suggest.

³⁷ Ibid., 181.

³⁸ Ibid., 137-138.

³⁹ Ibid., 138.

I should note at the outset that More occasionally associates his opponents with the Turks and Islam, although he employs images of Jews and Judaism far more frequently. The references to Turks and Islam, while perhaps more polemically inventive, may not resonate with a sixteenth-century English audience as much as the more familiar images of Jews and Judaism would. Nevertheless, images of the Turks and Islam serve More's polemical objectives. For example, More accuses Tyndale of more infidelity than the Turks because Tyndale purposely mistranslates the gospel and promotes heresies as "euyll as the Alchorane."⁴⁰ Sometimes More includes the Turks with other enemies of Christendom, primarily Jews and heretics. For instance, he accuses Tyndale of teaching the fruitlessness of baptism which makes heretics worse than "turkes, Iewes, or saracens" and adds a marginal note for emphasis: "An heretique is worse than a Turke."⁴¹ More resorts to the triumvirate of Turks, Jews and Saracens at several other points regarding doctrines such as the Eucharist and the nature of the church.⁴² At one point he explains why the church considers Jews, Turks and heretics in error, namely that the Turks resort to false scripture, the Jews promote false traditions and heretics employ false expositions.⁴³ He denies the possibility that true miracles of God can be wrought from among Turks or pagans unlike the church and he assures his readers that "among all ye false chyrcches and fals heretikes there be no miracles at all."⁴⁴

Among his many condemnatory statements about Tyndale and other evangelicals, More fixates on evangelical moral failure, especially his opponents' violations of their vows of chastity as former members of religious orders. It is More's most common

⁴⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁴¹ Ibid., 94.

⁴² Ibid., 111, 393.

⁴³ Ibid., 245.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 253.

condemnation, occurring at least sixty-six times throughout the work and serves as a constant refrain in which to emphasize evangelical immorality. For More, marriages between friars and nuns exemplify not just an unprecedented moral failure but the work of the devil; this indictment alone seems to provide a rationale to legitimately condemn everything evangelicals represent. But More also stresses this one moral failing to expose evangelical hypocrisy, since evangelicals often point out the moral failures of the traditional clergy.

III

In Book III, More maintains that miracles hold a central place in true religion in that they confirm belief in the right doctrine. Scripture, he contends, “had bene and yet euery age were well testyfyed with myracles, in that the prophetes and precers therof, and the places where it was preched and occupied in goddys seruyce, were by god illustrate and set out wyth myracles.”⁴⁵ Christ and the apostles, therefore, not only refuted the false Pharisees with miracles but, More argues, God continues that pattern against

these new pharisees these manyfolde sects of heretykes, both now do, and fro the bygynnyng haue done, mysse construe the scryptur of god agaynst the mynde of Cryste and his apostles: our lord sendeth and euer hath sent not onely good vertuous preachers agaynste them, but also reproueth and euer hath reproued theyr moste commen heresyys agaynste sayntes and sacramentes wyth dayly meruelouse miracles.⁴⁶

Those miracles include, among other things, images that speak and a Eucharist that bleeds. Miracles not only confirm God’s persistent presence in the church but they testify against heretics and preserve the sacraments of traditional orthodoxy. More’s indictment of evangelicals as the *new pharisees* not only associates them to Christ’s principle

⁴⁵ Ibid., 275-276.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 276.

opponents in the Gospels and characterizes them as antithetical to true Christianity but it emphasizes how evangelicals, like the Pharisees of old, distort the scriptures. Miracles, then, have an important role in maintaining traditional orthodoxy and reproving any *new pharisee* that tries to dismantle the central beliefs of traditional religion.

When Tyndale argues that true doctrine can only be supported by miracles or the scriptures and not church tradition, More argues that Tyndale ignores certain scriptural passages themselves and the testimony of miracles that occur in the church. For example, in reference to Acts 15, More asks “what miracle wrought the apostles for euey poynte of theyre doctryne in theyr letter...or where is yt wryten that they wrought any one for them all?”⁴⁷ Furthermore, More argues that miracles have been a common occurrence in the church not only among the saints but also through its sacraments and rites such as images, relics, pilgrimages and the Eucharist. These miracles testify to the legitimacy and veracity of the church’s doctrines and cannot be denied; heretics, however, “are shamefully dreuen to saye lyke the Iewes, that yt is the deuyll that doth them.”⁴⁸

In Book III, More also sets out to refute the doctrine of *sola scriptura* and he turns to Matthew 23 to do so, specifically how Robert Barnes uses that passage to argue that “sholde nothyng be taught but onely scripture.”⁴⁹ Matthew 23 is a passage fraught with danger: evangelicals often use it to associate the traditional clergy with the scribes and Pharisees and condemn them for hypocrisy and other offenses just as Christ did. More, however, confronts the text on his own terms. He sanitizes the passage by omitting most of its condemnatory verses that evangelicals often cite and focuses solely on verses 2-3,

⁴⁷ Ibid., 347.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 347. More probably refers to episodes from the Gospels such as Mark 3:22 or Luke 11:15 in which Pharisees accuse Jesus of casting out devils through the power of the devil.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 352. Barnes addresses this topic in his 1531 *Supplication*, 118v.

that “Vppon the cheyre of Moyses, are now set the scribes and the pharyseys. All thynges that euer they say vnto you obserue them and do them, but the thynges that they do, do not you.”⁵⁰ He warns his audience about the consequences of *sola scriptura*: Barnes teaches that “a man myghte breke all the laws that the hole chyrche maketh beyde the expresse precepts of god conteyned in the scypture without any scruple of conscyence, so that he do it secretelly where there were no weke conscyence of feble faythed folke offended.”⁵¹

More he points out that although Christ condemned the scribes and Pharisees as useless he also commanded the people to obey them regardless because “they were in the authoryte and occupied the place of Moyses that gaue the law, & were the rulers and gouernours of the people.”⁵² But More qualifies his argument: people should not obey commandments that God forbids, nor should they “set goddess law aside for mennys tradycyons” according to the words of Christ in Matthew 15; commandments not explicitly mentioned in scripture cannot be refused if they lead “to virtue, good maners, or goddes honour.”⁵³ More then explains that according to Augustine, the *chair of Moses* occupied by the scribes and Pharisees should be interpreted as an allegory about preachers who seek their own temporal advantage. If they preach “accordynge to the law of god, we sholde...lerne to live thereafter” but if they “preache of that they seke for, this is to wyt fantasyes of theyr owne inuencyon, and for them selfe and theyr owne commodyte: therin be they not to be herd or byleued.”⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Ibid., 352.

⁵¹ Ibid., 352.

⁵² Ibid., 352-353.

⁵³ Ibid., 353.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 353.

More's allegorical interpretation circumvents the evangelical argument that only the written scriptures should command obedience. According to his interpretation, Christ expects obedience to commandments even beyond those found in the scriptures, even if those commandments are burdensome or commanded by hypocrites such as the scribes and Pharisees:

For those words of Cryste sauynge by waye of allegorye, seme not so properly to pertayne to techynge of the scribes and pharaseys, as to theyr commaundementes and byddynges; as well appereth by the wordes folowyng, where he byddeth that they sholde meane not onely the preceptes wryten in the law, but also theyr other commaundementes beside, suche as were not superstycyouse or unlawfull to be kepte... As though [Christ] wolde saye, Syth they syt vppon Moyses chayre, and occupye hys place, and be your gouernors: do all that they commaunde you... For they wyll them self leue them all vndone, and not set onys a finger to the doying of them. But I warne you do not you so.⁵⁵

Furthermore, More contends that Christ never commanded anyone to *only* obey the scriptures and nothing else, “but he sayd, do not as they do, not forbedinge them to byleue them in many other thynges, but forbedynge them to follow them in theyr vyces.”⁵⁶ The evangelical claim of *sola scriptura*, in his view, does not reflect what Christ actually taught and what Augustine confirmed. If Christ commanded that his followers even obey the commandments of the scribes and Pharisees, whether biblical or extra-biblical, the notion of *sola scriptura* does not seem to be supported by the scriptures themselves, namely Christ's teaching from Matthew 23. More finds a way to nuance the image of the scribes and Pharisees enough to argue that *sola scriptura* cannot be supported from the scriptures themselves, since even Christ recognized that they occupied the chair of Moses.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 354.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 357.

Another issue More addresses in Book III involves church statutes. Through a discussion of church statutes More challenges two important dimensions of evangelical orthodoxy, preaching and the Bible, and provides a rationale for what evangelicals consider persecution. More cites Barnes from his *Supplication*, who “fayneth that the chirch maketh some agaynst the worde of god, and to the destruccyon of the fayth; as is that statute sayth he, whereby they haue condemned the new testament, and also forbeden certayne men to preache the word of god; hauynge no cause agaynste them but all onely theyr owne malycyouse suspycyon.”⁵⁷ More denies that such a statute exists for the New Testament, unless of course it is the *wrong* New Testament. Evangelicals who insist on Tyndale’s translation use a New Testament that is “a false englyshe translacyon...so altered & chaunged in maters of great weight, malycyously to sette forth agaynste Crystes trew doctryne Tyndales antichrysten heresydes” which is “not worthy to be called Crystes testament, but eyther Tyndales owne testament, or the testament of hys mayster Antechryste.”⁵⁸ As for preaching, no statute exists that forbids an individual from preaching the word of God, unless one preaches “agaynst the bysshoppes wyll” or sows the “seed of heresydes, scysmes, & sedycyons.”⁵⁹ More justifies such prohibitions against preaching when it endangers “other mennes soules & theyr owne to.”⁶⁰ This leads More to address the execution of heretics.

More explains the rationale for why relapsed heretics, even if they recant again, must go to the stake: it preserves their souls. He relates the execution of one such man,

⁵⁷ Ibid., 357; see Barnes, *Supplication*, 118v.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 358.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 358.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 358-359.

likely Thomas Bilney who was burned at Norwich in August of 1531.⁶¹ After his initial abjuration “yet wold he preche heresyess styl” and thus “god caused hym to be taken, & Tyndals bokes with hym to, & both two burned togyder – wyth more profyte vnto his soule then had ben happily to haue lyued lenger & after dyed in his bedde.” More asserts that this man “dyed a good crysten man” because although his “reuocacyon coude not saue his body: yet reuoked he his heresyess and abhorred Tyndals bokes for to saue his soule.”⁶²

If readers were to believe More’s critics like Barnes that he was only concerned with seeking out and punishing heretics out of *malicious suspicion*, here he offers them a rationale. Heresy endangers not only the commonwealth but the individual soul, and the accused who recants, even a second time, must still face the flames so that his soul can be preserved. With this rationale, More confronts his opponents. He condemns evangelicals as dangerous heretics and returns again to Matthew 23 and Augustine’s allegory with an allegory of his own. He agrees with Augustine that heretics can be deemed as religious mercenaries but More has an alternative description too which involves images of scribes and Pharisees: they can also be deemed as “scribes and pharisees, of wurse kynde then were those of whom Criste in that gospel speaketh.

For these be false scribes – that is to wytte wryters, not wrytyng any trew bokes of scripture, but false gloses and contrary commentes vpon scripture, and erronyouse bokes of dyuelyshe heresyess dyuysed of theyre owne frantyque braynes – to the coloure wherof they abuse the scripture, and when they lyst they also denye the scripture. These be also the worst kynde of pharisees. For these haue dyuyded them selfe not from the other people by any profession of a more honest & more virtuous luyunge, but haue dyuyded them self from the catholyque chirche of Cryste by abominable heresyess, and from all honeste people by the contempt of all good wurkes, and by the bestly profession of freres &

⁶¹ Ibid., 1471n. to 23/1, 1583n. to 359/1-11; Richard Marius, *Thomas More: A Biography* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), 313, 396-397.

⁶² Ibid., 359.

nonnes lyvuyng to gether in lechery, & preachyng theyr horedom for honeste matrimony.⁶³

More's deployment of images of Jews and Judaism here serves as one important example of how he redirects evangelical polemic back against his opponents. But he takes it one step further: evangelicals represent the real scribes and Pharisees in England but worse than the Jewish scribes and Pharisees in the Gospels. Augustine's notion of the religious mercenary is much too nondescript to be as effective as images that embody wickedness, falsehood, corruption and pride. For More, nothing short of hunting them down and prosecuting them will suffice.

IV

In Book VI, More finds himself addressing images of scribes and Pharisees again. He begins with a challenge to Tyndale's assertion that Christ and the Apostles broke away from a corrupt church overtaken by scribes, Pharisees, Annas and Caiaphas, who led people into an *inward* form of idolatry through false religion, works and vain traditions.⁶⁴ Tyndale then argues that reformers have done the same thing as Christ and the Apostles. Before More offers his refutation of Tyndale on this issue he cannot help but remind his readers again that his opponents have broken their vows. While Tyndale argues in his *Answer* that the prophets preached against the Israelites about idolatry over and over again, More points out that God punished people for the sins of the flesh too: just as God punished Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone, surely God will “fynde out yet some newe more horryble turment to punissh and reueng the filthy stynke of the fleshely caryn...that freres brekyng the their vowys and wedded wyth nonnys, be so

⁶³ Ibid., 359.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 609. See Tyndale, *Answer*, 40-41.

shamelesse to bycome prechers, & fynde wreched bestly people to bere it, and be content therwyth.”⁶⁵

As for Tyndale’s assertion, More contends that Tyndale mischaracterizes the synagogue of the Jews under the scribes, Pharisees and the elders and offers a much more nuanced view of them. He does admit that “the chyrche or synagoge of the Iewys was decayed in fayth, or good lyuyng decayed by the false doctryne or false gloses of the scribes and pharisees, Cayphas, Anna, and thelders” but he agrees with Tyndale on one point: they did keep people from practicing outward idolatry like the pagans. But More challenges the way Tyndale characterizes all the scribes and Pharisees. He points out that the scribes, Pharisees and the elders “were not euyng at that tyme all of one sorte...for good scribes were there, and good phariseis to, as by the newe testament appeareth.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, Judaism under the scribes and Pharisees was not altogether corrupt as Tyndale claims. Although some of their traditions and doctrines were superstitious and evil, people in the synagogue also had access to “vertuose doctors that had in sondry ages longe before the false exposicions and false doctrine of the phariseis or false scribes began” and that there “were of olde in euery age suche trewe doctors and expositours amonge the Iewis.”⁶⁷ He concludes that although God did not provide the Jewish synagogue with the same fullness that he provided the Christ’s church, it was sufficient: people, even if they were “in euyll doctrine and supersticiouse traditions, they coulde nat be dampned, if they were desirouse & diligent about theyr owne soule helthe.”⁶⁸ When Christ appeared, God “suffred not those naughty scribes & false phariseis to continue

⁶⁵ Ibid., 610.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 612.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 612.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 612-613.

long” but removed their deceptive influence so that one could easily enter heaven, unless one was negligent or simply malicious.⁶⁹

More then explains how the church came into being and reveals what the church was before Christ. God sent Christ to establish a new church in which he would abide in it through the Holy Spirit and lead it into all truth so that all people could recognize it, save those who were malicious. He then explains that before Christ came and established this new church,

the sinagoge was the very chyrch, and with suche as were wyllingly blynde, was knowen for the very chyrche of god diuided from all the world byside, by goddes law, by gouernors of his assignement by trewe prophetes, trewe precheours and miracles, for all the false prophetes and false precheours that were therein byside. And the right faithe was lerned no wher els. And who so had gone out of that chyrch except onely into Christes, hadde gone wronge.⁷⁰

On the one hand this positive description of the Jewish synagogue might appear somewhat conciliatory towards the Jews: More defends it as a legitimate institution under God before the time of Christ, despite the errors and deceptive influence of the scribes and Pharisees. We should be cautious, however, to assign any notion of modern tolerance to More’s argument here. More’s seemingly positive endorsement of the synagogue serves only to refute Tyndale’s argument that Christ and the apostles separated from a corrupt church just as reformers have separated themselves from a corrupt church. To win the argument in his view, More undermines Tyndale’s entire premise: the Jewish synagogue was not as corrupt as Tyndale claims, and therefore neither is the “catholyke chyrch of Chryst.”⁷¹ However, we should also recognize that More’s portrait of Judaism is much more nuanced and sensitive than virtually all of his opponents.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 613.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 613.

⁷¹ Ibid., 613.

More then directly confronts the common evangelical polemic that associates the clergy with the scribes and Pharisees, a point which Tyndale and other reformers repeat again and again. But More makes a larger point about the nature of the *true* church, the church of traditional religion. Although Tyndale “wyll paradventure say, that it is in the clergy now as it was in the scribes & phariseis in Christes tyme, and that as they and that people were than fallen from the trewth into false errorrs, so be now the clergy and the christen peple,” More argues that God has promised the church, through the Holy Spirit, “to kepe it from all dampnable errorrs, by techynge it and ledynge it into euery trouth” despite whether people fall away from the faith, whether the devil works to undermine it or even whether it devolves to the point of “the scarcite either of faithe or virtue” that characterized the Jewish synagoge during the time of Christ.⁷² The true church, More argues, “must be that knowen catholyke chyrche, of whiche from age to age the scripture hath been receiued, and the people taught” rather than Tyndale’s notion of a “chyrche vnknownen of onely good men or electes onely.”⁷³ An invisible church, More contends, is no church at all.

More then carefully differentiates the true church from the synagoge of the Jews and the traditional clergy from the scribes and Pharisees, perhaps lest his audience be confused. Tyndale’s argument that associates “the catholyke chyrch of Cryst vnto the synagoge of the Iewys” and “the clergye of the tone to the scrybes and pharyseys of the tother” falls short because God began those two churches differently and with different founders: for “Moyses that was the lawyere & beginner of the tone, was not lyke vnto Crist the beginner & lawyer of the tother; nor the promyses of god concernynge his

⁷² Ibid., 616-617.

⁷³ Ibid., 617.

assystence & preseruynge, were not lyke in the tone chyrche & the tother.”⁷⁴

Furthermore, while God sent prophets to the synagogue of the Jews at various times to correct its errors, especially when they began to fall away under the scribes and Pharisees, the traditional church, if it did fall into error, deception and damnation as Tyndale claims, it did not receive “any man sent to shewe them the ryght vnderstandyng of scripture & the ryght way, by any such mene as the peple myghte perceyue that the man were comen from god.”⁷⁵ The dissenters who did emerge in the history of the church varied in the doctrines from another and the doctrine handed down by the saints, “whom god had proued hys messengers by myracles, wherof these men shewed none at all, and abiured theyr owne doctryne to.”⁷⁶ Thus, because God sent prophets to the synagogue of the Jews to correct it from error but not true men of God to the church for eight-hundred years, Tyndale not only denies the promises of God because he criticizes the true church as corrupt, but his assertion that “the clergye of Chrystes chyrche” resembles “the scribes and pharyseys of the Iewys chyrche” lacks validity: the two institutions, synagogue and church, cannot resemble one another if God sends men of God to the former to correct it but not the latter.⁷⁷

More then offers a somewhat unusual hypothetical situation to undermine Tyndale’s characterization of the Jewish synagogue, which More affirms as the true church of God prior to the advent of Christ but which Tyndale rejects outright as corrupt. More proposes that if Tyndale had been born a pagan four years before the birth of Christ and had adopted the religion of the Jews at the time and had undergone circumcision,

⁷⁴ Ibid., 617.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 618.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 618.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 618.

would he have acted in a similar fashion towards the Jewish synagogue as he does now towards the traditional church? Tyndale would encounter various sects of the Jews such as the Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, Levites, priests and the laity; although they agree on the issue of circumcision and they all regard themselves as Israelites, they would differ in doctrines and beliefs not only on small issues but “in suche thynges as the one secte dyd reken and accompte the tother to stande in greate errour and dampnable.” Given this religious environment, More asks, “what wolde Tyndale haue done in thys case?”⁷⁸ Would he take the scriptures and without regard to anyone else “pyke out the trouthe by hym selfe?” If he did he would “very likely to frame hym selfe a newe fayth in many great thynges, agreyng wyth no man but wyth hym selfe” but yet he would find warnings from scripture, such as Proverbs 3, which counsels a man not to “lene vnto hys owne wyte.” Likely, More surmises, Tyndale would have difficulty understanding the scriptures of the Jews and would inquire of them whether his *newe fayth* was legitimate or not, because “dowtes ryse vppon theyr lawe and vpon the construccyon of theyr scryptures.”⁷⁹ Given those hermeneutical challenges, More believes that Tyndale would not actually depart from the synagogue at all and form a new church. Rather he would recognize that miracles from God “hadde...very oftentimes shewed in euery age for that synagoge, and that in that synagoge some continued styll” and that “he might styll haue thought in the synagoge of the Iewys, bothe had bene & then were yet, the very trewe waye both of bylefe and lyuyng, and in none other chyrche.”⁸⁰ Furthermore, Tyndale

⁷⁸ Ibid., 619.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 619.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 619-620.

would find in that synagogue “some good folke alwaye that had the very treuth, of whyche parte of that synagoge yf he myghte happen, he sholde surely know the trouth.”⁸¹

More then surmises that Tyndale would encounter two types of Pharisees: the corrupt, proud Pharisee that despised the publican from Luke 18 but also Pharisees such as Gamaliel from Acts 5. Gamaliel, for his part, would tell Tyndale “I am a pharysey as well as he [the proud Pharisee], and there are on our syde though not so many, yet pharyseys and scribes and rulers of the peple to, bothe as good, as honeste and as well lerned also, bothe in the lawe and in the scripture, as the beste of all them be.”⁸² More argues that Tyndale forgets that God guided the Jewish synagogue in times past: since the time of Moses God has sent the Jews almost a hundred prophets which brought forth true faith among the people, many more than merely the twelve Apostles that followed Christ; God brought forth miracles to confirm his truth among the Jews and the prophets of old and their interpreters of the scriptures “were of the mynde that we be, and the people of theyr times to” until the corrupt Pharisees “brought in this newe doctrine whiche is untrew.”⁸³ On the whole, then, whatever particular corrupt Pharisees did, they only did in part: the true believers also remained and the institution stood as a testament to the world that “the chyrche or sinagoge of the Iewys” was “the chyrche of god here in erthe;

in whiche as well we as they, that is to wyt as well the trew as the false, as well the good as the bad be for the while to gyther, tyll Messias come that shall make a new chyrche, a greater and a better, and the trew from the false moche better knowen to.⁸⁴

Tyndale, then, would have “knowen euyn than of the very chyrche” among the Jews since true Pharisees would have refuted false Pharisees and therefore he falsely

⁸¹ Ibid., 620.

⁸² Ibid., 620.

⁸³ Ibid., 620-621.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 621.

characterizes the Jewish synagogue as a wholly corrupt.⁸⁵ Thus, Tyndale cannot claim that the true church departed from a corrupted church influenced by scribes and Pharisees because the Jewish synagogue consisted of both holy and unholy elements and God worked through it as a legitimate church after all despite some of the error of its members.

But More does not end the argument on this point. He argues that even if the church were “infected by many false folke wyth false doctryne” and had “crepte vp in to the place of Chryste and hys apostles, and were waxen a greate deale the more parte of those that had the authoryte in theyr hands” as so many of the reformers argue, “God hath sythe the dethe of Christe and his apostles, styred vp in his knowen catholique chyrche...many mo than an hundred prophetes, whome hath with moo than a thousande myracles declared to be his messangers.”⁸⁶ Tyndale, More argues, forgets the promises of God to preserve his church regardless of human frailty and the miracles that confirmed the legitimacy of the church as the true church and its messengers. The church has stood through the centuries and will continue to do so. With the church and the synagogue both clarified, More turns his attention the hermeneutics.

More addresses the issue of biblical hermeneutics with a brief defense of allegory as a legitimate hermeneutical approach to the scriptures and a condemnation of how his opponents distort the scriptures. While Luther and Tyndale “wolde haue all allegoryes and all other senses taken awaye, sauynge the lytterall sense alone...god whose plentuous spyryte endyghted the scripture, foresaw full well hym selfe that many godly

⁸⁵ Ibid., 621.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 623.

allegories holy men sholde by his inspyracyon at dyuers tymes draw out therof.”⁸⁷ Not only did Christ employ allegories through his parables but Paul and the holy doctors did as well. More affirms a literal hermeneutical approach to the scriptures but argues that God also gives grace for Christians “to fynde oute a ferther thyng therin” which leads to wisdom.⁸⁸ He provides an example from the New Testament: while the Old Testament commandment forbade the Jews to muzzle an ox as it threshes, Paul uses that commandment to exhort the Corinthians to support those who minister over their souls, something More believes “Tyndale is euen anger wyth saynte Poule for that exposycyon.”⁸⁹ He also cites Saint Jerome’s allegory regarding King David from 1 Kings, who in his old age took on another, younger wife to nurse him, although More does not explain Jerome’s allegorical reading of the text other than to argue that something wholesome can be adduced from the story. But More does not provide further examples of allegory; his defense of an allegorical approach becomes overshadowed by a searing indictment of how his opponents corrupt the scriptures.

More recites various evangelical criticisms of the traditional clergy: how the clergy usurp apostolic authority for their own enrichment, how they beguile people with false expositions of the scriptures and how they affirm rites and ceremonies that obscure the true significance of the sacraments. More finds these charges not only false but hypocritical and then launches into a long indictment of his opponents. Heretics challenge apostolic authority too: they preach and teach without the endorsement of the church, they exchange their liberty for lechery and they beguile people with their false

⁸⁷ Ibid., 635.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 636.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 636-637; More cites Deuteronomy 25 and 1 Corinthians 9.

preaching.⁹⁰ Furthermore, if the clergy obscure the true signification of the sacraments, evangelicals do far worse: “these heretykes take from theym all the thyng whyche they chiefly signify, that is to say, the grace inuisyble that god geueth wyth them, and therof he maketh them an effectuall token and instrument.”⁹¹ The church teaches trust in fasting, almsgiving, prayer and chastity no more than “their archeheretyques teache in glotony, spoilyng of chyrcches, despite of all hallowes, and in religious lechery.”⁹²

Finally, More addresses evangelical hermeneutics. Luther, for example, eliminates the sacrament of matrimony through a false interpretation of scripture: clearly in Ephesians 5, More argues, “saynte Poule calleth yt a great sacrament hym selfe.”⁹³ But more than matrimony, More argues that evangelicals misinterpret the scriptures about a number of significant issues, namely the importance of good works and the centrality of the Eucharist. In terms of good works, More argues that his opponents willingly abandon what should be considered “highly rewardable in heuen and merytoryouse” and eschew holy vows of chastity and thus “vtterly condempe to the deuyll theyr fowle filthy wyddynges and incestuouse lechery.”⁹⁴

As for the Eucharist, More argues that evangelicals corrupt the Gospel itself through their false glosses of scripture: do they not, he asks, “dreue god oute of christendome, when they wolde expell Chryste out of the sacrament of the auter?” He points out that the consequences of false glosses result not only in error but disagreement among evangelicals themselves, which reveals the fallacy of evangelical views regarding the Eucharist. More contends that in order to believe what Luther, Zwingli and Tyndale

⁹⁰ Ibid., 638.

⁹¹ Ibid., 638-639.

⁹² Ibid., 639.

⁹³ Ibid., 639.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 640.

teach about the sacrament one would have to believe that Christ has communicated the truth to a new group of holy men who now contradict what he had taught and what the church has affirmed for the past fifteen-hundred years; one would have to believe that Christ not only communicates the truth through men who “vowed chastyte and breke theyr vowe” but “wyll do no suche good workes as might make theym truste any rewarde in heuen, nor forbere any euyll workes wherwyth they shulde walke to hell.”⁹⁵

Furthermore, one would then have to believe that Christ contradicts himself, since apparently he explained the sacrament of the altar to Luther as the “very body & very brede ther wyth” but to Zwingli he “ment no more but that yt sygnyfyeth” Christ’s body.⁹⁶ More exploits the disagreement between Lutheran and Zwinglian views on the Eucharist to prove that his opponents have usurped Christ’s authority for themselves, disregard the plain teaching of the church and employ false glosses to distort the plain words of Christ: *hoc est corpus meum*. At the close of this section he condemns his opponents for their errors and points out how it is they who resemble the scribes and Pharisees after all:

These goodly gloses lo do these heretyques make, and these blasphemouse folyes they preache vnto the people, as boldely and as solempnely as though they hadde herd them in heauen...and wyth iestyngge mokkyngge and scoffyngge, wene to rayle out euery mannys reason saue theyr owne. For thus lo wyth his symylytude of the scribes & pharysyes of the Iewes, Tyndale rayleth on agaynste the prestes and the clergie, & the whole catholyque chyrche of Chryste.⁹⁷

More, in similar fashion as Tyndale, finds scribes and Pharisees a useful rhetorical image to identify and demarcate error from orthodoxy. Just as the scribes and Pharisees usurped Moses’ authority, More’s opponents usurp the authority of the church and speak as

⁹⁵ Ibid., 640-641. In this section More cites Matthew 25 in error; he is actually citing Matthew 26:26. See 1629, n. 640/22.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 641.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 641.

though they represent Christ when they do not. Both the scribes and Pharisees of Christ's time and evangelicals of Reformation England resort to false glosses of the scriptures, the latter to obfuscate what Christ plainly taught regarding the sacrament of the altar. Likely, however, More's rhetorical arsenal would not include any mention of scribes and Pharisees to defend the veracity of the Eucharist. The charge of heresy seems sufficient and has been sufficient since before the Reformation. However, notwithstanding a chance to use Tyndale's rhetoric against him, More refutes whenever he can the evangelical claim, somewhat popularized by Tyndale himself, that the clergy resemble the scribes and Pharisees and the church resembles the Jewish synagogue.

After his defense of good works and the Eucharist, More challenges Tyndale's assertion that the clergy employ *blind reasons* against he and other evangelicals, just as the Pharisees made against Christ. He confronts Tyndale's rhetoric directly but pushes that rhetoric to a conclusion not without its own limitations:

Tyndale as he before hath hitherto likened the catholyque chyrche of all christen people, vnto the synagoge of the Iewes, and the scrybes and pharysyes that were then, vnto the preachers and the clergye that are nowe: so doth he now crepe a lytle farther, and resembleth hym selfe and such other heretyques hys felowes, vnto the person of our sauour hym selfe, and sayth the reasons whyche we nowe make agaynste hym and hys felowes, are such blynde reasons as the Iewys made agaynste Chryste.⁹⁸

More's strategy uses Tyndale's own rhetoric in an attempt to expose evangelical hubris. According to More, Tyndale's judgment upon the clergy and the church elevates Tyndale to the status of Christ, a scandalous idea for any mortal let alone a heretic. More argues that if Tyndale and his fellow evangelicals lived at the time of Christ and rebuked the Jews the way Christ did, they would fall into hypocrisy: for the Jews would have found in Tyndale and his fellow evangelicals "fautes inough, so greate and so syghtly, that they

⁹⁸ Ibid., 641-642.

might haue sayed vnto them very well, Take the beames oute of your owne eyen ye hypocrytes, ere ye go aboute to take the motys out of other mennys.”⁹⁹ Furthermore, More argues that neither Tyndale nor his fellow evangelicals would be able to claim as Christ did that they were without sin or that their exposition of the scriptures reflected the “good holy Iewys of olde tyme in sundry ages.”¹⁰⁰

More then experiments with a question as to whether Tyndale’s answers to the church fair better than Christ’s answers to the Jews. In the case of Christ, he could explain to the Jews how the scriptures attest of himself from Moses and the prophets, and point out that Moses had commanded the Jews according Deuteronomy 18 to listen to the prophet who would come after him, which is Christ: a figure full of the Holy Spirit and the power of God, so that his deeds “none coulde do but god.”¹⁰¹

Evangelicals like Tyndale, of course, fair far worse against the church than Christ did against the Jews. According to More, Tyndale offers criticisms of the church, the clergy and the pope but he falls short because he forgets “all the olde holy sayntes fro Chryste vnto oure dayes, bothe taughte and byleued the same, and all the christen people besyde.”¹⁰² Tyndale’s criticisms of the church not only fall short of those Christ leveled at the “synagoge of the Iewes” and but he has “no suche defence for hym selfe as hadde oure sauoure for hym selfe to whome he wolde be resembled” and thus his accusation of the church’s blindness reaches a level of absurdity, that the church was so blind that it could not see Tyndale even “yf he wente visible before vs all naked in a nette.”¹⁰³

⁹⁹ Ibid., 642.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 642-643.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 643.

¹⁰² Ibid., 644.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 644.

More's argument, however, seems to fair no better than the version of Tyndale he presents. Tyndale never claims the status of Christ nor does More address Tyndale's concept of a holy rebuke which underpins Tyndale's criticism of traditional religion. But More constructs a hypothetical anyways, a hypothetical wherein no one, defender of traditional religion or evangelical, would emerge untainted. Furthermore, Tyndale could just as easily accuse defenders of traditional religion of the same hubris.

More then challenges Tyndale on a number of issues that relate to the way evangelicals define the articles of faith and how they determine when scripture speaks clearly about those articles. More asks which faction should be believed regarding the articles of faith, the church or heretics. He then provides contrast between orthodoxy and heresy on a range of doctrinal issues. While the church affirms the sacraments of matrimony and the Eucharist, Tyndale does not, and for the latter he merely regards it as "but wyne and cake brede."¹⁰⁴ In regards to vows, perhaps More's favorite subject for which to embarrass his opponents, he points out again that "Tyndale byleueth yt is lawfull (yf he byleue as he sayth) that freres may wedde nunnys, and we byleue as all good men haue euer byleued, that suche maryage is very vnlawfull lechery & playne abominable bychery."¹⁰⁵ More includes scriptural passages in the marginalia that support traditional religion's view on several of the sacraments, including confirmation, orders, matrimony, the Eucharist and again vows of chastity, "that freres therefore maye not wedde nunnes" which has been a practice for all the holy saints since the time of Christ.¹⁰⁶ Since both Luther and Barnes do not even agree whether the Epistle of James accounts for scripture at all and that among heretics reside such diverse opinions on

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 645.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 645.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 646. Scriptural citations include Acts 8, I Timothy 4, Matthew 26, Psalm 75 and I Timothy 5.

matters of interpretation and faith, More concludes that the only way Tyndale can be satisfied with what the articles of faith should be or who represents the true church is if everyone simply agrees with Tyndale. For More, however, only the church can preserve the proper meaning of scripture and thereby affirm the true articles of faith; otherwise those interpretations of scripture and articles of faith merely reflect the arbitrary intuitions of not only of “dyuerse sectes” of heretics “but also dyuerse men.”¹⁰⁷ As for the church itself, More addresses that issue next with a lengthy discussion about John the Baptist, Luther, Jews, heretics and of course, Tyndale.

More includes a lengthy excerpt from Tyndale’s *Answer*, perhaps a strategy not without some risk since some readers might be persuaded by Tyndale’s rhetorical skills. Any reader who held even mild disgust for someone in the clergy might find Tyndale more compelling than More would be comfortable with since traditional clergy were themselves not immune to hypocrisy. Perhaps an evangelical rebuke, then, is a necessary correction to clergy who “haue theyr scripture, yet they be fallen from the fayth and lyuyng of them.”¹⁰⁸ Of course, Tyndale calls the clergy themselves *heretics*, which most audience members not already fully committed to the evangelical cause would find somewhat absurd. More’s defense, however, conflates an association between Tyndale and the figure of John the Baptist. He assures his readers that when he examines Tyndale’s conclusions, “when his wordes be well sifted, men shall fynde lytle fine flowre in theym, but all very musty branne not worthy so myche as to fede eyther horse or hogges.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 647.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 648. More cites Tyndale’s *Answer*, 43; see above Chapter 4, n. 122.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 649.

More reiterates that he has already addressed the issues about whether the traditional church resembles the synagogue, whether the clergy resemble the scribes and Pharisees and how evangelicals like Tyndale have likened themselves to Christ and the apostles; one “may se that lyste to tourne a few leuys backe & look theron.”¹¹⁰ Furthermore, in More’s view Tyndale has failed to prove that “that the catholyke chyrche that now is, hath loste the fayth of Cryste” and that “all the olde holy doctors and sayntes had lost yt to.”¹¹¹ But the church, argues More, has been around for fifteen-hundred years and those champions of the church have always affirmed a consistent interpretation of the articles of faith, much to the chagrin of heretics who “can not bere theyr honour.”¹¹²

More then challenges Tyndale’s statement that he and other evangelicals rebuke the church in like manner to John the Baptist, but he carries Tyndale’s illustration to an absurd limit: that Luther *literally* claims to be a “new saynt Iohan the Baptyste” as a “fore goer of these new Chrystes, that is to wyt, holy Huyskyne and holy Swynglius, and such other” which would include Tyndale himself.¹¹³ Tyndale, of course, does not make this claim about Luther: one does not claim to be a new John the Baptist if one rebukes the church in a similar manner to how John the Baptist rebuked the scribes and Pharisees. But this does not matter to More since polemical debate does not require someone to read one’s opponent with any nuance or precision, especially since it serves his argument. With Luther as a *new saynt Iohan the Baptyste*, More can then expose Luther’s dissimilarities in comparison to the forerunner of Christ in very literal, albeit predictable ways and therefore undermine the legitimacy of the evangelical cause.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 650.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 650.

¹¹² Ibid., 650.

¹¹³ Ibid., 650.

When John the Baptist came, More argues, “he was prophecyed of byfore” so it would follow that with the arrival of Luther, God would also supply ample prophecies to legitimate the forerunner of a new faith.¹¹⁴ It would require one to then believe that amidst the multitude of doctrinal errors that have arisen in the church God would send a holy prophet to correct the church’s errors. If Luther represents a new version of John the Baptist, then, “an holy spyrytuall man...so fully fastened all vpon the spyryte, and so farre abhorrynge from all fleshely workes” he would have never “haue wedded the nonne, nor onys haue layed hys spyrytuall hands vpon her fleshely face, had he not first felte & founded her frome the too to the chynne, turned all into fysshe.”¹¹⁵ But of course, Luther has wedded a nun and therefore cannot be another John the Baptist. More points out the absurdity that God would send another holy prophet to preach and “turne the world to the ryghte way, and make a perfyte people” through a friar who has wedded a nun and “from a harlottes bedde steppe vp into the pulpette and preche.”¹¹⁶

Of course, More seems to undermine his whole argument about how Luther is a new version of John the Baptist when he addresses how evangelicals claim to rebuke the church *in like manner* to how “Iohan Babtyste rebuked the synagoge of the Iewes.”¹¹⁷ Here, More does address a point Tyndale actually makes. For his refutation he argues that while John the Baptist was faultless when he rebuked the Jews, evangelicals fall woefully short not only in terms of moral behavior but also true doctrine. In fact, evangelicals have been “specially sent by the deuyll to marre mennys fayth and all good luyng to, both with theyr false poysened heresydes” and, unsurprisingly, “theyr bold open defended

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 650.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 651.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 651.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 652.

lechery so horryble and abominable byfore the face of god, whose holy sacrament of wedloke they defowle shamfully wyth theyr vow brekyng bychery.”¹¹⁸ Furthermore, if one examines evangelical criticisms closely they do not criticize the church in the same manner as John the Baptist rebuked the Jews, for “Iohan Baptyste rebuked the vices of the Iewes, not wyth wordes onely but specially wyth the sample of his owne virtuous liuyng.”¹¹⁹ While John the Baptist preached penance for sin, evangelicals “kepe styll theyr own synnys them selfe, and call them vertue” which manifests in a whole range of errors to include lechery for matrimony, the condemnation of penance, the hatred for the sacrament of confession and the satisfaction that should surely follow. And amidst his defense More finds space to include some biting satire: while John the Baptist exhorted his hearers to penance, confession and contrition and practiced the virtues of fasting by living in the desert, preserved in traditional religion through such fasts as those connected to Lent, More’s opponents refuse all fasts save “breke faste” and “easte faste, and drynk faste, and slepe faste, and luske faste in theyr lechery, & then come forth and rayle faste.”¹²⁰ These dissimilarities lead More to conclude simply that “Tyndale sayth vntrewe when he sayth they rebuke vs after the same maner that saynt Iohan dyd the Iewys.”¹²¹

More then revisits Tyndale’s assertion that practitioners of traditional religion are heretics and that evangelicals represent the true church. More asserts that Tyndale has not proven that the evangelical dismissal of good works, the repudiation of transubstantiation, the condemnation of ceremonies and the violation of vows of chastity by friars and nuns comprise of the true articles of faith “nor can prove whyle he lyueth,

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 653.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 653.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 653.

¹²¹ Ibid., 654.

nor all ye heretykes in this world, nor yet all the deuyls in hell.”¹²² He then reminds his readers that the traditional church has preserved the same articles of faith taught by Christ and the apostles not only through the scriptures but by oral traditions premised on the promise of Christ that he would “lede it in to all trouth, and by his owne perpetuall assystence and presence wyth hys chyrche for euer as hym selfe promysed also.”¹²³

The heart of More’s refutation involves the not only the inadequacy, in his view, of the doctrine of *sola scriptura*, but also the evangelical notion that one must read the scriptures with “the trewe sense and ryghte vnderstangynge.”¹²⁴ Of course, More reminds his readers that Luther and Barnes dismiss the Epistle of James as authentically apostolic; but more importantly More argues that Luther has repudiated much of what the church fathers have written even if he claims the contrary. For example, More again raises the issue of perpetual vows, in particular the vow of chastity, which he maintains the saints have always practiced: “let them of so many tell vs one, that euer so constrewed the scripture, that a man professynge onys vowed chastyte, was for all that at hys lybertye to wedde a vowed professed nonne.”¹²⁵ He then argues that just because Tyndale claims that he departed from a heretical church does not mean he has joined the true church. For example, although the medieval heretic Berengarius once affirmed that the Eucharist was merely bread, his revocation of that heresy did not mean he embraced transubstantiation. Rather, Berengarius simply adopted the heretical view Luther adopts, that the sacrament of the altar be both the actual body of Christ as well as bread. Tyndale, which More exposes as one *Wyllyam Hychyn*, drifts in the opposite direction: having once believed

¹²² Ibid., 656.

¹²³ Ibid., 656-657.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 658.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 659.

like Luther, he now embraces the view of Berengarius and “thus where the olde heretyke Berengarius began at the worste, and from that fell to lesse euyl” Tyndale “goth the contrary way, begynnynge at the lesse euyl and fallynge from that vnto the worse.”¹²⁶ Furthermore, More contends that evangelicals cannot represent the true church and claim to follow the laws of God given how many different sects of evangelicals exist who do not agree with one another. He points out that Anabaptists have simply added to Tyndale’s faith additional errors: the repudiation of infant baptism, the affirmation of communal property, the violation of the bonds of matrimony and the denial of the divinity of Christ.¹²⁷

As a final response, More challenges Tyndale’s notion of the “chyrche of vnknown electys” in that if there are now “twenty known chyrches” of evangelicals “they can not all be goddess electys.”¹²⁸ He argues that if Tyndale excludes none of the sects that have gone out of the traditional church to represent the true church, that argument would simply be folly; likewise, More challenges Tyndale’s notion of an unknown church if members cannot “knowe an other as for a member of hys owne vnknown chyrch, that is to wytte for one of the trewe fayth and ryght lyuynge, & for a penytent synner, and fynally for a fynall electe.”¹²⁹ And yet Tyndale, More points out, asserts that one can know the elect “by theyr fayth examyned by the scripture, and by theyr profession and consent to lyue accordynge vnto the laws of God.” More attempts to expose the contradiction: how can the church be unknown and yet its members may be known by their faith and consent to live according to God’s laws? For More, “thys he

¹²⁶ Ibid., 661-662.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 664.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 665.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 667.

clerely declareth the madnesse as well of hym selfe as of Luther & Barns and them all, that wold haue the chyrch a congregacyon vnknowen and yet labour to deuise vs markes by all the menes they maye, wherby theyr chyrch vnknowen myghte seme to be perceyued and knowen.”¹³⁰

At the end of Book VI, More presses his point about how heretics, namely Luther, Tyndale and other reformers have departed from the true church and thus the true faith, countering Tyndale’s argument, in the words of More, “that the good cometh euer out of the bad, and leueth the noughty behynde.”¹³¹ He provides several biblical examples of *noughty* departures from the church of God: Lucifer who was thrown down from heaven, Cain who cast out of God’s presence to wander the earth, Korah and his rebellion against Moses, the ten northern tribes of Israel who broke off from their king Rehoboam, and Judas, who “departed from the chyrch of Criste at the Maundy souper, when he went to betray the hed of that chyrche, and vterly to dyssolue the body.”¹³² But More has an additional biblical example often cited by his opponents:

And lyke wyse do all these sects of heretykes, which in that point do more then verily represent the scribes and pharysyes, whom saynte Iohan called the generacyon of vypars. For as the yonge viper serpents gnaw out theyr mothers bely, and those scribes and pharysyes dyd by theyr false doctrine labour to destroye the very trew doctryne of the synagoge, whereof they were engendered: so do all these cursed seprentyne sectys of heretykes, both wyth theyr false errorrs and heresyys, labour to destroy the trew doctrine, and also wyth sowynge of dyssencyon and sedycyouse scysmes, go aboute to gnaw out the very bely of theyr moder the holy catholyke chyrche.¹³³

For More, the scribes and Pharisees had already departed from the synagogue God established under Moses. More warns his opponents that if they do not repent they will

¹³⁰ Ibid. 667-668.

¹³¹ Ibid., 672. I discuss this point of Tyndale in Chapter 4.

¹³² Ibid., 671-672.

¹³³ Ibid., 672.

have their part with Judas, who has been destined to everlasting torment. He reminds his audience that not all the devils in hell can pull down the true church of Christ, and that Tyndale and his followers “be very false heretyques all the whole rable, and synagoges of Sathan, and very chyrches of the deuyll” who will be “wyth Iudas be beryed and burne in hell” if they do not return to church.¹³⁴ Clearly More offers Tyndale an olive branch to avoid the fires of hell, or anyone else that might be persuaded to leave the evangelical cause: recantation.

Why More employs images of Jews and Judaism at the height of his polemic against Tyndale needs little explanation: he turns evangelical rhetoric around on his opponents not only to protect the sanctity of the ecclesiastical establishment but to disrupt one of the primary rhetorical tools of his opponents. The church and the reformers cannot both be the synagogue of Satan. But More probably would not use images of Jews and Judaism at all if he did not have too: the stigma of heretic and his association of evangelicals with the devil would suffice.

V

In Book VII, More offers a refutation on a lengthy passage from Tyndale’s *Answer* that associates evangelicals with John the Baptist who corrected the distortions of the Pharisees much like evangelicals correct the distortions of the clergy and traditional religion.¹³⁵ More reminds his readers that he has answered this charge already and reiterates the promises from scripture that God will preserve the church “and lede it into all trouth, and that hym selfe wold be ther wyth all dayes vnto the very ende of the worlde” and therefore the synagogue of Moses can never be “lyke the chyrche of

¹³⁴ Ibid., 673.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 691-692.

Chryste, that is to wytte the knowen sontynued catholyke chyrch” since, as he argues previously, the synagogue ended with the advent of Christ.¹³⁶

More then affirms traditional orthodoxy through specific refutations of Tyndale’s points. One of the first issues relates to almsgiving. According to Tyndale the Pharisees taught the people to make their offerings to God at the expense of supporting needy parents, which violated the commandment to honor one’s father and mother; in similar fashion the clergy promote offerings to God and dead saints instead of helping the poor. Tyndale, of course, uses this comparison to demonstrate how both the Pharisees and the church both distort the commandments of God. More does not challenge the way Tyndale characterizes the Pharisees; he agrees with Tyndale that the Pharisees did encourage people to violate the commandment to honor one’s father and mother. But he does challenge Tyndale’s correlation between the Pharisees and the church. More explains that needy parents and the poor stranger are not the same thing despite how Tyndale frames his argument, and that the church affirms “both to gyue almyse is good, and to offer is good, and he that hath wherwyth to do both, ought to do the tone, and doth well to do the tother.”¹³⁷ More then supports his view through the figure of Mary Magdelene from Mathew 26, who bestowed upon Christ expensive ointment to the chagrin of Judas who would have sold it and given the proceeds to the poor. Christ, then, was not “rauysched wyth the odour of her oyntement, but wyth ye delyte of her deuocyon, in whych he delyteht yet when any man doth the lyke.”¹³⁸ For More, one should make offerings and give alms, not one or the other. Therefore, the church “teacheth playne the contrarye therof, and sayeth that the pharisees taught false, and teacheth onely that to offer to god

¹³⁶ Ibid., 693-694.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 698.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 699-700.

and his sayntes is well done, and that to helpe pore men and gyue almyse muste nedes be done.”¹³⁹

More then offers a lengthy response to evangelical criticism which asserts that God commands his followers to give to the poor but does not command Christians to make volitional offerings, especially in lieu of helping those in need. More responds that one can always find the poor somewhere and therefore volitional offerings would never take place if one adhered to evangelical teaching on this point. Furthermore, the story of Mary Magdalene and Christ support the practice of volitional offerings since instead of anointing Christ with perfume she could have sold it and “founden in Hierusalem euyn at her hande, pore nedey men inough to haue receyued twyse as mych money as all that oyntement was worth.”¹⁴⁰ But she did an act of devotion instead and was praised by Christ. Finally, More argues that volitional offerings to build churches, supply those churches with books and chalices and adorn them with ornaments seem just as worthy an expense as helping those in need according to St. Chrysostom. Thus, rather than imitating the Pharisees, the church repudiates their teaching, and “so the doctryne of the chyrche and the doctryne of the pharyseys in thys poynte, wherin Tundale resembleth them togyther and lyeth to, to make them lyke, be no more lyke togyther, then is chalke to colys.”¹⁴¹ For More, traditional orthodoxy regarding offerings and almsgiving not only differs from evangelical opinions on the subject but also those of the Pharisees, the latter a point More reiterates repeatedly to refute evangelical claims to the contrary. More attempts to isolate Tyndale and his views from the historical church that has been in existence for fifteen hundred years: Tyndale, as a *new John the Baptist*, “calleth

¹³⁹ Ibid., 700.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 702.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 703.

pharyseys...all those olde holy doctours and sayntes that haue bene in euery age thys fifteen hundred yere” who all “byleued in the same sacramentes that we do, and the same thynges that thys newe baptyste rebuketh.”¹⁴²

More regards Tyndale’s association between the saints of old and the Pharisees as absurd. After all, if one were to believe Tyndale, one would have to believe that for the past fifteen hundred years that “the pharyseys, that is to wytte all the holy doctours and sayntes that haue bene all thys whyle in chrystendome from Cryst hym selfe hytherto...”¹⁴³ One would also have to believe that these saints of old, although “the treuth of whose fayth, and the holynes of whose lyuyng, our lorde hath illustrate and sette out vnto the shewe wyth many a thousande miracle” have nevertheless made “the scripture croked and rowgh, wrestyng it wyth false gloses.”¹⁴⁴ Those false expositions include the practices and beliefs associated with traditional orthodoxy, such as “makyng men byleue that there were purgatory, and that men should knele to Crystes crosse and kysse it, and wurshyp Crystes holy body in the blessed sacrament, and kepe the chastyte they haue vowed to god...”¹⁴⁵

But not only is this absurd, it is actually a scheme of Antichrist, for “thys newe seynt Iohan baptyste is sent downe to prepare the waye for Antichryste, and make rowgh smothe and the croked strayte, and to turne the hartes of ye fathers vnto the children, wyth makyng the worlde now to be of the same harte and mynde, that the olde holy fathers haue ben of in old tyme.”¹⁴⁶ How will this new John the Baptist accomplish this? According to More he will teach doctrines contrary to what the holy fathers have taught

¹⁴² Ibid., 703.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 703.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 703.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 703.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 703-704.

the past fifteen hundred years and “tellyng vs that all the olde fathers were lyke the false pharyseys, and corrupted the scripture as pharyseys dyd wyth false gloses, teachynge good workes and sacramentes, and keypyng holy vowes and suche other synfull supertycyons.”¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, this new figure will break vows of chastity, subvert good works, diminish baptism, teach that confession is an invention of the devil, repudiate the sacraments of orders and extreme unction and desecrate the sacrament of the altar in which he will “forbedyth to haue any honour done vnto it, but onely take it for a memoryall of hys passyon.”¹⁴⁸ More then exposes and castigates Tyndale:

here is the doctryne of thys newe baptyste, not saynt Iohan Baptyste but syr wylliam Baptyste, thys holy wylliam Tyndale otherwise called Huchyn scolare to frere Huyskyn, whyche hath here made you of the synagoge scribes and pharyseys, such a goodly paynted processe as he hath now tolde you twyse...to declare twyse the greate frute and profyte that the world may now take yf it wyll...to preche and rebuke the pharisaycall doctrine of all the olde holy sayntes, and teche hys owne godly christen heresyas suche as ye now haue herde.¹⁴⁹

But this tirade addresses specific charges from Tyndale that do not actually appear in the long passage More cites from Tyndale’s *Answer*. Here More responds, at least in part, to Tyndale’s theory about the origins of *imageservice* in which Jews who had converted to Christ entered the church but retained their adherence to rites and ceremonies, thus polluting the purity of Christ’s doctrine and corrupting the church from the very beginning. More never cites this passage in anywhere in the *Confutation*, but he addresses it here implicitly.

At one point in *Answer*, Tyndale associates the texts of Duns Scotus, Thomas Aquinas “and a thousand lyke draffe” with the Jews and the Talmud in that both support

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 704.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 704.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 705.

their errors by falsifying the scriptures.¹⁵⁰ More explodes with fury but he does not explicitly address Tyndale's rhetorical strategy that associates medieval theological texts with the Talmud. He admits that he has no knowledge of the Talmud and essentially agrees with Tyndale that the Talmud contains falsehoods. He suggests that its later inconsistencies and falsehoods which "varied from the consent of theyr olde expositours" should be detected and restrained so as to limit their influence.¹⁵¹ Medieval Christian texts, on the contrary, reflect no such inconsistencies: the holy doctors of the past eight hundred years "do consente and agre wyth the olde holy doctours of the tother .vii. hundred yere a fore."¹⁵² For More, Tyndale's association between Christian theological texts and the Talmud falls apart if one examines the issue of consistency. He moves on to his main argument: Tyndale's characterization of the pillars of the church, especially Thomas Aquinas.

Tyndale's condemnation of Thomas Aquinas and others as *draffe* ignites More's fury. He calls forth those condemned by Tyndale to "dreue Tyndale as a drudge of the deuyll out of Crystes chyrche for an heretyke" or at least, typical to More's polemic, "let Tyndale tell vs of all those old, which one taught it for lawfull a frere to wed a nonne."¹⁵³ As for Thomas Aquinas, More defends him in the most laudatory terms as "a man of that lernyng that the greate excellent wyttes and the moste connyng men that the chyrche of Cryste hath hadde synnes hys dayes, haue estemed and called hym the very floure of theology" through whom God worked miracles and thus achieved heaven as a saint.¹⁵⁴ More then excoriates Tyndale, a "deuelysshe drunken soule" who "hath drunken so depe

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 706-707; see Tyndale, *Answer*, 46-47 and above, Chapter 4.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 713.

¹⁵² Ibid., 713.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 713.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 713.

in the deuelys dregges, that but if he wake and repente hym selfe the soner” he will become *draffe* himself “as the hogges of hell shell fede vppon and fyll theyr belyes thereof.”¹⁵⁵

More does not put the matter to rest either. He addresses the rest of Tyndale’s argument and continues his defense of the great theologians of the church. Tyndale alleges that if one finds a theologian contradicting current church doctrine or practice, proponents of traditional religion simply “glose hym out as thei do the scrypture, or wyll not here, or say the chyrche hath other wyse determyned.”¹⁵⁶ More explains that Tyndale must consider a particular theologian as part of a greater whole, i.e., “the comen faste fayth of the whole catholyke chrych, growen as yt euer doth by the spyryte of god, that maketh men of one mynde in his chyrche” or by the determination of church councils.¹⁵⁷ Thus, all past holy men, even if they wrote particular views, submitted themselves to the determination of the church as a whole; More even challenges Tyndale as a courtesy that if he can present one holy saint that contradicted the rest of the saints, he will agree with Tyndale’s argument.¹⁵⁸ But of course, More does not believe Tyndale can present even one. He then informs his readers what Tyndale should realize, that if he cannot even bring forth one example, “we can agaynste hym brynge so many as hym selfe can tell well ynough: lette hym then for very shame confesse that he bylyeth the chyrche, when he sayth we wyll byleue no holy doctoure.”¹⁵⁹ Furthermore, both Tyndale and Luther should then confess to their shame, “and all the shamelesse harlottes of theyr secte,

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 713-714.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 714; Tyndale, *Answer*, 46-47 and above, Chapter 4.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 714-715.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 715-717.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 717.

do shamfully mysse constre the scripture, and wyth some newe Talmude of the deuyls deuysse and theyres, do corrupte and falsefye the very trew gospell of god...that all theyre whole doctryne is but playne frantyeke heresyys, and that theym selves beyng so shamefull shamelesse vreasonable raylynge ribaudes, be men full vnmete for god to sende on his message in so great a meter, namely as to tourney the worlde wyth rybaudry fro synne.¹⁶⁰

More finds use of the image of the Talmud after all. The image of a *new Talmud* as partly inspired by the devil in opposition to the gospel evokes longstanding Christian views about Jews and Judaism. Luther and Tyndale are not only outsiders as heretics, but they, like the devil and the Jews, are enemies of the church. But use of the Talmud probably has its limitations: after all, most lay Christians would scarcely know what it is given that educated men like More and Tyndale appear to know so little about it themselves. But the Talmud as an image makes its appearance in *Confutation* far less frequently than other images of Jews and Judaism such as scribes, Pharisees, the Jews as a whole and the synagogue. In the next section those images make their appearance again.

Tyndale at one point challenges his opponents about whether the church can err.¹⁶¹ According to him, because John the Baptist and other prophets knew the scriptures they recognized that the church, before the advent of Christ, was in captivity and corrupted under the scribes, Pharisees and the Jewish priesthood. How can his opponents claim that the church at this time was not in error?

More's response involves two key points. First, he exposes Tyndale's rhetorical tactic as more or less absurd, that the "sotletye of Tyndale is as blont as a blocke, and to great for any man to stumble at yt hath any eyen in his head."¹⁶² That tactic associates the whole "catholyque chyrche of Cryste, that is to wytte the whole multitude of all trewe

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 717.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 717-718.

¹⁶² Ibid., 719.

christen people...vnto the scribes and the pharyseys, & the high prestes, as though they alone had ben the whole chyrche of the Iewes, or the high prestes of one town, the whole vniuersall synagoge.”¹⁶³ More refuses to simply condemn the entire Jewish synagoge, which was the church of God prior to the appearance of Christ, just because certain scribes or Pharisees or high priests were corrupt. But he also feels no need to affirm that the whole synagoge could not err, that the whole synagoge was “the very chyrche of god” nor admit that the whole “synagoge of Moyses and the catholyke chyrche of Cryste” be exactly the same as Tyndale claims.¹⁶⁴ Instead he argues that “there is yet in maner as great dyfference, as is bytwene the figure and the thyng, the shadow and the body” and therefore the synagoge and the church.¹⁶⁵ This leads to his more lengthy second point: the synagoge and the church are fundamentally different because of the promises of God.

More explains that “there is specyall dyssymylytude bytwene the synagoge and the chyrche” because Christ had promised to the church “to send hys holy spyryte in to it to lede it in to all trouth, and that it sholde dwell therein for euer, and hym selfe be permanent also therein for euer.”¹⁶⁶ He argues that these promises, an enduring gift from God, “were neuer made a lyke vnto the Iewes” and therefore “it is a clere thing to me and all christen men, that none other chyrche hath that gyfte but the catholyke chyrche.”¹⁶⁷

More then offers a long refutation of Tyndale’s other points, how the children of God can know their father just as eagles can find their prey and how God’s elect can

¹⁶³ Ibid., 719.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 719.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 719-720.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 720. More cites John 16 and Matthew 28 in the marginalia.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 720.

know Christ “and trace oute the pathes of hys fete.”¹⁶⁸ He explains that he would believe that Tyndale and Luther were true messengers of God if miracles would validate their preaching. But More trusts that heretics will do no such miracles.¹⁶⁹ He explains that Tyndale cannot prove that “he knoweth the trew scripture not by the chyrch but by specyall inspyracyon of god inspyred into hym selfe.”¹⁷⁰ More then subtly misquotes Tyndale. In his initial citation of Tyndale, the text reads “euen so the chyldren of god spye out theyr father.”¹⁷¹ However, in More’s later response he changes Tyndale’s statement to read “Euen so the children of god spye oute theyr father and mother.”¹⁷² More then argues that Tyndale “meaneth of lykelyhed god for the father. But what chyrche meaneth he for his mother? For he can not spye out the vnknowen chyrch.”¹⁷³ More then describes Tyndale’s church as “some old mother mawde, some baudy chyrche of heretykes” since it cannot be “the knowen catholyke chirch whyche is the spouse of god in dede.”¹⁷⁴ As to whether Tyndale’s followers represent the elect of God in that they follow the steps of Christ, More describes them as adulterers, treasonous, inspirers of manslaughter and perjurers; Luther’s *steps* do not refer to following Christ at all but rather “into the nunnys bed.”¹⁷⁵ More characterizes his opponents in these terms not only to inform his readers about the nature of these heretics but to undermine their claims to orthodoxy and counteract Tyndale’s rhetoric which associates the church with the synagogue and the clergy with scribes, Pharisees and Jewish high priests. For More,

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 717-718.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 722.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 722-723.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 717.

¹⁷² Ibid., 724.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 725; see also 1649, n.724/34-35.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 725.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 725-726.

preservation of the church's legitimacy necessitates his discussion about the fundamental difference between church and synagogue.

In Book IX, of which only exists as a fragment, More primarily argues for the sanctity, uniqueness and legitimacy of the traditional church and its doctrine. He sets out to prove that the church must be a known church rather than an unknown church, that the known church is the traditional church, that if there is an unknown church that is part of the known church it cannot be the church of Luther or Tyndale, and finally that the traditional church has "markes and tokens" which make it clear that it is the "very church of Christ here in earth."¹⁷⁶ Part of his apology regarding the church involves a discussion of the Jewish synagogue, something that should not come as a surprise to a reader who has made it this far in the *Confutation*. He distinguishes the synagogue from the church with additional arguments beyond what he writes in Book VI. His primary purpose, of course, seeks to invalidate evangelical conflation between church and synagogue. But he begins his discussion of their similarities.

For More, those similarities involve both being *known*, or visible entities, in contrast to the evangelical notion of the invisibility of the church; both comprise of the righteous and the wicked; both were validated by God's presence through miracles. He explains that before the appearance of Christ, the synagogue was "the knowen church of God" which comprised of both "many good faithfull folke therin, yet by the meane of many euyl maisters abydyng styll amonge the good" and many were misled as a result.¹⁷⁷ When Christ came he established a new known church "of Iewes and Gentyls bothe, and was hymselfe the heade corner stone whyche the Iewes reprod and reiected,

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 1001.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 1009.

and would not be buylded vpon it...that same knowen church so begon, ther hath bi succession continued a church this .xv. hundred yere wel knowen.”¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, that known church has always been comprised of both the good and the bad, whether during the time of Noah, in the days of the synagogue under Moses or the church under Christ, but God did give “hys continuall assistance vnto them, as appeareth by al the whole corps of scripture, wherin we see the myracles that God wrought for theym.”¹⁷⁹ But these similarities should not lead one to be persuaded by Tyndale’s “inuencion as it semeth to himself, of a similitude between the sinagoge of the Iewes and the church of Christ.”¹⁸⁰ More describes that *similitude* as basis for evangelical departure from a corrupt church, just as Christ and the apostles departed from a corrupt synagogue; those evangelicals who do depart represent the true church and cannot possibly be heretics as the church claims. For More, however, Tyndale’s invention represents nothing less than a legitimatization of heresy.

More’s refutation begins with a point he made in Book VI, a reminder that God has promised through Christ that he will not allow the church to fall into error but will lead it in the truth. But More now adds new arguments. The church distinguishes itself from the synagogue because unlike the church, the Jews “did vse to suffer all their dissonaunt & contrary belieuing sectes to dwell & abide together” but the church “haue euer ben from the beginning to this present tyme, to suffer therin no such confusion of contrary beliefes in the necessary pointes of doctrine to the destruccion of soules.”¹⁸¹ Unlike the synagogue, then, the church has always eschewed schisms of any kind and

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 1009.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 1016, 1018.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 1031.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 1032.

curates have always been charged with the duty exposing heretical opinions. Furthermore, the church has always maintained the same points of doctrine since the beginning: that good works inspired by faith, hope and charity shall be rewarded in heaven, the legitimacy of pilgrimages, prayers to saints and almsgiving, the reverence for the doctrine of transubstantiation and the sanctity of vows of chastity.¹⁸² More stresses these points between church and synagogue not only to offer a definition of what the church actually is, but also what it is not: it is not the synagogue, nor is it what Tyndale claims.

CONCLUSION

Defenders of traditional religion thought with Jews and Judaism in a variety of ways to refute evangelical rhetoric, condemn heresy, exhort audiences to faithfulness through didactic illustrations and above all protect and promote traditional orthodoxy. By 1535 both Fisher and More had been executed. Other champions would come to the defense of traditional orthodoxy for sure but they would face increasingly vocal and enthusiastic evangelical opponents. The rhetorical strategy somewhat pioneered by Tyndale was appropriated by other evangelicals; More, for his part, attempted as best he could to turn evangelical rhetoric against itself. When he was executed in 1535 the future of England's religious climate was anything but certain.

¹⁸² Ibid., 1033-1034.

Chapter 6

Reformers on the Attack: Jews and Judaism and the Struggle for an Evangelical Orthodoxy

In this chapter I return to other evangelical writers besides Tyndale and examine some of the major works of Robert Barnes and George Joye and their struggle for orthodoxy. I discuss John Frith only briefly towards the end of the chapter because he does not appear to utilize the same rhetorical strategy as his fellow reformers. I also include brief discussions of several other evangelical figures to include the ballad composer Thomas Gray, the Bible translator Miles Coverdale and the naturalist-turned-evangelical propagandist William Turner. In the conclusion I examine a few sermons from the 1547 sermon cycle issued by Thomas Cranmer in the wake of Henry VIII's death and the new regime, to include sermons by Cranmer himself, John Harpesfield, Edmund Bonner and the anonymous evangelical composer of the twelfth sermon. In that twelfth sermon one can see evidence that Thomas Starkey's 1536 observation about the divided religious climate in England, marked by heretics, papists and Pharisees, was even more relevant in 1547 than it was in 1536.

I

Tyndale was not the only reformer to employ images of Jews and Judaism in the struggle for orthodoxy. A prominent English adherent of Luther was Robert Barnes, one of the central figures of the group associated with White Horse Inn at Cambridge and a skilled preacher who found himself in serious trouble with ecclesiastical authorities 1525. He eventually escaped imprisonment to Germany and several years later appealed to the king about his ordeal with the ecclesiastical establishment. After having served the crown

throughout the 1530s he would eventually find himself the target of the king he once served and burned at Smithfield in 1540.¹ In this section I will examine Barnes' 1531 *Supplication* to Henry VIII.²

Barnes wrote *Supplication* to the king to complain about his treatment by ecclesiastical authorities after his sermon at Saint Edward's in Cambridge in December 1525. Ecclesiastical authorities brought Barnes before them in February 1526 and condemned him on twenty-five articles for heresy. Barnes' *Supplication* was to set the record straight not only about that trial but also to advance an evangelical vision of orthodoxy in relation to justification by faith, the authority of scripture and the nature of the church. Before Barnes rehearses the points of his examination, he accuses the bishops of manipulating the king's authority for their own aims with quite inflammatory rhetoric similar to Tyndale: they regard the king merely as their own "hangeman" and "make hym a mynister of...myschevous tyrannye;" he concludes that their usurpation of power was worse than the Jews under Pilate who "dyd not procede even on thys maner agenst Christ."³

The next section relates to Barnes' examination by ecclesiastical authorities in 1526, of which Barnes provides the points of contention. The first article entails the observance of holy days, such as Christmas and Easter, and whether a Christian should abstain from work on holy days. Barnes argues that Christians should remember that "everye day for christ is everie day borne, everye day risen, everye day assended vpp."⁴

¹ Korey D. Maas, *The Reformation and Robert Barnes: History, Theology and Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), 1-2.

² Robert Barnes, *A supplicatyon made by Robert Barnes doctoure in diuinitie, vnto the most excellent and redoubted prince kinge henrye the eyght* (Antwerp, 1531?; STC 1470).

³ *Ibid.*, 11r-v.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 23v.

Christians, therefore, should not limit their devotion to Christ's incarnation and resurrection to merely two days in the calendar, but every day. But ecclesiastical authorities, following their interpretation of scripture, argue that holy days should be observed in accordance to scripture. The Bishop of Bath asks Barnes if it was proper that a Christian work on a holy days because "yt is written thou shalte obserue thy holy day."⁵ Barnes replies "that christen men were not bounde to abstayne from bodily labour by that commaundement, [f]or it was so geuyn to the Iuys." He argues, in reference to Augustine, that

we must obserue the sabboth day, not yt we shuld rekkyn oure selfe not to labour, but that all thyng that we doo worke well, must haue an intencion to the euerlasting rest, wherfore we must obserue the holly day not by corporall idyllenes, and vn to the letter, but spiritual|ly must we reste from vices and concupiscensys where fore a monge all the ten commaundementes that of the sabboth day alonly is commaundid to be figuratlye obserued and not by corporall idyllnes.⁶

The theme of avarice appears among the twenty-five articles as well. In the seventh article Barnes condemns ecclesiastical authorities for "the superfluosnes and the abuse" of temporal wealth; in the ninth article he revisits this theme and associates his opponents with the figure of Judas. Although they may claim to be the legitimate successors of Christ and the apostles, Barnes concludes that "I can se them follow none but Iudas, for they bere the purse, and yf they had not so greate possessions I am suer an .C. wolde speke agenst them where now dare not one for losse of their promosyon." But Barnes goes even further, excoriating priests who charge money for rehearsing the Mass: "yov may well condemne yt for heresy, but it is as trew as youre pater noster, Iudas solde

⁵ Ibid., 24r.

⁶ Ibid., 24v.

oure master but once, and yov selle hym as oftyne as he cometh in youre handes.”⁷ In the tenth article Barnes provides a brief summation which reveals their hypocrisy: “There is not the greatyst pharisye in thys churche, but I am suer I prycke him with these wordes and he knowithe that these thynges be trewe though he say the contrary and yt do I wel knowe.”⁸ Barnes reveals in the thirteenth and fourteenth articles specific examples of how ecclesiastical opponents follow Judas, namely that they sell blessings, pardons, the remission of sins and even the benediction for a mere half-penny while they give nothing.

In the nineteenth and twentieth articles Barnes condemns the miter and other ecclesiastical accouterments that comprise a bishop’s costume. He initially complains that these “mytres with glysterynge precicious stonis” as well as gloves, rings, clasps “and other ceremonyes” have infected the church to such an extent that “that there is in a maner now no thyng els in the churche, but all Iewysh maners.”⁹ For Barnes, the miter evokes a particular connection to Judaism:

These myters I can not tel from whence they do come except they take them from the Iuys bysshops, and yf they take them from the Iuys, than let them also take their sacryfyces and their oblacions from them ond offer calues and lambes as they dyde, and than haue we nothyng to do with them for we be christen men and no Iuys.¹⁰

He challenges his detractors to find scriptures that authorize miters. For Barnes, the miter represents Judaism, not only foreign to a reformist vision of biblical orthodoxy but Christianity in general. The association between Judaism and traditional religion extends to doctrine as well. After Barnes refutes the twenty-five articles for which he found himself condemned for heresy, he launches into the heart of his *Supplication*.

⁷ Ibid., 28v-29r.

⁸ Ibid., 29r.

⁹ Ibid., 31r.

¹⁰ Ibid., 31v.

Barnes defends justification by faith alone through an exegesis of biblical and patristic texts. He argues that although his opponents would not deny that Christ came in the flesh, the principle sign of Antichrist according to 1 John 4, that in itself proves nothing: one can be of Antichrist if one denies Christ. While they preach Christ's name and do many good works in Christ's name, "yet neuer [the] lesse vnder grea crafte and subtylty of the deuuyll they deny Christ...howe can this be?"¹¹ Barnes then explains that Christ brings about peace between God and human beings as the savior, redeemer and justifier to which the scriptures attest and that "we haue no need of nothing but of hym only, & we desyer no nother saluacion, nor no nother satisfaccion...but off him only."¹² Therefore his ecclesiastical opponents have a spirit of Antichrist because they deny Christ as the only source of justification: "you graunt the name, but you deny the vertu."¹³ Barnes then attempts to refute the traditional view about justification in order to corner what he considers evasion of the clear teaching of Paul. While Paul condemns the works of the old law, Barnes argues that his opponents do not apply that condemnation to the *new law* and therefore works of the new law are worthy of justification. Barnes responds that Paul is "as styfly and as strongly agenst yov and youre newe workes as ever he was agenst the Iuys and their olde workes, and yf he dyd condemne the workes of the lawe, that were institute by the mouth of god, thynke yov that those workes that haue inuented out of youre idylle brayne shalle be there a lowed?"¹⁴ The reliance on works, whether old or new, associates proponents of traditional religion with Jews and Judaism, both under condemnation for the same reason. But at least the Jews, according to Barnes,

¹¹ Ibid., 37v.

¹² Ibid., 38r.

¹³ Ibid., 38v.

¹⁴ Ibid., 40v.

practiced works given to them by God, whereas his opponents have no scriptural rationale to support their idea of new works, something completely invented “out of youre idyll brayne.”

Furthermore, Barnes argues that the Jews did not even seek justification from the old law because Abraham was justified by faith, some 430 years before the law was given. Apparently, however, his opponents argue that one should distinguish between the law *proper* and ceremonial laws, the latter which do not justify, so of course the Jews were not justified by fulfilling ceremonial laws. But that says nothing, by implication, of the moral aspects of the law. For Barnes, Paul does not make this distinction at all; in his view Jews never sought justification through ceremonial laws. He retorts, “what need S. paule to prove [that] the ceremonials did not iustify, was there ever any Iue [that] lokyd to be iustified by them? Nay doutles.”¹⁵ For Barnes, his opponents just simply do not understand Paul. He then develops a refutation through an exegesis of Romans 9-10 in which he aims to demonstrate how Paul understands the law and justification as it relates to Jews and Gentiles.

Barnes explains that God justified the Gentiles through faith even though they practiced nothing but wickedness and idolatry, but excluded the Jews who were full of good works. He finds it confusing that Paul mentions that the Jews practiced good works; as a parenthetical addition he writes that it was “madnes for paul to speke of the damnable iuys that were opyn wrechis and damnable by the Iudgement of the law” as practicing good works at all.¹⁶ Barnes’ enmity towards Jews and Judaism reflects the attitudes of most of his contemporaries on both sides of the religious divide. And that

¹⁵ Ibid., 41r.

¹⁶ Ibid., 42r.

enmity serves as a subtext for his evangelical vision: traditional religion in various ways comports with Judaism and the wretched and damnable Jews. Be that as it may, while Barnes may not understand Paul's comment about the good works of the Jews, this does not stop Barnes from brandishing Paul's writings on justification to refute his religious opponents. Gentiles who practiced wickedness were nevertheless justified through faith while the Jews who practiced the law were not justified, even though they were zealous for the law. Good works, then, did not profit the Jews "by cause they had no fayth" even though "the Iue hathe the zele of god and alle maner of good workis..."¹⁷ After his exegesis of Paul, Barnes cites patristic authors, from Ambrose and Athanasius to Augustine, and concludes "of these scriptures, and off these doctours that the faith that we haue in Christ Ihesus, & in his blessyd bloud dothe alonly and sufficiently iustefye vs a fore god wyth out the helpe off any workes."¹⁸

In the preceding examination of Pauline texts, Barnes criticizes his opponents and their arguments precisely in the same manner that Paul fought his opponents, the Jews. Barnes argues that his opponents seek justification by works; the example of the Jews demonstrates that even with zeal one cannot obtain justification by works of the law, and thus, by implication, his opponents have much in common with Paul's opponents. It explains, for example, Barnes' previous condemnations of the bishop's miter and other practices as Jewish, how the Church observes the Sabbath and the greed of ecclesiastical authorities who resemble Judas. For Barnes, traditional religion and its proponents not only resemble certain aspects of Judaism or imitate the worst of the Jews, but at the heart of their doctrine, when it comes to justification, little separates traditional religion's

¹⁷ Ibid., 42r-v.

¹⁸ Ibid., 48r.

views on justification from the Judaism with which Paul contended. But Barnes does not just want to expose error; he wants to advance an evangelical vision of orthodoxy, mainly about justification by faith alone. After his exegesis of Romans 9-10, he explains the nature of true faith, justification and its consequences, in light of the issue of good works, perhaps the most personal, even intimate part of his *Supplication*.

True justification comes solely by the mercy of God and the love of Christ who offer the gift of faith, a faith that trusts in the promises of God as recorded in the scriptures; for this “faithes sake be we the elect childern of god.”¹⁹ But it is not a faith that merely believes that there is one eternal God who made the world and that the Gospel is true and God speaks the truth, for that kind of faith even the infidels have, a faith that can be obtained through reason. Rather, Barnes reveals that faith “must be of another maner strength, for yt must come from heuen, and not from the strength of resone.”²⁰ True faith has a personal, emotional dimension: God, the maker of heaven and earth is not just a Father, “but also my father: yee and that thorow the fauour that Christ hath purchesyd me, from the whiche faour, neyther heuyn nor erthe, tribulacion nor persecucion, dethe nor helle can deuyde me, but to this stycke I faste, that he ys not alonly my father, but also a mercifull father”; and although Barnes admits that his sins be ever so great, God as a merciful Father will not “impute my synnes vn to me...so longe as I hange on the blessyd bloud of Christe Iesus.”²¹ Barnes then explains how this faith from heaven makes him “hange clearely off god and off his blessed promisis” and therefore he can stand against and despise the fear of death, affliction, persecution, tribulation and even “myne awne selfe, mine awne body, my awne life for Christes

¹⁹ Ibid., 48v.

²⁰ Ibid., 48v.

²¹ Ibid., 48v.

sake.”²² This abnegation of the self, a consequence of true faith, coincides with personal transformation and good works:

Finallye of a fleshely best it maketh me a spirituall man, of a damnabille childe, yt maketh me a heuently sone. Of a seruauant of the deuell, yt maketh me a fre man of godys, both deliuered from the lawe, from sinne, from dethe, fro the deuell, and from all mysery that might hurte me. My lordes this is the faythe that dothe Iustifie, and be cause it is geuen from heuen in to oure hartis by the sprete off god, therefore it can be no ydille thyng. But it must nedis do all maner of thingis, that be too the honour off god, and also to the profite of oure neyboure, in so muche that at all tymis necessary yt must nedis worke well, and also brynge forthe all good workes, that may be to the profite and helpynge off any man.²³

Heavenly transformation, then, leads to helping one’s neighbor, a result of true justification. Barnes pleads with his audience to understand, devoid of inflammatory language that we see in earlier passages. It represents Barnes at his core, the motive behind not only his *Supplication* but his entire evangelical career. His confrontation with ecclesiastical opponents, the arguments over what constitutes orthodox justification and the role of good works, derives from his personal evangelical convictions: traditional religion’s ideas on justification, in his view, obscure and even subvert true justification, a justification he has viscerally transformed him personally.

But this brief window into the soul of Robert Barnes quickly develops into a steady stream of argumentation to refute his critics: “But now let me answere to theyr scrypturs and too their carnall reasons that they brynge to proe that workys do Iustyfye.”²⁴ Barnes addresses three main criticisms of his opponents, namely that justification by faith undermines the need to do good works or mortify the flesh, the charge that justification by faith alone actually destroys good works entirely and that

²² Ibid., 48v-49r.

²³ Ibid., 49r.

²⁴ Ibid., 49v.

certain scriptural passages support works as part of justifying faith.²⁵ Barnes refutes the second charge, that justification by faith destroys works entirely, outright: “I answere if there were any shame in you, you might well be a shamed of these open lyes. Tell me one that is lernd, that euer dyd saye or lerne, that men shuld do noo good workys...I marvell not at you, for you do but the workis off youre father, which was a liare and a mutherar from the begenyng...”²⁶ He then explains that the logical consequence of this charge would lead one to conclude that since the king does not justify, “yow dysspyse hym, Ergo he is no longer kyng.”²⁷ As for the first criticism, Barnes offers extensive rebuttals from Paul’s writings. True justification produces good works, and those who “do no good workys by cause they be Iustifyde alonly by faythe, be not the chylderne of god nor the chylderne of Iustifycacyon.”²⁸ For Barnes, this argument does not undermine justification by faith alone anyway, deployed by his critics to deflect what he understands to be the clear teachings of Paul: “Doth not Saynt Paul say that oure iustifycacion is alonly of faythe, and not workys? How can you avoid thys same, *Non ex operibus*, Not of workes?”²⁹ But the third criticism, centered on the Epistle of James, becomes problematic for Barnes, so much so that he eliminates any discussion of the epistle’s authenticity in his revised 1534 treatise.³⁰ This revision does not suggest, however, that Barnes abandoned his adherence to justification by faith alone, as some have suggested.³¹ But in

²⁵ Ibid., 49v-56v.

²⁶ Ibid., 51r-v.

²⁷ Ibid., 51v.

²⁸ Ibid., 50r.

²⁹ Ibid., 51r.

³⁰ Ibid., 51v-53r. See Korey D. Maas, *The Reformation and Robert Barnes* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), 45-50; William A. Clebsch, *England’s Earliest Protestants, 1520-1535* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1964), 66.

³¹ Maas, *The Reformation and Robert Barnes*, 46-50. I agree here with Maas, who writes on page 46 that “Most of the changes in the 1534 *Supplicacion* have little or no direct bearing on the doctrine of justification that Barnes outlined in 1530 and amplified in 1531...William Clebsch has highlighted what

his 1531 *Supplication*, Barnes offers a two-fold rebuttal. First, he questions the authenticity of the epistle: "...if I denyed this pystelle to be Sanyt Iamys, yow coulde not proue yt by the auctoyte of the churche, for she hath allways doutted of yt."³² Second, Barnes offers several scriptures to prove that Abraham and Rahab were justified by faith prior to their works of righteousness, and thus *improves* the Epistle of James.³³ Abraham was justified by faith in Genesis 15, prior to offering his son Isaac in Genesis 22. Likewise, Rahab believed in the message of the Israelites prior to sheltering the Israelite spies when they arrived.

So far I have demonstrated that Barnes draws upon images of Jews and Judaism not only to refute some of the twenty-five articles leveled against him but also, perhaps more importantly, to contrast evangelical orthodoxy from traditional religion as it relates to justification by faith and works through illustrations he devises from Paul. Barnes then examines the nature of the church, the keys to the church and to whom they are given, the issue of free will, who should be able to read scripture, temporal and ecclesiastical power, his opinions regarding the sacrament of the altar and finally the issue of iconography and the veneration of the saints. Images of Jews and Judaism taper off a bit, perhaps because Barnes has made his point earlier. But he does insert images of Jews and Judaism at key points for various purposes.

For example, Barnes explains that the true church comprises of individuals that have been cleansed and purified by God, who believe that "Chryst hath washed them from their synnes...where they be Iue or greke, kynge or subject, Carter or cardinale,

thus seems to be a 'new connection between faith and works', and has therefore argued that by 1534 Barnes abandoned his former stance on justification by faith alone. A close reading of Barnes' comments on good works, however, reveals that no such radical change has been made."

³² Barnes, *A supplicatyon*, 1531, 52r.

³³ *Ibid.*, 52r. Barnes' marginal note reads, "James pistle is improued."

bucher or bishop... fryer or fyder, Monke or Miller if they beleue in Christis worde... & trust only in [the] meryttis of hys bloude, they be the holy church of god yee and the very true church a fore god...”³⁴ The reference to ‘Jew’ and ‘Greek’ likely reflects Barnes’ Pauline reflexes, a combination that appears numerous times in Pauline texts.³⁵ But *Jew* in this instance denotes something a bit more positive than Barnes’ earlier opprobrium: in theory, Jews who convert to Christ and are washed from their sins would be just as much a part of the true church as anyone else.³⁶ The true church, according to Barnes, should not be confused with the *ecclesia*, the visible church made up “of good and bad... for in this churche are Iuys and Sarasens, Murtherars and theuys, baudys and harlots though we know them not.”³⁷

In reference to the keys of the church and to whom those keys are given, Barnes rails against the notion that priests have the authority to admit or not to admit people into heaven: “the Bysshops and the prystis not vndertondyng haue vsurpyd vn to them som what of the pharisys pride, so that they thynke [that] they may condemne innocentis, and loose them that be gyilty...”³⁸ The mention of ‘pharisys’ seems superfluous to the actual argument, but Barnes employs the phrase because he knows its value as polemical currency. It reinforces his earlier condemnations of ecclesiastical authorities who examined him for heresy and who use the king merely as a ‘hangman’ to stamp out the true followers of Christ. Barnes argues, however, that the priesthood has surpassed the

³⁴ Ibid., 59r-v.

³⁵ Some sort of combination of “Jew and Greek” occurs in Romans 1.16, 2.9-10, 3.9 and 10.2; 1 Cor. 1.22, 24, 10.32 and 12.13; Galatians 3.28; Colossians 3.11.

³⁶ Whether Jews they remain *Jews* after conversion is unclear among reformers. This question arises in Chapter 5 with John Bale’s *The Image of Bothe Churches* and in the Epilogue regarding John Foxe’s 1578 sermon *A sermon preached at the christening of a certaine Jew*, in which the Jew in question is referred to a “baptized Iewe.”

³⁷ Barnes, *Supplicatyon*, 58v.

³⁸ Ibid., 70v.

Pharisees in corruption, specifically as it relates to the issue of authority, because priests believe both they and God “to gether take away sinne.”³⁹ Barnes, like Tyndale, uses the Pharisees as a benchmark for how corrupt the priesthood has become: “I thynke shortly yov wylle also be godes, the phareses dyd rekken muche better of god than yov doo, for they sayd, that god only dyd absolve from synnes, and yov saye I doo assoylle, ye and that by auctoryte, so that yov farre passe the phareses...”⁴⁰ Because priests have exceeded their authority, Barnes condemns them as heretics; even the Jews “dyd better vnderstonde the remyssion off synnes than heretykes doo, for the Iuys sayd, what man is this that forgeueth synnes, and [the] heretyke saith, I forgeue, I make clene, I sanctify.”⁴¹ Barnes positions the priesthood well beyond even the corruption of those who practice Judaism, a forceful indictment that supports his charge of heresy as he turns the tables on his opponents. Evangelical orthodoxy, then, teaches that God can only remit sins; the priesthood practices a view that even the enemies of Christ recognized as wrong.

In a lengthy discussion on freewill, Barnes argues that those without faith cannot command the human will to obey God’s commandments, love God, believe in God, love justice for the sake of itself, regard God as a father or any other good works. Barnes, of course, attempts to undermine his opponents’ view regarding good works because without true justification, good works are impossible since the unregenerate “cane no more do vn to goodness, than a dede man cane do to make hym selfe a lyue agayn, yee he cane doo nothyng but delight in synne...”⁴² An example of the Jews provides an illustration that good works done apart from grace constitute works of the flesh:

³⁹ Ibid., 78v.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 78v.

⁴¹ Ibid., 78v.

⁴² Ibid., 83v.

Marke also [that] Paule dyd wryte vn to the Iuys, ye & to [the] best of them which dyd stodye to do good workis yee and that the best workis that were the workis of [the] law and yet all the se he calleth but fleshe, and declaryth opynly [that] all these good workis coulde not helpe them, and yet no doute but [that] [the] Iues did as muche as lay in their frewyll to do to come to [the] faouore off god, and yet it hope not for all was but wysdom of the flesh, and enmy to god.⁴³

Barnes then explains free will in relation to God's sovereign election through a relationship between Christ and the Jews. In this case, the Jews were not elected but hardened, a position Barnes arrives at after an extensive discussion of Augustine and his refutation of Pelagius.⁴⁴ Christ willed to save the Jews in that he preached to them, performed miracles in their midst, and wept for them, but they remained unconverted. Barnes' explanation for why the Jews did not convert ultimately does not violate their free will: "for he had blynded theyr yies, and hardened theyr hartes, that they shulde not see with theyr yies, nor vnderstande with theyr hartes...and yet were they neither constrained" despite the fact that the Jews would not consent to Christ because they were blinded and hardened. As to why the Jews were blinded and hardened in the first place, Barnes seems to echo Paul in Romans 11, although he does not cite the passage: he asks his readers to "inquire of the inscrutable wyll, that pleased hym so to leaue them. The cause thereof, I am sure he can tell you, if he wolde. I am sure it is ryghtwysely done."⁴⁵ But Barnes does not only use the Jews to illustrate how God has hardened hearts: he points to Pharaoh too, although later he notes that the Jews in the wilderness after the Exodus were also hardened by God.⁴⁶ The overarching orthodoxy Barnes tries to explicate through this discussion attempts to explain free will in regards to God's

⁴³ Ibid., 85r.

⁴⁴ In his 1534 revision, Barnes provides a marginal note which reads "howe Chryst willed to saue the iewes" which is absent in the 1531 version. See Robert Barnes, *A supplicacion vnto the most gracyous prynce H. the viij* (London: John Byddell, 1534; British Library: STC 1471), sig. P1r.

⁴⁵ Barnes, *A supplicatyon*, 1531, 93r. The 1534 version, sig. P1v, adds the phrase "that is ynoughe for me."

⁴⁶ Ibid., 97r-v. Barnes is likely thinking of Paul's statement in Romans 11.33.

sovereignty and elective choice, which results in true faith and therefore good works. Otherwise, one performs good works from the flesh much like the Jews and indeed Barnes' opponents.

In the remaining sections of Barnes' *Supplication*, he addresses several important issues as they relate to reformist orthodoxy: that people should be able to read the scriptures freely, the roles of temporal and spiritual authority, a biblical argument for an ultraquist view of the sacrament of the altar, and abuses relating to images and the cult of saints. For two of those issues, he employs images of Jews and Judaism to under gird his forceful rhetoric. In regards to his charge that the church forbids access to the scriptures, Barnes, like Tyndale before him, condemns his opponents as worse than the Pharisees: Christ sent the Pharisees to the scriptures but "yov for byd christenmen to rede them, for they [the Pharisees] iudged to haue lyffe in them and yov iudge to haue heresys in them so that yov be tentymys worse to scripturs than euer were they."⁴⁷ As for the abuses surrounding images, Barnes attempts to entrap his opponents. Defenders of the practice argue that those who honor the saints kneel before those images; without love for them, it would be a form of idolatry. Barnes argues that if one does so without love then it must be a form of mockery, much like "the wykked Iuys that chrouched and kneled vnto christe...they dyd yt neyther of love nor faouere but of mokkage as yov doo honour youre sayntes and ymages."⁴⁸ Barnes could have made these points without using images of Jews and Judaism, but merely *mocking the saints* does not nearly have the same effect to a sixteenth-century Christian audience as it does when one associates the practice with

⁴⁷ Ibid., 103v.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 149v.

the Jews, whom most Christians believed not only mocked Christ, but tortured and murdered him.

II

George Joye also deployed images of Jews and Judaism in several of his writings to provide contrast between the vision of reformers and traditional religion. In his 1534 refutation, *The subuersion of Moris false foundation*, written in response Thomas More's Eucharistic opinions, Joye begins with a bleak and violent picture of the past ten years in England, ever since Lutheran texts began arriving in the mid-1520s.⁴⁹ He characterizes More's church as a "papisticall Synagoge" or the "Sinagoge of Satan," which, under More's leadership as Lord Chancellor began to "rore & resiste with fyer & water" against reformers, namely through cruel imprisonment, persecution and torment.⁵⁰ But Joye does not lay all of the blame upon More himself. Cardinal Wolsey, Joye argues, empowered More and "these wyked pharisays" to "wryte & wrestle" against God and Christ "and defende their anticristen sinagoge."⁵¹ When More became the Lord Chancellor, Joye recounts that More refused to read the scriptures translated into English which "openly layd forth...[how] euery laye man might se the verite & the waye to his saluacion thorow Cristis blode."⁵² Thus, Joye describes More as a "cruel pharisaye" who either for

⁴⁹ George Joye, *The subuersion of Moris false foundation where upon he sweteth to set faste and shove under his shameles shoris, to vnderproppe the popis churche* (1534; British Library, STC 14829). Joye's *Subuersion* is a reply to Thomas More's *The answer to the first parte of the poysoned booke, whych a nameless heretyke hath named the souper of the lorde*; what sparked More's intervention was an anonymous treatise composed by Joye in 1533 called *The souper of the Lorde wher vnto, that thou mayst be the better prepared and suerlyer enstructed...*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1v.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1v-2r.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 2r.

financial gain or to honor Cardinal Wolsey underprops the Church, associating him with the blind builders who refused the stone from Psalm 118:22.⁵³

Joye refutes More's insistence that the traditional church cannot err in both doctrine and practice, since the Church has been preserved through papal succession right down to the present. These include the utterances of the Maid of Kent, the merit of saints, the pope's pardons, pilgrimages and the veneration of saints' images, the last of which Joye considers nothing short of idolatry.⁵⁴ But worst of all, Joye argues that More's religion does not teach true justification by faith alone, but rather a faith that must be accompanied by "giftis and grace of other creatures" and not solely on Christ's "blode & confirmed with his death & miracles."⁵⁵ Seemingly exasperated, Joye launches into a tirade against the Church and the religion More underprops:

O miserable religion and wretched churche that cannot be defended but with fliche lyes, false miracles, fayned reuelacions & so pestelent doctryne. O Satanical synagoge whiche cannest not be mayntayned & supported but by tyrannye, persecucion, imprisonment, murder, cruel burning & shedding of innocent bloode. O wiked wryter, whiche canst not confirme & fortifye thy false faith & falser doctrine, onlesse (the wryten worde of god forsaken, or els perniciously peruerted) thou beist constrayned to fle vnto they nowne unwryten deed dremes, haithen rytes, iewisshe ceremonyes, euen anticristis owne tradicions."⁵⁶

Here, Joye characterizes More's religion not as orthodox or even a church at all, but rather a satanic synagogue brimming with heathenism, Judaism and the traditions of Antichrist. A true Church, the writer implies, would not persecute, commit murder or shed innocent blood, nor would it suppress or distort the scriptures or promote falsehood and false doctrine. In these instances, Joye contrasts reformist religion with his opponents through the most visceral condemnatory language possible in order to establish his vision

⁵³ Ibid., 2r.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 2v-3r.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 3v.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 3r-v.

of reformist orthodoxy. He condemns More as an “arrogant pharisay” because rather than teaching that Christ offered himself as a “perpetual purgacion euermore...[who] alone was sufficient...More & his chirche...make hym half a sviour, deuiding his glory, some to sayntis merits, some to our satisfaccions, some to our dedis, some to popis pardons pylgrimagis: and I cannot tell how miche to his owne vnwryten verities.”⁵⁷

One of Joye’s central claims relates to the issue of truth and its source. According to Joye, traditional religion contains numerous practices, beliefs and rites not found in scripture. Therefore, in his view More supports the “Anticristen Synagoge” by depressing the authority of scripture through the rationale that the apostles “left oute certain vnwryten verities necessary for our saluacion.”⁵⁸ These include various practices and doctrines of traditional religion, such as Mary’s perpetual virginity, her assumption, praying to saints, holy fasts, the Sunday Sabbath, the hallowing of chalices and holy water, how to say the Mass and creeping to the cross among others. Joye attends to the issue of Mary’s perpetual virginity to address the issue of unwritten truths, truths for which Joye argues have no scriptural basis. Although Saint Jerome attested to the truth of perpetual virginity, Joye points out that he could not prove it from scripture; in his view More’s church cannot either. Joye castigates More as “that olde holy vpholder & protectour of the papistical Synagoge...[who] hath founde vs oute this vunwryten verite” and who should beware lest “he be not licked vp with the flame of his owne coles with Nadab & Abiu, for fetching them els where then at y^e auter of god as he commanded.”⁵⁹ In contrast, Joye promotes scriptural authority as the source of all truth. Citing Psalm 85, Joye pleads to God: “Lorde lede me into thy way [that] I might walke in thy trowthe, &

⁵⁷ Ibid., 5v.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 8v.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 11v-12r.

not in Moris vnwryten verities: for al the ways of [the] lorde ar mercy & verite: but All [the] ways of More ar cruel tyranny & subtyl false hed.”⁶⁰

Joye then examines several of More’s *unwritten truths*: the perpetual virginity of Mary, which he argues is inconsequential for salvation, the “praynge to sayntes & worshiping of stockis & stones” and the practice of fasting during Lent.⁶¹ But Joye’s central argument accuses his opponents of distorting the scriptures through false glosses of the text. The scriptural promise that the “holy gost shal lede you into al truth” undermines the Christian identity of his opponents: in Joye’s view, his opponents do not interpret the scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit at all; they interpret scripture in ways unrecognizable to his evangelical opinions and therefore out of context, such that the “very truth of [the] text so torne & mangled.”⁶²

Joye then reveals the nature of More’s church through a brief examination of Christ’s words found in John’s Gospel. When Christ left his disciples, he sent them the Holy Spirit to lead them into all truth; the Holy Spirit was thus sent to “conuince [the] worlde of synne, of rightwisnes and of iugment” for which More argues that the word *world* refers only to “the Iews and paynems.”⁶³ But Joye explains that the word *world* includes not just Jews and pagans but also More’s church, a vainglorious and worldly “pharisaical secte” which opposes Christ, persecutes true Christians like Joye himself and promotes justification through works:

For siche vngodly whom [the] worlde fauoreth and laugheth vpon, which hate his members and persecute him and his worde in them, even for More and his chirche, [the] bissops & their faccion, whom ther is none more vayn glorious worldly and wicked. The worlde is here they that beleue not that Iesus Criste is our

⁶⁰ Ibid., 12v.

⁶¹ Ibid., 15r-v.

⁶² Ibid., 15v-16r.

⁶³ Ibid., 17v.

sufficient satisfaccion, redempcion, rightwysnes, and that faith in him onely saueth not, that there is no nother name by whome we maye be saued than Iesus Crist, but beleue to be iustified by workis, and iuge falsely of god and his worde...the holy gost here this daye rebuketh, of this secte pharisaical is More and his church...For this Gospel was wryten as well to rebuke vs as ether Iwe or paynem.⁶⁴

Joye then accuses More of misconstruing Christ's promise that the Holy Spirit will lead the Christian into all truth. According to him, More believes that truth is not solely contained in the written word but rather on the hearts of believers and thus all forms of truth need not be written at all. Joye responds: "lyke argumentis More maketh in other places: God promised to wryte his lawe in their hartis, ergo the lawe was not wryten in bokes. What a blynde Pharysaye is this?"⁶⁵ Here, Joye attempts to expose what he sees as the heart of the problem with More's church: if one obscures or distorts the scriptures, not only will one miss Christ entirely as the Pharisees did, but also the definition of true justification. For Joye, calling More a 'blind Pharisee' reflects feelings nothing short of bewilderment, exasperation and perhaps righteous anger, anger against a religion that obscures Christ's true image and his saving justification.

We could assume that images of Pharisees, or any other image of Jews and Judaism, only serve as simple polemical devices deployed to delegitimize and defame Joye's opponents. They most certainly do that. Joye's readers, even ones with only a superficial understanding of the scriptures would understand that images of Jews and Judaism convey at least something anti-Christian, sinister or corrupt. Joye deploys images of Jews and Judaism frequently; one does not have to go to great lengths to convince readers about the corrupt or sinister nature of scribes and Pharisees or the Jews in general, nor would one have to explain that Christ and the synagogue have little if

⁶⁴ Ibid., 18r.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 22r.

anything in common. But he does have to convince his readers about the nature of traditional religion and what he understands is at stake.

When Joye deploys images of Jews and Judaism, he attempts to accentuate contrasting visions between evangelicals and proponents of traditional religion about the nature of true faith and practice and the identity of a true Christian. Joye associates these images with More's church not only because he truly believes that More represents a church which practices a corrupt form of Christianity, one that shares similarities with Jewish opposition of Christ and Paul in the New Testament, but also because they provide a stark contrast to his vision of evangelical orthodoxy: *sola scriptura* and justification by faith alone, doctrines that he argues have been lost or defiled. As for More's notion of *unwritten verities*, Joye associates them with the Pharisees precisely because he believes the proponents of traditional religion obscure the scriptures in the same manner as the Pharisees obscured the Old Testament. It is not a haphazard, random association, merely polemical mudslinging at traditional religion's expense. He advances this association, and others like it, not merely to bring ill-repute to traditional religion; in his vision of true orthodoxy there must also exist a defined vision of *unorthodoxy*, a set of identifiable traits, supported by the scriptures, which exhibit characteristics of, or similarities with, Jews and Judaism, a contrast which allows one to distinguish error from truth. Therefore, his condemnation of More's church as a 'papistickall Synagoge' or an 'Anticristen Synagoge' in the preface, a church filled with Pharisee-minded individuals who distort the scriptures and undermine the primacy of the Bible among other things, reflect a larger, more complicated disagreement over the nature of orthodoxy, the primacy of the scriptures as a source for that orthodoxy, its proper interpretation and its

most fundamental truth: that Christ alone justifies, apart from works. Thus, Joye contends that More's church is a *synagogue* not simply because he calls it one; he labors to show why that is so according to the scriptures. For him, a church that undermines the scriptures and promotes a soteriology in clear contradiction to the teachings of Paul as he understands them is not a *Christian* church at all. Furthermore, some of the practices of More's church, in Joye's view, do not have a scriptural basis either. We should not be surprised that he connects two of those practices, fasting and ceremonies, as practices connected to the synagogue.

While no one denies that the scriptures support fasting, Joye argues that the traditional church's practice of fasting is not what the Bible teaches: for "the scripture and euery christen man that knoweth the truthe of Goddis worde and haue espied the flashed and abominacion of the pope and his Synagoge, taketh the popes choyse of meatis by certain prescript dayes for euery man, for the doctrine of the Deuel: as Paule playnely calleth it."⁶⁶ As for ceremonies, Joye points out that More's unwritten verities have allowed the continuation of ceremonies of the law that have been abolished with the advent of Christ, a view substantiated by Paul. Since Paul "reputed sich ceremonies so light which god himself ordained for that peple & for that tyme: miche lesse ought we to esteem Moris unwryten ceremanes inuented of his Synagoge...when thei be but tradicious of lying men..."⁶⁷ Unwritten verities, then, have led to unwritten ceremonies; Joye reminds his audience prior to this discussion that when Paul preached to the Jews and also Gentiles, people were convinced through the scriptures unto salvation rather

⁶⁶ Ibid., 50v.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 56v.

than through unwritten verities.⁶⁸ For Joye, a true church under Christ reflects an orthodoxy found in the scriptures in regards to faith and practice; a synagogue reflects unwritten verities, an unorthodoxy one finds among both Pharisees and More's church alike.

But Joye does not include images of Jews and Judaism on every page, nor does he overuse these images to make his points. Large sections of his refutation simply involve an exegesis of scripture in order to refute More's *false foundation*. He does mention 'the Jews' frequently, but he does not necessarily associate them with traditional religion while he refutes More's interpretation of various biblical passages. However, my preceding examination includes the instances where Joye does deploy images of Jews and Judaism to provide contrast between orthodoxy and unorthodoxy, which serve him more than merely reflect his contempt for traditional religion. Those images demonstrate the gravity of the struggle between evangelicals and the traditional church, a contest between the true church and a 'papistical' synagogue and ultimately between Christ and Antichrist. They serve to advance an evangelical movement not well-established or popular among vast quantities of lay people entirely comfortable with traditional religion through carefully crafted exegetical polemic that arrests readers with near-universal images widely accepted as corrupt or sinister. They inform readers who may not be aware that traditional religion actually resembles Jews and Judaism more than Christ and the scriptures, that church practices reflect man-made traditions rather than scriptural truths and that, through careful exegesis of the scriptures, readers will learn the importance of justification by faith alone as the scriptures teach.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 33r-34v.

We do not know what month in 1534 Joye published his *Subuersion*; perhaps it was after the Heresy Act passed at the end of March, which prevented authorities from arresting someone for heresy merely on suspicion, and the fact that the King had surrounded himself with evangelicals at Court, namely Thomas Cranmer, Queen Anne and Thomas Cromwell, whose influence undoubtedly tempered aggressive persecution.⁶⁹ But although More had resigned as Lord Chancellor, he was still active in refuting heretics, Bishop Stokesley still sought heretics with enthusiasm in or around London and Frith had been burned just a year before.⁷⁰ By 1534, an overwhelming majority of English people still remained loyal to traditional religion despite the influx of evangelical ideas from the Continent for over a decade.⁷¹ The language of Joye's refutation, then, seems to be informed by a religious climate largely intolerant of evangelical ideas, and therefore he employs images and opinions in the starkest of terms, perhaps to jolt readers to move beyond their traditional religious sympathies. Connecting traditional religion to images of Jews and Judaism justify Joye's campaign to refute More; More would never get a chance to refute Joye's *Subuersion*. But he did have a long, stormy career composing refutations on a number of evangelicals, which is the subject of a later chapter.

III

Numerous other evangelical texts from the Henrician period include authors who employed images of Jews and Judaism for a variety of reasons. I should note the other works by Joye beyond his *Subuersion* that I largely omitted from consideration, including

⁶⁹ Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 218-219.

⁷⁰ Clebsch, 218; Brigden, 188-189, 219.

⁷¹ Brigden, 414-417.

the ‘anonymous’ 1533 treatise *The souper of the Lorde*, likely written by Joye which vigorously attacks transubstantiation, and his works of the 1540s.⁷² Many of those works employ images of Jews that reflect a rhetorical pattern we find in his *Subversion*. And one cannot discuss the English Reformation without considering John Frith, the reformer who “displayed the finest mind, the most winsome wit, and the boldest spirit” among the early English reformers.⁷³

Frith, although to a much lesser extent than Tyndale, Joye and Barnes, even resorts to a rhetorical strategy similar to his fellow evangelicals in his treatise on purgatory.⁷⁴ But Frith’s polemic appears muted and restrained. In his refutation of one of Thomas More’s points about Judah Maccabee, Frith argues that just because it was in the Old Testament does not mean it pertains Christians at all, especially in regards to sacrifices. “What if Iudas [Maccabee] gathered soch an offering in the olde testament, shuld it then folowe that we must do so to, which knowe that Christ is to me and that all oblacyons are ceased in him? shall we become Iewes and go backe agayne to the shadowe and ceremonye sith we haue the bodye and signification which is Christ Iesu?”⁷⁵ Frith implies that More’s argument and traditional religion on a host of issues, does not adequately take into consideration that much of Old Testament Judaism, especially its sacrifices and ceremonies, were not to be imitated in light of Christ but extinguished

⁷² *The souper of the Lorde wher vnto, that thou mayst be the better prepared and suerlyer enstructed: haue here firste the declaracion of the later parte of the .6. ca. of S. Johan, beginninge at the letter C. the fowerth lyne before the crosse, at these wordis: merely were. etc wheryn incidently M. Moris letter agenst Johan Frythe is confuted* (Nornburg: Nicholas Twonson, 1533; STC, 2d ed. 24468). Some notable works by Joye in the 1540s that reference images of Jews and Judaism include *George Ioye confuteth, Vvinchesters false articles* (1543), *The vnitie and scisme of the olde chirche* (1543) and *The refutation of the byshop of Winchesters derke declaration of his false articles...* (1546).

⁷³ Clebsch, 78.

⁷⁴ John Frith, *A disputacion of purgatorye made by Iohan Frith which is deuided in to thre bokes* (British Library; STC 11386.5, 1531).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. F6r.

entirely. Those rites and practices in the Old Testament were “nothyng but figures of Christ...so that when Christ came, all sacrifices and oblacions ceased.”⁷⁶ For Frith, Christ ended the sacrifices of Judaism, but traditional religion seems to perpetuate those practices in a new Christian way. Frith does advance an evangelical orthodoxy, that Christ’s one sacrifice is sufficient and therefore ceremonies should cease entirely. But he does so with a subtle polemic that might not even register to a less sophisticated audience.

Perhaps Frith was somewhat of an exception among his evangelical peers. In his 1533 treatise against transubstantiation, Frith even uses the image of the Jew to support his argument with the nuance of a skilled biblical humanist. He reasons that if the apostles believed that the body and blood of Christ were actually to be consumed, it would not only have “excluded the Iewes from crystes fayth” but it is highly unlikely that they would do something “so playne against Moses lawe” since even Peter never ate anything forbidden according to Acts 10.⁷⁷ Images of Jews, in the hands of a reformer who understood historical context, could be used in constructive ways too. Frith seems to understand Judaism more intimately than his fellow evangelicals, enough for him to offer a nuanced refutation of transubstantiation. Numerous evangelical writers in the 1540s, however, follow a similar rhetorical pattern to Tyndale, Barnes and Joye. I will provide several examples.

⁷⁶ Ibid., sig. F5v.

⁷⁷ John Frith, *A booke made by Iohn Frith prisoner in the tower of London answeringe vnto M mores lettur which he wrote agenst the first litle treatyse that Iohn Frith made concerninge the sacramente of the body and bloude of Christ...fourth daye of Iuli. Anno. 1533* (British Library, STC 11381), sig. G1v.

We see associations between scribes, Pharisees and adherents to traditional religion in Thomas Gray's poetic denunciation of Cromwell critic Thomas Smythe in 1540. Two of the five instances include marginal citations of the familiar Matthew 23:

The scribe on hys skyrtes, doth goddess commaundementes set
The deuyll resembleth, the messenger of light
Who destroyeth laws? Who doth good order let?
But those pharisees, that christen peple spyght
Sendynge soche prophetes, as the daye change to the nyght
All them that abhorre, ther olde pylde popetrye
For the worde of God, they accuse of heresy.⁷⁸

At the end of the ballad Gray describes his opponent as "The Pharyse in dede/ Hys phylacterye sprede./ Hys skyrtes he doth dilate/ To fourny she hys estate/ The scribe set forth hys hemme/ With perle and with gemme/..Yea, clerke of the Quenes counsell/ And persecuteth the Gospell."⁷⁹ Miles Coverdale's confutation against John Standish in 1541 in defense of the late Robert Barnes includes several instances wherein he castigates his opponent. Those references describe the traditional church as an unholy synagogue or the synagogue of Antichrist, the Pharisees in relation to a discussion of traditional religion's doctrines and practices and Robert Barnes' persecutor as Caiaphas.⁸⁰ An anonymous caveat from 1548 warns its Christian audience to "beware of the Pharisicall leuen, of the Archeapist" and addresses the offender directly: "But thorow your good pacience I muste go about to pouрге out that same lytle leauen that you hyd of late purposely in

⁷⁸ Thomas Gray, *A brefe apologye or answere to a certen craftye cloynar, or popyshe parasyte, called Thomas smythe* (Antwerp: 1540; British Library, STC 22880), sig. A3r-v. For authorship and its context in the wake of Cromwell's execution, see Michael R. Powell, "The Polemical Literature of the English Protestant Reformers, c. 1534-1547" (PhD diss., Unniversity of Edinburgh, 1984), 482-487.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, sig. B2r.

⁸⁰ Miles Coverdale, *A confutacion of that treatise, which one John Standish made agaynst the protestacion of D. Barnes in the yere. M.D.XL. Wherin, the holy scriptures (peruerted and wrested in his sayd treatise) are restored to their owne true vnderstanding agayne by Myles Couerdale* (British Library, STC 5888, 1541), sig. B7v, C1r, C4r-v, C5r, H6r, I7r, M5r-v.

[the] dowghy lumpe of your pharasaicall sermon.”⁸¹ Apparently the sermon in question altered the Lord’s supper because the word *consecration* was used, which “all papistes and al the vnlearned people” understand the word to mean “transubstantiating, changing, or alteryng of the sacramental bread and wyne.”⁸² Anthony Gilby in a 1548 sermon condemns bishops in reference to Jews: “And you byshoppes haue your autorite to edifie and not to destroie. But the olde serpent and his first begotten caine, then Pharao, next Herod and the phariseis, the olde byshopes condemninge Christe, and you their successours, banisheinge his worde worde with crueltie, are of a contrarie spirite.”⁸³ The idea that bishops represent the successors of Christ’s tormenters reflects Tyndale’s ideas in *Answer*.

William Turner’s 1545 polemical work *The rescuyng of the romishe fox* includes numerous correlations between images of Jews and Judaism and traditional religion. One example refers to his condemnation of transubstantiation. The Zwinglian Turner writes,

We vse to gyue the Sacrament to all that wil receyue it, euery moneth and in sum places euery sonday in the remembrance of our sauour Christe and ye gyue a bit of comon brede in the remembrance of the Sacrament, who holdeth Christis memori better? What iewishe and dull Pharisees ar thes that ether wil not, or can not be cantent with the holy worde of Christe and hys Sacramentes to bryng Christe to theyr memories that they may thynk on hym except they smel sum thyng to remembre hym and taste sum thyng also to remembre hym thereby. I neuer red of more fleshy Pharisees in my lyfe then thes be.⁸⁴

For Turner, transubstantiation is not only unbiblical but *Jewish*. But Turner did not always think with Jews in such an overt polemical tone. A few years later he composed a

⁸¹ *A caueat for the Christians agaynst the arch-papist*, 1548 (British Library; STC 5195), sig. A6r-v.

⁸² *Ibid.*, sig. A6v.

⁸³ Anthony Gilby, *An ansvver to the deuillish detection of Stephane Gardiner, Bishoppe of Wynchester published to the intent that such as be desirous of the truth should not be seduced by hys errors, nor the blind [et] obstinate excused by ignorance*. (British Library; STC 11884, 1548), 14v-15r.

⁸⁴ William Turner, *The rescuyng of the romishe fox other vvyse called the examination of the hunter...*, 1545 (Huntington Library; STC 24355), sig. G3v.

New Dialogue in which he examines the Mass.⁸⁵ In that dialogue a discussion of Matthew 23 arises in which the speaker Porphyry argues that since the Jews were “bounde to do that wyche the Scribes and pharises bad them do, we are now bounde to do in the new testament those thynges, that our bisshoppes and ordinaries byd vs do.” And that includes the repeated celebration of the Eucharist.⁸⁶ The speaker identified as Knowledge agrees that the Jews were bound but only insofar as the scribes and Pharisees taught the law of Moses. Because the scribes and Pharisees taught their own traditions, however, the Jews were not bound to obey them, nor the apostles. Thus, Christians “are bounde to obeye oure Bysshoppes and pastores in all tradytions and commaundementes, whatsoeuer they commaunde vs to kepe wythoute any exception, but onely in such commaundementes, as they haue out of the new Testament.”⁸⁷ Knowledge illustrates his point with the Pharisees who believed in Christ in Acts 15 and required all Christians to be circumcised. He asks rhetorically: “was the Christen men of that tyme bound to beleue and to obeye these preachers commaundementes?”⁸⁸ For Turner, the image of the Pharisees, even ones that did accept Christ, could be used to explain the extent of ecclesiastical authority on Christian practice: Christians are not bound to obey the church’s traditions if they cannot be supported by scripture, including the Mass.

In 1556, Thomas Whittel, Protestant martyr under the Marian regime, wrote a letter from prison addressed to “all the true professours and louers of Gods holy Gospell

⁸⁵ William Turner, *A new dialogue vverhin is conteyned the examination of the messe and of that kynde of priesthode, whych is ordeined to saye messe: and to offer vp for remyssyon of synne, the body and bloud of Christe agayne*. Anno 1548 (Cambridge University Library; STC 24363).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. F2v-F3r.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. F4r-v.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, sig. F4v.

wythin the Citye of London.”⁸⁹ In that letter he exhorts fellow evangelicals to endure persecution, to take up their crosses and go with Christ to Jerusalem “amongst the Bysshopes, Priestes, and rulers” and they will “anone send you to Caluarye.”⁹⁰ But he promises martyrs that they will dwell with the Lord forever: “O blessed are they that suffer persecution for ryghteousnesse sake, as Christes people in this Iewyshe Englande now doth, for theirs is the kyngdome of heauen.”⁹¹ He warns his audience to beware “the leuen of the Pharisees” and not to defile themselves “with thys false & wicked religion of Antichrist.”⁹² The restoration of traditional religion during the Marian regime, with its accompanying persecutions, apparently meant for one evangelical that Christian England had become *Jewish* England.

CONCLUSION

Reformers did not deploy images of Jews and Judaism solely as polemical devices; these images should not be considered merely as expressions of evangelical polemical reflexes that explain everything wrong with traditional religion. In essence, evangelical writers used these images to communicate a sharp contrast between competing visions of orthodoxy. By doing so they created a space for evangelical ideas to find audiences willing to embrace the *newe learning*, audiences that would eschew familiar images of Jews and Judaism and by extension their connection with traditional religion, and thus provide an impetus to embrace a purer, unadulterated, biblical

⁸⁹ Thomas Whittel, “To all the true professours and louers of Gods holy Gospell wythin the Citye of London” ca. 1556, in Miles Coverdale, *Certain most godly, fruitful, and comfortable letters of such true saintes and holy martyrs of God, as in the late bloodye persecution here within this realme, gaue their lyues for the defence of Christes holy gospel written in the tyme of their affliction and cruell imprysonment* (Huntington Library; STC 5886, 1564), 494-500.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 496.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 497.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 499.

orthodoxy. This rhetorical strategy also created somewhat of a legacy. I will discuss the work of John Bale in the next chapter; here I will close with an examination of some homilies published soon after the death of Henry VIII in 1547.

Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, invigorated by the prospects of a new and staunchly evangelical regime in the wake of Henry VIII's death but faced with a shortage of trained preachers in England, compiled a series of twelve sermons in order to assist parishes which lacked qualified clergy. Cranmer himself wrote sermons three, four and five and likely composed the first one as well; John Harpesfield and Edmund Bonner, much more traditional in their religious sympathies than Cranmer (and who would later be involved in Cranmer's downfall during the Marian regime), wrote sermons two and six respectively; Thomas Becon contributed sermon eleven. The other sermons remain unclear or anonymous as to authorship.⁹³ I will discuss a few of them.

The stated purpose of the sermons, written by Cranmer, was so that the King's beloved subjects might "bee deliuered from all errors and supersticions, and to be truly and faythefully instructed in the verye worde of God..."⁹⁴ According to the preface, these sermons were to be delivered by "all Persones, Uicars, Curates, and all other, hauyng spirituall cure, euery Sondaye in the yere, at high Masse, when the people be moste gathered together to reade and declare to their parishioners..."⁹⁵ Images of Jews and Judaism appear in several of them; those references serve both didactic and polemical functions but sometimes it depends on the religious sympathies of the listener.

⁹³ Ronald B. Bond, ed., *Certain Sermons or Homilies (1547) and A Homily against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion (1570): A Critical Edition* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 26-28; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 372-375.

⁹⁴ Thomas Cranmer, *Certayne sermons, or homelies appoynted by the kynges Maiestie, to be declared and redde, by all persones, vicars, or curates, euery Sondaye in their churches, where they haue cure*. Anno 1547 (British Library; STC 13640), sig. A2r.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. A2v.

Harpesfield provides an interesting case. In his sermon about human sinfulness, pride, judgment and Christ's redemptive sacrifice, *An Homilie of the miserie of al mankynd, and of hys condempnacion to death euerlastyng, by hys awne synne*, he reminds his audience through numerous scriptural references that all of humankind commits sin and that no one stands blameless before God. Christians should not be proud, for scripture attests to humankind's wickedness: even when the holy man confesses his sins, "they bee so many in numbre, and so hid, and hard to vnderstande, that it is in maner vnpossible, to knowe, vtter, or numbre them."⁹⁶ For anyone who does not acknowledge their own sinful frailties or who remains proud before God, Harpesfield points to the hypocrisy and pride of the Pharisees:

He [Christ] preferreth the penitent Publicane, before the proude, holy, & glorious Pharisey...He teacheth vs in oure prayers, to reknowlege our selves sinners, & to aske forgeuenes and deliuerance from all euilles, at our heauenly fathers hande...He saieth, he came not to saue, but the shepe that were vtterly lost, and cast away. Therefore fewe of the proude, iust, learned, wise, perfect, and holy Phariseis, were saued by him, because thei iustified themselves, by their counterfeit holynes before men. Wherefore (good people) let vs beware of suche hypocrisy, vainglory, and iustifyng of our selfe.⁹⁷

The didactic context seems clear enough: Christians should not follow the example of the Pharisees in their pride; one should approach God with humility and authenticity and thus safeguard oneself from hypocrisy. For Harpesfield, the Pharisees illustrate people who regard themselves as holy and pure, devoid of penitent reflection and humility, attitudes good Christians should avoid. But what Harpesfield meant to be didactic could also have polemical connotations, especially for audience members familiar with or sympathetic to evangelical rhetoric. The term *Pharisee* might trigger a person to view a member of the clergy with an evangelical scrutiny far beyond what Harpesfield intended: the description

⁹⁶ Ibid., sig. C3r.

⁹⁷ Ibid., sig. C3r-v.

of the Pharisees as wise, holy and learned men would likely implicate England's ecclesiastical establishment as pharisaical themselves, especially since evangelical authors have repeated that particular indictment for years. And even audience members with traditional sympathies might not view the illustration solely in a didactic context either. By 1547, the term *Pharisee* meant much more than just some Jewish figures in the New Testament with whom Christ contended: England was full of clergy who reminded some people of the Pharisees. And Thomas Cranmer, for his part, exploits that image and other images of Jews and Judaism in order to confront traditional religion. Those statements are most prominent in his fifth sermon, *An homilie, or sermon, of good workes annexed vnto faithe*.

In Cranmer's fourth sermon he explains that a *lively* and *true* faith produces good works and not idleness; in his fifth sermon he argues that the reverse must also be true: "that without it can no good worke be doen, acceptable and pleasaunt vnto God."⁹⁸ He then addresses the specifics of those good works, but he finds this question more difficult to answer. Citing Matthew 19, Cranmer explores the question through the dialogue between Christ and the rich young man, whom Cranmer designates as a prince. That prince asked Christ what works he should do to come to eternal life, and Christ answered to keep the commandments. He then asked which commandments was Christ speaking about because he was confused. Cranmer explains why the prince was so confused, which seems to come from Cranmer's own imagination rather than the actual biblical passage:

The Scribes and Phariseis had made so many of their awne laws and tradicions, to brynge men to heauen, besides Gods commaundementes, that this man was in doubtte, whether he should come to heauen by those laws & tradicions or by the

⁹⁸ Ibid., sig. H1v.

laws of God: & therefore he asked Christe, which commaundementes he meante?⁹⁹

Christ replied to the prince to keep the commandments of God, found in the Decalogue, and to love one's neighbor as oneself. Cranmer explains that "this is to be taken for a moste true lesson taught by Christes awne mouth, that the workes of the moral commaundementes of God, be the very true workes of faithe, whiche leade to the blessed life to come."¹⁰⁰ Cranmer then launches into a long explanation how humanity has been corrupted by Adam's original sin when he broke the first commandment of God, which led to idolatry among the Gentiles with the worship of false gods and the corruption of Israel, notwithstanding the reforms by the three righteous kings Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah and Josiah. He describes these religious practices as error, blindness, phantasies, feigned inventions and abominations. Upon that premise, Cranmer singles out the Jews during the time of Christ. With a marginal note for this section that reads, "Religions and sectes among the Iewes" Cranmer explains that

beside the foresayed inuencions, the inclination of man to haue hys awne holy deuocions, deuised newe sects and religions, called Phariseis, Sadduces, and Scribes, with many holy & godly tradicions and ordinaunces (as it feined, by the outward apparaunce and goodly glistering of the workes,) but in very deed, all tending to Idolatrye, Supersticion and Hipocrisye: theyr hartes within, beyng full of malice, pride, coueteousnesse, and all iniquitie. Against which sectes, and their pretended holynes, Christe cryed out more vehemently, then he did against any other persons...¹⁰¹

Cranmer then cites Matthew 23, Christ's condemnation against the scribes and Pharisees. That in itself seems unremarkable: Cranmer merely echoes numerous predecessors dating all the way back to the lollards. We should not miss, however, that Cranmer's marginal note explains that the scribes and Pharisees, along with the Sadducees, are *Jews*; for

⁹⁹ Ibid., sig. H3v.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., sig. H4r.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., sig. 11r-v.

Cranmer these images have yet to become disconnected with their specific Jewish context.

This matters a great deal in how Cranmer develops the rest of the homily when he compares traditional religion with the scribes and Pharisees. Drawing from Matthew 12 and 15, Cranmer recalls how the scribes and Pharisees contended against Christ regarding Sabbath observance and other traditions and how Christ called them “blynde guydes, warnynge his disciples from tyme to tyme, to eschewe their doctrine” for “althoughe they semed to [the] worlde, to be moste perfect men...yet was their life but Hypocrisie, and their doctrine but sower leuen, mixte with supersticion, Idolatry, and preposterous iudgement: setting vp tradicions & ordinaunces of man, in stede of Gods commaundmentes.”¹⁰² Cranmer carefully constructs his list of indictments against the scribes and Pharisees; he even includes idolatry as one of their faults without even explaining it in terms that Tyndale does in his *Answer*. These indictments provide a basis, then, to condemn the practices of traditional religion and reveal its ultimate didactic purpose.

Cranmer rehearses what has been said thus far, how from the beginning of the world until Christ’s time, humanity has sought “other meanes to honor and serue” God, “after a deuocion imagined of their awne heades...” But he then brings the sermon directly to his sixteenth-century audience: “which hath happened also in our tymes (the more it is to be lamented) no lesse then it did emonge the Iewes...”¹⁰³ For Cranmer, however, the corruption is *worse* than it was among the Jews, for never “had the Iewes in

¹⁰² Ibid., sig. I2v-I3r.

¹⁰³ Ibid., sig. I3r.

their moste blyndnesse, so many Pilgrimages vnto Images, nor vsed so muche knelyng, kissing, and censing of them, as hath been vsed in oure tyme.”¹⁰⁴

We should not miss Cranmer’s rhetorical strategy here, which echoes earlier evangelical figures. Cranmer, like some of his predecessors, exploits the hostility against images of Jews to create a newer, worse benchmark: that traditional religion with its practices could be *worse* than Jewish religious sects and their practices makes Cranmer’s indictment exceedingly inflammatory. He signals his audience with a marginal note that reads “Sectes & Religions emong christian men” and then explains that the Jews never had nearly the number of sects and false religions that Christians do in his own time. What follows is a long list of abuses and superstitions, from the various implements of traditional religion to its practices such as the vows of obedience, chastity and elective poverty, all of which have been broken in various ways.¹⁰⁵ Cranmer employs the words of Christ against the ecclesiastical establishment and their pretense regarding vows: “And therefore of them might be moste tryely sayed that, which Christ spake vnto the Pharises: you breake the commaundementes of God by your tradicions: you honor God with youre lippes, but you[r] hartes be farre from him.”¹⁰⁶ He then repeats portions of Matthew 23 again, this time in relation to how priests take advantage of widows and other simple folk and how monastic houses constantly seek out new novitiates into their sects. Cranmer then reminds his audience of Henry VIII’s faithful service to God, who “put away all suche Supersticious and Pharisaicall sects by Antichrist inuented” and he prays that God would now, under a new king, grant “all vs, the Kynges hyghnesse faythfull & true subiectes, to fede of the swete and sauorie breade of Gods awne woorde,

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., sig. I3r-v.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., sig. I3v-I4v.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., sig. I4v.

and (as Christ commaunded) to eschewe all oure Pharisaicall and Papistical leuen of mans feyned religion.”¹⁰⁷

Cranmer’s use of images of Jews and Judaism reflect an evangelical tradition dating back to the late 1520s. In this sermon, the connection between traditional religion and the false religion of the scribes and Pharisees reinforces a similar evangelical vision of orthodoxy. For Cranmer, orthodoxy comprises of the primacy of scripture, authentic Christian practice and obedience to the King; traditional religion, by contrast, has invented a false religion not attested by the scriptures, practices hypocrisy and superstition, and contravenes God’s continued work to purify England of *leaven* that began under Henry VIII and continue under the new king. Images of scribes and Pharisees provide Cranmer, like his predecessors, with convenient, established biblical models that illustrate the nature of false religion and its practitioners, then and now. As for obedience to the King, Cranmer’s predecessors might agree with him in terms of a biblical principle, especially Tyndale; they would unlikely share in Cranmer’s revisionist praise of a King who drove many of them into exile or, in the case of Barnes, to the stake. But obedience to the new regime in 1547 meant practicing a religion devoid of pharisaical, traditional *leaven* in concert with the advent of a second Josiah.¹⁰⁸ The process of religious reformation in England, however, was far from peaceable according to the author of the twelfth sermon.¹⁰⁹

In the twelfth sermon, *An Homilie against contencion and braulynge*, the author confronts the religious contention that has divided England. “For to many there be,” he

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., sig. I4v-K1r.

¹⁰⁸ MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, 351-409.

¹⁰⁹ Ronald B. Bond, ed., *Certain Sermons or Homilies (1547)*, 28. Some scholars speculate that Hugh Latimer was the author of the twelfth sermon, or perhaps Cranmer.

writes, “which vpon the Alebenches or other places, delight to propoude certayne questions, not so muche perteyning to edificacion, as to vainglory and ostentacion: and so vnsoberly to reason and dispute...”¹¹⁰ He cites the biblical example of the division that once plagued the Corinthian church during Paul’s day, and asks what Paul would say if “he hearde these words of contencion: (whiche be now almoste in euery mans mouth) he is a Pharisei, he is a gospeler, he is of the new sorte, he is of the olde faythe, he is a new broched brother, he is a good catholique father he is a papist, he is an heretique...Oh how [the] churche is diuided.”¹¹¹

Critics of evangelicals would have certainly laid the blame for this division at the feet of men like Cranmer and other evangelicals. After all, evangelicals have certainly castigated traditional religion and its adherents for over two decades. The fact that the preacher mentions the term *Pharisee* as a term of abuse thrown around in alehouses by the mid-1540s suggests that evangelical rhetoric had finally gained some traction amongst a wider audience. Cranmer, for his part, certainly exploits the term’s negative import in his fifth sermon, likely exacerbating religious division to which the author of the last sermon references. In addition to the fifth sermon, the term *Pharisee* appears in other places in the sermon cycle. English Christians still partial to traditional religion would not be heartened, for example, by the staunchly evangelical statement that appears in the tenth sermon, *An exhortacion, concernynge good ordre and obedience, to rulers and magistrates*, regarding the Bishop of Rome: “He ought therefore rather be called Antichriste, & the successor of the Scribes & Phariseis, then Christes vicar” because he

¹¹⁰ Thomas Cranmer, *Certayne sermons, or homelies*, sig. X3v.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, sig. X3v-4r.

teaches doctrines opposed to both Peter and Christ.¹¹² The association between the pope and Antichrist reflects typical evangelical opprobrium; that the pope was the successor of the scribes and Pharisees reflects Tyndale’s ideas in *Answere*. Nor would people necessarily regard Bonner’s mention of the Pharisees in his sixth sermon, *An homilie of Christian Loue and Charitie*, as a simple didactic illustration. He argues that to love only one’s friends falls short of the biblical standard, “for asmuche as the Phariseis (with their moste pestilente tradicions, false interpretacions & gloses) had corrupted... this pure wel of Gods liuely worde, teaching, that this loue and charitie perteyned onely to a mannes frendes...”¹¹³ Christ, of course, teaches that a Christian is to love all people, friend and foe alike, which encapsulates the heart of Bonner’s exhortation. For Bonner, the Pharisees got it wrong because their traditions, false hermeneutics and distortions of God’s commandments led them to conclude that only loving one’s friends was sufficient, an position insufficient for Bonner’s Christian audience. But an audience member exposed to Cranmer’s fifth sermon might conclude something likely unintended by Bonner, similar to Harpesfield’s message: the term *Pharisee* might trigger audience members to conclude that those “pestilente tradicions, false interpretacions & gloses” refer to clergy members still beholden to traditional religion.

The author of the twelfth sermon appears quite aware that past evangelical denunciations of traditional religion may have contributed to division. Although he finds it necessary to confront alehouse contention and unruliness over religious issues, he justifies the use of harsh language citing, of course, biblical precedent: John the Baptist called the Pharisees a brood of adders; Paul condemned the men of Crete in Titus and

¹¹² Ibid., sig. S2v-S3r.

¹¹³ Ibid., sig. K4r. Curiously enough, this statement remained unchanged when this sermon was re-issued during the Marian regime.

Philippians; Christ castigated the scribes and Pharisees as “blynde guydes, fooles, painted graues, Hypocrites, serpents, adders brode” and members of a wicked generation. Further examples include Christ also rebuking Peter, Paul’s condemnation of Elimas in Acts 13 and Peter’s condemnation of Ananias in Acts 5 for lying to the Holy Spirit. And the author recalls Old Testament figures too, namely Moses and Phineas. Therefore, he argues, the rebuke of opponents through harsh, denunciatory language is at times required if one follows a biblical model. But the author counsels his audience with a crucial caveat: he notes in the margin, “But these examples are not to be followed of euery body but as men be called to office and set in auctoritie” according to James 4.¹¹⁴

Now that evangelicals were firmly established in the new regime, only biblically-informed confrontation would be authorized, namely from the pulpit. It was probably the only way the new church authorities could reign in a cantankerous public who, for decades were exposed to polemical material produced by their co-religionists. Apparently the stigma of the Pharisee did not abate, nor the other images of Jews. What Thomas Starkey noticed in 1536 was perhaps more pronounced in 1547, encouraged by the writings of Tyndale, Barnes, Joye and several others, including an ex-Carmelite friar, polemicist and playwright John Bale, who is the subject of the next chapter.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., sig. Z2r-v.

Chapter 7

John Bale's War of Attrition: Jews, Traditional Religion and the Struggle for Orthodoxy

Beginning in the 1530s, John Bale, ex-Carmelite friar, playwright and ardent evangelical polemicist began a campaign that promoted an evangelical vision of orthodoxy over and against traditional religion and its clergy. That campaign consisted of publishing a number of dramatic works, polemical writings and a commentary on the book of Revelation, all of which sought to vilify and delegitimize traditional religion and its defenders. Like his predecessor Tyndale, Bale exploited images of Jews and Judaism to denigrate traditional religion. But he displayed much more versatility in his campaign than most of his fellow evangelicals: he crossed the boundaries of genre, from drama and polemic to biblical commentary and drew upon newer, perhaps more inventive images of Jews and Judaism that set him apart. For Bale those images served to accentuate the differences between true religion and the false traditions he sought to overthrow and reinforce evangelical claims of orthodoxy in an English world wrought with confusion, anxiety and doubt.

A brief biographical sketch reveals an extraordinary career. Two things stand out about John Bale: he was born in relative obscurity but became a major influential figure for the evangelical cause from the mid-1530s onwards; he survived while so many of his contemporaries on both sides of the religious divide perished either by sword or flame. Biographers tell us that he was born in 1495 in Suffolk from humble beginnings and entered the Carmelite friary at Norwich around the age of twelve. Eventually Bale became a monk of the Carmelite Order and studied at Cambridge; his academic career was interspersed with years of travel to the Continent. He finally received his B.A. in

1529 and subsequently his doctorate around 1534, some eighteen years after beginning his Cambridge career.¹

The exact date of Bale's conversion eludes us but it probably occurred in the mid-1530s. From 1536-1540, Bale wrote over twenty dramatic works, five of which survive.² In 1540, Bale fled England to safer environs on the Continent when his patron Thomas Cromwell was executed on charges of treason and his friend Robert Barnes went to the stake. Although Bale likely welcomed Henry VIII's break from Rome, the dissolution and the monasteries and the placement of an English Bible into every parish church, by 1539 he would have become alarmed. The passage of the Act of Six Articles in 1539 reinforced traditional doctrine and practice such as the real presence in the Eucharist, communion in one kind and auricular confession, even though Thomas Cranmer could take some consolation that the king remained the Supreme Head of the Church of England.³ It was during this first exile that Bale began to write numerous polemical works and his commentary on Revelation, sometimes under a pseudonym to avoid detection since the king had banned Bale's works in 1542 by royal proclamation.⁴ After Henry VIII died in 1547, Bale returned to England and eventually took up a post as a bishop in Ireland only to flee a second time after the untimely death of Edward VI and the ascension of Mary Tudor. During his second exile Bale associated frequently with

¹ Peter Happé, *John Bale* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), 1-4; Honor C. McCusker, *John Bale: Dramatist and Antiquary* (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1942), 1-4; Leslie P. Fairfield, *John Bale: Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1976), 1-30.

² Happé, 5-6; Rainer Pineas, *Tudor and Early Stuart Anti-Catholic Drama* (Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1972), 5.

³ MacCulloch, Diarmaid, *Thomas Cranmer: A Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996), 251-253; Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-1580*, 2d Edition (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 423-424.

⁴ Happé, *John Bale*, 12.

John Foxe, the author of the eventual best seller *Acts and Monuments*, and likely had a great influence on him.⁵ Bale survived the persecutions of the Marian regime by taking refuge abroad and returned to England when Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1559. He died in 1563.

I

John Bale was inventive and unique but also conventional as far as a dramatist. He no doubt single-handedly pioneered the use of drama to advance the evangelical cause and exploited its popular form to criticize the traditional church and promote evangelical ideas; his rhetoric involving images of Jews and Judaism, however, borrows much from his evangelical predecessors.⁶ Most of his plays were probably composed in the late 1530s; of his five surviving plays, internal and external evidence points to 1538 as the date of composition although many of his plays underwent revisions in the years that followed.⁷ Of those surviving plays, Bale employs images of Jews and Judaism with varying frequency in four of them, the exception being *A Tragedye or Enterlude Manyfestyng the Chefe Promyses of God*.⁸

⁵ Happé, *John Bale*, 20-22.

⁶ Pineas, 5-6, 24-25. Pineas argues that Bale “singlehandedly launched the drama as a propaganda vehicle of the Reformation” and that it was Bale “who Protestantized English medieval Catholic drama and who introduced techniques of dramatic polemics which had a wide influence on those who followed him in the use of the genre.” Pineas is one of the few scholars to examine Bale’s technique involving Jews. Pineas writes, “His methods were extremely simple. He anachronistically had the forces of good, such as Christ or John, preach Protestantism while attacking Catholicism, and at the same time identified the forces of evil, such as Satan and the Jews, with the Church of Rome.” Pineas further identifies Bale’s technique of associating Jews with Catholics and writes that the “specific identification of the Catholic with the traditional evil character of the Jew occurs quite frequently in Tudor and Stuart polemical drama, as well as in prose polemics...” See also, Introduction, John Bale, *The Complete Plays of John Bale, Volume I*, ed. Peter Happé (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1985), 20-21.

⁷ John Bale, *The Complete Plays of John Bale*, Vol. 1, ed. Peter Happé (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1986), 4-11.

⁸ John Bale, *The Complete Plays of John Bale*, Vol. 2, ed. Peter Happé (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1986), 1-34. In this play, several Israelite characters appear including Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah and John the Baptist. They should not, however, be confused with the images of Jews and Judaism that appear in

In Bale's historical play, *King Johan*, he employs a few images of Jews and Judaism, mostly to characterize the insidious nature of the clergy who undermine an English monarch's resistance to the pope.⁹ One of those images appears only as a passing reference while the others are more explicit. In the beginning of the play Englande complains to King Johan that "yowre clergy hath done very sore amys/ In mysusyng me agaynst all ryght and justyce" and describes them as "tree that God dyd never plant,/ And, as Christ dothe saye, blynd leaders of the blynd."¹⁰ The image of blindness comes from Matthew 15 in reference to Christ's description of the scribes and Pharisees; only those familiar with the scriptural reference, however, would understand the connection between the clergy and Christ's Jewish opponents. However, Englande is more explicit later when she complains that the clergy "take from me my cattell, howse and land,/ My wodes and pasturs with other commodityes" which resembles the "wyckyd Pharyseys" who appropriate widows' houses, a phrase Bale draws from the familiar Matthew 23.¹¹ As the first act unfolds, Englande reveals that her misery and the clergy's corruption can be traced to the pope, which explains why the clergy forsake God's word, practice vile ceremonies and delight "in mennys draffe and covytus lucre all."¹² Sedicyon, the pope's agent, threatens the king's authority, reveals his disdain for England and his influence over both the religious and secular clergy, nuns, bishops and the nobility who have "becum a meyntener of owre godhed/...He belevyth nothyng but as Holy Chyrch doth

evangelical rhetoric. For a sixteenth-century audience, these Israelite figures represent paragons of biblical faithfulness, qualitatively different than Pharisees, Scribes, Annas, Caiaphas or *the Jews* in general, all of whom rejected and persecuted Christ.

⁹ John Bale, *The Complete Plays of John Bale*, Vol. 1, ed. Peter Happé, 29-99.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30-31, lines 26-34.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 31, lines 62-65.

¹² *Ibid.*, 31-32, lines 73, 79 and 85.

tell.”¹³ Worse still, the nobility resist the gospel and “callyth them herytyckes/ That preche the gospell, and sydycyows scysmatyckes.”¹⁴

Through a new character, Treason, Bale offers a negative portrait of the rites and practices of the traditional church through images of Jews and Judaism and to a lesser extent paganism. Treason, dressed as a priest, explains to King Johan and Englande his activities. Those include making the nobility obedient to the Church of Rome, that no priest or lawyer will obey God’s word nor support the preaching of the gospel and that in place of those “I have sett up supersticyons;/ For preachynges, ceremonyes, for Gods wurde, mennys tradicyons.”¹⁵ He then explains that Christ has no place in the church but rather “Moyses and the paganes doth utterly hym deface.”¹⁶ Englande seems curious and asks Treason, “Tell what we have of Moyses” to which Treason replies,

All your ceremonyes, your copes and your sensers, doubtless,
Your fyers, your waters, your oyles, your aulters, your ashes,
Your candlestyckes, your cruettes, your salte, with suche lyke trashes;
Ye lacke but the bloude of a goate or else a calfe.¹⁷

Moyses here should not be confused with the Interpretour’s earlier description of King John at the end of act one as “Thys noble kynge Johan as a faythfull Moyses/ Withsotde proude Pharao for hys poore Israel.”¹⁸ In the mouth of Treason *Moyses* means Judaism and not the faithful biblical figure. As for paganism, Treason describes such things as images, the kneeling and kissing of the cross, processions, fastings and praying to saints.¹⁹ When Englande asks about Christ in the church, Treason replies “Marry nothyng at all but the Epystle and the Gospell,/ And that is in Latyne that no man

¹³ Ibid., 36, line 278.

¹⁴ Ibid., 36, lines 280-281.

¹⁵ Ibid., 76, lines 1820-1824.

¹⁶ Ibid., 76, lines 1826-1826.

¹⁷ Ibid., 77, lines 1827-1831.

¹⁸ Ibid., 58, lines 1107-1108.

¹⁹ Ibid., 77, lines 1832-1838.

shoulde it knowe.”²⁰ King Johan then asks if Treason has sought reformation and Treason explains why the church resists it:

It is the lyvyng of our whole congregacyon.
If supersticyons and ceremonyes from us fall,
Farwele monke and chanon, priest, fryer, byshopp and all.
Our conveyauce is suche that we have both moneye and ware.²¹

When it comes to preaching, Treason then explains that the church has forsaken that office and have sided “with Judas we love wele to be purste...And as for preachynge we meddle not with that trade/ Least Annas, Cayphas, and the lawers shulde us blame,/ Callynge us to a reckenynge for preachynge in that name.”²² Here Bale associates the clergy with some of the most infamous Jewish figures in the New Testament. Not only did Judas betray Christ and thus epitomizes Jewish greed and perfidy, Annas and Caiaphas, whom evangelicals often associate with persecution, condemned Christ to death and later sought to stop the apostles from preaching the gospel according to Acts 4.

After King Johan dies from poison, Veritas enters the stage and describes the king as a valiant and godly man; the king was a man of who provided “[g]racyouse provysyon for sore, sycke, halte and lame” and a man of “notable mercye.”²³ But he was valiant too and zealous for the Christian faith: after all “Hys zele is declared as towchyng Christes religion/ In that he exiled the Jewes out of thys region.”²⁴ For Bale, the exile of the Jews reflects King John’s Christian passion and faithfulness; Bale’s revisionist hand would probably go unnoticed by a vast majority of his audience.²⁵ The image of exiling the

²⁰ Ibid., 77, lines 1840-1841.

²¹ Ibid., 77, lines 1843-1847.

²² Ibid., 77, lines 1852, 1854-1856; see 164: ‘purste’ here means to be paid.

²³ Ibid., 86, lines 2208, 2213.

²⁴ Ibid., 87, lines 2219-2220.

²⁵ Ibid., 136. In the notes, Happé suggests that the exile of the Jews here refers to that “John persecuted the Jews for money in 1210 according to Wendover II.” Bale’s focus seems to be on exile of the Jews not John’s historical extraction of large sums of money from the Jewish community in 1210; one could argue

Jews, like most other images of Jews and Judaism in the play, has a double meaning. Since Bale has associated the traditional clergy with the Jews it appears that he endorses the expulsion of the traditional clergy.

A final reference to Jews and Judaism appears in the final scene of the play. Imperial Majesty elicits penitent responses from Noblyte, Clergye and Cyvyle Order as a spirit of repentance and reformation touch several characters after the king's death. After the Clergye promises to obey the Noblyte, Cyvyle Order adds that the nobility should have power over the clergy just as the nobility of the Jews had power over the various Jewish priestly sects:

Thys I also marke: whan the priestes had governaunce
Over the Hebrues the sectes ded first aryse
As Pharisees, Sadducees and Essees, whych wrought mucche grevaunce
Amonge the people by their most devylysh practyse,
Tyll destructyons the prynces ded devyse
To the quyettesse of their faythfull commens all,
As your grace hath done with the sectes papistycall.²⁶

This last statement likely refers to Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries that began in 1536, something Bale obviously wants to publicly praise. The rhetoric that associates religious clergy with Jewish sects from the New Testament has a long tradition among dissidents of the church in England. Bale directly exploits that tradition here as well as his other plays.

One of Bale's shorter plays, *The Temptacyon of Our Lorde and Saver Jesus Christ*, draws chiefly upon the Gospel accounts of Christ in the wilderness.²⁷ At one point

that greed informed John's policy much more than Christian zeal. As for exile, Bale seems to be intentionally connecting King John to later regional expulsions in the decades after 1210 or even the final expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290 under Edward I.

²⁶ Ibid., 97, lines 2615, 2618-2624.

²⁷ John Bale, *Complete Plays of John Bale*, Vol. 2, ed. Peter Happé (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1986), 51-63. The complete title of the play is *A brefe comedy or enterlude of concernynge the temptacyon of our Lorde and Saver Jesus Christ by sathan in the desart. Anno 1538.*

Bale connects the traditional clergy to the scribes and Pharisees but the primary aim of the play is one of exhortation, especially in how it reinforces the evangelical idea of the primacy of the scriptures. For example, Baleus Prolocutor declares this at the end of the play:

‘Resyst,’ sayth Peter, ‘resyst that roarynge lyon,’
Not with your fastynges – Christ never taught ye so –
But with a stronge fayth withstande hys false suggestion,
And with the scriptures upon hym ever go;
Then shall he no harme be able yow to do.
Now maye ye be bolde ye have Christ on your syde,
So longe as ye have hys veryte for your gyde.²⁸

Just as the word of God was critical for Christ to overcome the temptations of Satan, so too is it for the church: for Bale, the scriptures provide a basis for determining biblical orthodoxy and especially in determining the truth.

Towards the end of the play, after Satan Tentator fails in his three temptations he finds comfort in knowing that his agents will be able to hinder Christ and his followers:

If Pharysees and Scrybes can do any thyng therto,
False prestes and byshoppes with my other servauntes mo,
Though I have hynderaunce it wyll be but for a season.
I dought not thyne owne hereafter wyll worke some treason;
Thy vicar at Rome I thynke wyll be my frynde.²⁹

The real treason according to Bale concerns how the pope “wyll...treade underneth hys fote for ever” the scriptures.³⁰ For Bale it all fits together: just as the Pharisees and scribes resisted and the living word of God, i.e. Christ, so now the pope and his servants resist the truth by trampling underfoot the scriptures. Both the Jews and traditional church authorities share not only resistance to the word of God but also in that they both serve Satan. But resistance goes both ways: Bale exhorts his audience to resist Satan as Christ

²⁸ Ibid., 63, lines 413-419.

²⁹ Ibid., 61, lines 333-337.

³⁰ Ibid., 61, line 341.

did, which necessarily will involve resisting some of the *false suggestions* coming from traditional church authorities.

One of Bale's more well-known and longer dramatic works, *A Comedy Concerning Thre Lawes*, briefly touches upon his associations between Jews and Judaism and the traditional church.³¹ The main antagonist of the play is Infidelitas who conspires against the three laws of God, Naturae Lex, Moseh Lex and Christi Lex and recruits various vices to help distort and undermine these laws. Bale explicitly condemns traditional religion through a series of images; its association with Jews and Judaism appears at two significant moments in the play.

When Infidelitas asks how his minions Hypocrisis and Pseudodocrina handled Christi Lex, or Christ, Pseudodocrina describes them following Christ around, attempting to entrap him and undermine his teaching; eventually they succeed and put him to death and bury him, setting four *knyghtes* to keep him in his grave, for "Better one were lost than we shuld perysh all/ As Cayphas ones said in counsell pharysaycall."³² Then Pseudodocrina reveals the four *knyghtes*:

Four knyghtes wyll we hyre whom we shall streyghtly charge
To kepe hym down harde. The first are ambycyous prelates,
Then covetous lawers that Gods worde spyghtfully hates,
Lordes without lernynge, and justyces unryghtfull:
These wyll kepe hym downe, and rappe hym on the scull.³³

Here, Bale identifies figures in England who keep Christ "buried" and resist reformation: ambitious prelates, avaricious lawyers, an ignorant nobility and unjust magistrates. Just as the Jews buried Christ in the Gospels through Caiaphas and the Pharisees, the same

³¹ Ibid., 64-121. The complete title of the play is *A comedy concernynge thre laws, of nature, Moses, and Christ, corrupted by the sodomytes, pharysees and papystes. Anno 1538.*

³² Ibid., 108, lines 1563-1564.

³³ Ibid., 108, lines 1568-1572.

pattern continues in England; therefore both the *knyghtes* and the Jews share a common resistance against Christ. One should not miss the searing polemical attack here. Bale associates secular authorities and ecclesiastical figures with images most sixteenth-century Christians associate with wickedness, stubbornness and violence towards Christ: a high priest who condemned Christ to death and the Pharisees who resist Christ's message every step of the way. But of course the Gospel fights back.

At the end of Actus Quartus, Evangelium confronts Pseudodoctrina and Hypocrisy and issues a severe condemnation. The speech invokes the prophet Jeremiah and primarily Christ's series of *woes* from Matthew 23. Evangelium describes his opponents in similar fashion to Jeremiah: "Soch prophetes are they as God ded never sende/ As Hieremy sayth, they dampnable wayes pretende."³⁴ The speech seems to reach a crescendo as Evangelium condemns the traditional clergy much in the same way as Christ condemned the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23; Bale also adds pagan imagery from 1 Samuel 5 with the god Dagon and a rhetorical question straight from John the Baptist:

Wo, hypocrytes, wo! For here ye tryfle and mocke
 With christen people, and the kyngedom of heaven uplocke.
 Ye count it a game to lose that Christ hath bought
 With hys precyouse bloud, and here most derely sought.
 O ye are wretches and pestilent Antichristes,
 Mynysters of Dagon, and most deceytfull papystes.
 Lyke ravenouse wolves, poore wydowes ye devoure...
 Wo, Pharysees, wo! Ye make cleane outwardlye,
 But inwardes ye are full of covetousnesse and baudrye.
 Paynted tumbes are ye, aperyng ryght bewtyfull;
 But within ye stynke, and have thoughtes very shamefull.
 Ye slew the prophetes, your doynge yet beare wytnesse:
 How thynke ye to avoyde that poynt of unryghteousnesse?
 Oh ragynge serpents, and viperous generacyon,

³⁴ Ibid., 112, lines 1697-1697. The specific scriptural references Bale has in mind are likely Jeremiah 23.21; 27.15.

How can ye escape the daunger of dampnacyon?³⁵

To make the connection between Pseudodoctrina and the traditional church even more conspicuous, the character asks Evangelium who made him so bold so to “teache newe lernynge? An heretyke art thou sure.”³⁶ The phrase *newe lernynge* as mentioned earlier was a common insult among traditional church adherents to describe evangelical opinions. Taken as a whole, then, Pseudodoctrina not only kills and buries Christ but also considers evangelical reformers heretics; Evangelium’s pronouncements against the Pharisees and hypocrisy not only describe the Jewish opponents of Christ but also members of the traditional church. That association seems more pronounced in his play about John the Baptist than any other.

Another 1538 work is *John Baptystes Preachynge in the Wyldernesse*, an intensely provocative play inspired by the Gospels that feature John the Baptist, Pharisees and Sadducees, the latter two of whom Bale associates with figures of the traditional church.³⁷ The play contains both exhortation and polemic; it not only contrasts evangelical faith from traditional religion but also calls an audience to a genuine evangelical repentance. Presumably an audience for this play would mostly comprise of Christians steeped in the religion of their ancestors and their birth, that is traditional religion. To call them to repentance and specifically to Christ would likely evoke a range of reactions, from authentic repentance to bewilderment or apathy and undoubtedly

³⁵ Ibid., 112, lines 1698-1715.

³⁶ Ibid., 112, line 1717.

³⁷ John Bale, *The Complete Plays of John Bale*, Vol. 2, ed. Peter Happé (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1986), 35-50. The complete title of the play is *A brefe comedy or enterlude of Johan the Bapyystes preachynge in the wyldernesse, openynge the craftye assaultes of the hypocrytes, with the gloryouse babtyme of the Lorde Jesus Christ. Anno 1538.*

righteous hostility. None of these reactions however would surprise the playwright himself.

In the beginning of the play John the Baptist first calls the Common People, Publicans and Soldiers to seek “God your father in sprete and veryte/ But not in shaddowes, as doth the Pharyse” who only seem to be concerned with outward works for their justification rather than true faith or God’s word.³⁸ He articulates the effects of true repentance and conversion through a series of contrasting images: meekness replaces pride by virtue of the Gospel, the simple fisherman “shall now be notable” over the “spirytuall Pharyse” who remains a detestable wretch, sinners will exceed in grace over the saints of the traditional church and the faithful will exceed in knowledge over the “consecrate Rabyes.”³⁹ Furthermore, John the Baptist explains how several of the mortal sins will give way to virtues: those who hate “shall now love earnestly” while those who exhibit gluttony, pride, lechery, and sloth will now practice the virtues of temperance, meekness, chastity and diligence.⁴⁰

Bale not only promotes a portrait of true religion and the gospel but he subtly associates the traditional clergy with Jewish figures: *consecrate Rabyes* suggests some connection with traditional priests who undergo consecration too; a *spirytuall Pharyse* might remind an audience of members of the ecclesiastical spirituality. Bale, however, is not subtle with his negative portrayal of Jewish figures or with his inclusion of mortal sins in contrast with evangelical virtues, which certainly points to traditional religion. The clear association between the traditional clergy and the Jews becomes more apparent when a Pharisee and a Sadducee enter the stage.

³⁸ Ibid., 39, lines 70-73.

³⁹ Ibid., 39 lines 77-83.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 39, lines 84-95.

After John successfully inspires repentance among the Common People, Publicans and Armed Soldiers, John affirms some evangelical doctrinal points: baptism with water signifies repentance, Christ's baptism "bryngeth full recoveraunce" and forgiveness of sins comes by faith.⁴¹ Phariseus, overhearing John, immediately realizes "thys fellawe preacheth newe lernynge."⁴² Sadducaeus advises Phariseus that in order to undermine him they must be crafty to which Phariseus replies, "Tush, thou shalt se me undermynde hym very fynelye."⁴³

The phrase *newe lernynge*, of course, was a pejorative term often used by defenders of traditional religion to describe evangelical doctrine from the 1530s onwards.⁴⁴ Bale associates the defenders of traditional religion with the Pharisee and the Sadducee in the play in that both condemn the *newe lernynge*. But equally important he associates evangelicals with John the Baptist because both preach the *newe lernynge*. The association between John's Jewish opponents and the traditional clergy becomes more pronounced as the scene develops. After an exchange of pleasantries the dialogue becomes increasingly adversarial as Bale draws distinctions between truth and error and between evangelical orthodoxy and the corruption of traditional religion. John remarks that God knows that in their hearts reside wickedness and that "Where as sectes remayne, the sprete of God cannot be" since God brings about perfect unity.⁴⁵ Although both the Pharisee and Sadducee defend their sects, John accuses them of falsehood, deception and hypocrisy. When the Pharisee argues that the Pharisees "syt in Moses seate/As

⁴¹ Ibid., 42, lines 191-200.

⁴² Ibid., 42, line 207.

⁴³ Ibid., 42, line 212.

⁴⁴ For discussion about the *newe lernynge*, see MacCulloch, 3, 265; Pineas, 24; for the development of the phrase 'the New Learning' from a humanist term to one that represents evangelicals in the 1530s, see Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, 68-73, 241-243.

⁴⁵ John Bale, *Complete Plays of John Bale*, Vol. 2, 43, lines 219-220.

intepretours the holy scriptures to treatē” John replies that they distort the scriptures:
“And them ye corrupt with your pestilent tradycyons,/For your bellyes sake have yow
false exposycyons.”⁴⁶

Those indictments about tradition and the false interpretation of the scriptures, of course, echo the typical rhetoric we find among Bale’s evangelical predecessors; the image of Moses’ seat comes from the familiar Matthew 23. Audience members unfamiliar with evangelical rhetoric would probably miss the association between the Jews and the traditional clergy but these references do reveal what Bale is doing here and explain how he frames the subsequent dialogue between John and his Jewish interlocutors.

After Sadducaeus attempts to defend himself John launches into a searing condemnation of both of them. He castigates them as false hypocrites, no better than sodomites in the sight of God, adversaries against the Holy Ghost, a generation of vipers, the murderers of the prophets, agents of Lucifer who have usurped authority and serpents full of poison. Furthermore, they will not escape God’s wrath nor will they find justification through good works, fasting, long prayers or “other holy behaviors” because those practices do not justify. He then calls them to repentance and to turn away from malice, pride and hypocrisy.⁴⁷

What Bale attempts to do here through the character of John the Baptist is to shock his audience out of their traditional religious reflexes. It might be unusual or even shocking for some audience members that fasting, prayer and good works will not assuage the wrath to come nor justify the sinner. But Bale offers more than merely a condemnation of traditional religion or even the correct evangelical view on justification.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 43, lines 229-232.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 43-44, lines 237-272.

He exhorts his audience to repent and turn away from sin; John's call for repentance reflects Bale's heart as a preacher to an audience perhaps too comfortable with a sacramental system that he believes does not lead to true faith. He reminds his audience of true repentance and comforts them: "No hart is so harde but he can it mollefye,/ No synner so yll but he maye him justyfye."⁴⁸

The Pharisee and the Sadducee, unsurprisingly, scoff at John's warning and refuse to repent. Sadducaeus, obviously speaking for the traditional church remarks, "Wyth a lytle helpe of an heretyke he wyll smell."⁴⁹ Bale then uses the Jewish figures to express the typical ecclesiastical opprobrium towards evangelicals: Pharisaeus calls John a vulgar knave for the doctrine he espouses and threatens to stop his preaching; Sadducaeus warns Pharisaeus that John is likely "to make an insurreccyon;/ For to hys newe lernynge an infynyte cumpanye/ Of worldye rascalles come hither suspyciouslye."⁵⁰ After the Pharisee and the Sadducee exit the stage, Christ enters the scene.

The interchange between Christ and John the Baptist includes the expected reticence on the part of John to baptize Jesus. Christ tells him that it is necessary for "all righteousnesse to fulfill" and then says:

If I by the lawe in yewth was circumcised,
Why shuld I dysdayne thys tyme to be baptysed?
The Pharysees abhorre to be of the common sort,
But I maye not so, whych come for all mennys confort.⁵¹

Christ's statement that the Pharisees consider themselves above common folk is meant to remind the audience that the traditional clergy act the same way. But Christ himself dwells among the common folk. At the end of the play, Baleus Prolocutor calls upon the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 44, lines 294-295.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 44, line 298.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 45, lines 312-313, 315-317.

⁵¹ Ibid., 47, lines 403-406.

audience to forsake “your olde lyfe and to the true fayth applye” and “folowe Christes Gospell.”⁵² He reminds his audience of the drama of the play as well and specifically the message John preaches. John preached Christ and those who receive that message include the “sinfull commonalte,/ Publicans and sinners, but no paynted Pharyse.”⁵³ The implication for audience members, then, is that if one does not receive the message of Christ that John preaches in the play one is more or less a Pharisee. To reinforce that message, Bale provides examples of those without true faith that his audience should avoid emulating, including Pharisees who “Johan compared to unfruteful, wythered trees” and holy figures such as Francis, Benedict, Dominic and others.⁵⁴ And he further calls his audience to believe neither in the Pope nor priests but rather to follow “Christes Gospell, and therein fructyfye/ To the prayse of God and hys sonne Jesus glorie.”⁵⁵

II

Beginning in 1540 defenders of the traditional church went on the offensive and Bale likely began writing polemical prose almost exclusively. In the autumn of that year and in the months that followed, Bishop Edmund Bonner began to clamp down in London on unlicensed preaching and expository preaching from the Bible that espoused heretical doctrine; he also began identifying parishioners who refused to engage in confession during Lent or receive communion at Easter.⁵⁶ In December 1541, Bonner organized a public recantation at Paul’s Cross for a rector at Saint Antholin’s named William Tolwyn to signal his return to the church. Tolwyn had a number of heretical

⁵² Ibid., 49, lines 480-481.

⁵³ Ibid., 49, lines 470-471.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 49, lines 484-489.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 49, lines 491-492.

⁵⁶ Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 330-333.

books in his possession and was found guilty of heresy.⁵⁷ Bale was incensed and began to write a refutation, specifically targeting Bonner. In 1543, while still exiled and probably living in Holland he published *Yet a course at the Romyshe foxe, A dysclosynge or openynge of the Manne of synne...* under the pseudonym John Harryson.⁵⁸ In this work Bale delivers an exhaustive assault against the traditional church and particularly the bishop of London himself and explains why William Tolwyn recanted his evangelical faith: Tolwyn was under duress because Bonner had condemned him “to the fyre without mercye, had he not recanted at Paules crosse.”⁵⁹ Like his dramatic works Bale uses a number of images of Jews and Judaism to characterize the church’s clergy, traditions and practices and how it treats those who hold evangelical opinions.

Bale associates traditional religion with scribes and Pharisees to under gird a number of criticisms against Bonner, the traditional clergy and the practices of traditional religion in general. He exhorts his audience not to be afraid to preach the gospel for fear of death just as James had done in the face of “Pharysees and scribes” who sought “to revoke agayne that doctrine of salvation.”⁶⁰ He rallies all evangelicals in London to stand firm against Bonner’s campaign like the late Richard Mekins who had recently been burned at the stake.⁶¹

In this treatise Bale employs typical evangelical rhetoric towards the practices and ritual furnishings of traditional religion. He uses the figure of Christ as a foil against his

⁵⁷ Ibid., 332-337.

⁵⁸ John Bale, *Yet a course at the Romyshe foxe A dysclosynge or openynge of the Manne of synne, contayned in the late declaratyon of the Popes olde faythe made by Edmonde Boner bysshopp of London. wherby wyllyam Tolwyn was than newlye professed at paules crosse openlye into Antichristes Romyshe relygyon agayne by a newe solempne othe of obedyence, notwythstandynge the othe made to hys prynce afore to the contrarye. An alphabetycall dyrectorye or table also in the ende thereof...*(Antwerp: A. Goinus, 1543; STC 1309).

⁵⁹ Ibid., 27r.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 4r.

⁶¹ Ibid., 24r; Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, 334, 336.

opponents: “Thus maye they cal christ an heretyke also, for he neuer allowed ther ceremonyes” such as processions “with cope, crosse, and candelstyke...sensed ymage nor sang latyn seruyce” nor established religious orders, sat in confession, honored saints, prayed for the dead, said mass, matins, evensong, fasted on Fridays, “hallowed church nor chalice, ashes nor palmes, candels nor belles.”⁶² Bale concludes this line of criticism with an exhortation for evangelicals to avoid these practices: “But soche domme ceremonyes not having the expresse commaundement of God, he called the leuen of the Pharysees and dampnable hypocresie, admonyshinge hys dyscyples to beware of them.”⁶³ Bale warns that God “curseth all them that addeth vnto hys worde soche beggerlye shaddowes, wyppyng ther names cleane out of the boke of lyfe” and that Paul “testifyeth them to haue no porcyon in Christ, which wrappe themselues ageyne with soche yokes of bondage.”⁶⁴ He repeats these characterizations throughout his polemic; later he connects certain customs of traditional religion, such as evensong and matins, to Gentile superstition as well as “the hypocritische customes of the pharisees” both of which Christ forbade: “Whan ye praye (sayth Christ) speake not moche as doth the heythen, nor stande not vp in the synagoges as doth the hypocrytes.”⁶⁵

Tolwyn’s crime was that he merely possessed heretical books, an infraction that was enough to bring him under examination for heresy. Bale considers his trial a sham. He argues that the contents of those books were not disclosed on purpose, for “yf the bokes were seane and the artycles throughlye knowne, [Bonner] might perchance be iudged both an heretyque and a traytour, and also a cruell persecuter of Christ in hys

⁶² Bale, *Yet a course at the Romyshe foxe*, 18r.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 18r.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 18r.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 88r.

faythfull members, whych were a great blemyshe to hys lordhypp.”⁶⁶ Rather than open the books and face the scrutiny of their contents, ecclesiastical authorities merely prosecuted Tolwyn on the basis of their titles alone. According to Bale, however, Tolwyn “hath not fedde with the pharisees leuen, nor yer pampred vp with the popes swylle and dregges accordynge to hys first professyon, but now of late with the pure worde of god as he coude conueniently procure yt.”⁶⁷ Thus, Tolwyn’s *real crime* was that he did not endorse traditional church doctrine, which Bale designates as *the pharysees leuen*, a term from the New Testament that describes an aspect of Christ’s opponents related to corrupt teaching.⁶⁸ Bale argues that if Tolwyn would have been “a good Idoll mayntener with holye water and sensynge, latyne Iabberyng and wawlyng” or would “haue shewed hymself the popes good swyneherde, and haue fedde hys porkelynges apace with sosse and syllybubbes...the great swine [would have] not so gredelye deuoured hym.”⁶⁹ For Bale, what Bonner and other ecclesiastical authorities attempt to hide is the corruption of traditional religion in light of scripture, i.e. *the pharisees’ leauen*. That kind of indictment appears again when he argues, for example, that if traditional religion’s doctrine, practices and its priests were put on trial according to the scriptures alone they would not only be found to have “sondrye errors” but a whole list vices, satanic doctrinal corruption, blasphemy, and of course “the pharysees leuen.”⁷⁰

Bale’s indictment of traditional religion leads to direct challenges of Bonner himself. Bale questions why Bonner seeks to uphold the rites and ceremonies of

⁶⁶ Ibid., 45r.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 43r.

⁶⁸ See Matthew 16.6, 11-12; Mark 8.15; Luke 12.1. In addition to the Pharisees, the Matthean reference also includes Sadducees and the Markan reference also includes Herod.

⁶⁹ Bale, *Yet a course at the Romyshe foxe*, 43v.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 60r.

traditional religion when they have no mention in the New Testament, the Psalms or Proverbs. He agrees with Bonner that Ezekiel mentions rites and ceremonies and admits that “Moyses .v. bokes” and “other hystoryall treatyses” do mention them as well; however, those references are figurative: they are “but shaddowes of good thynges to come, whych we are at a point with, hauynge Christ present.”⁷¹ If anything, Bale argues that the Old Testament more or less condemns rites and ceremonies rather than commends them, not only because of their relation to pagan superstition but because the Jews trusted in them rather than God. For Bale, rites and ceremonies for Christians signal a return to Judaism and bondage, even the *best* ceremonies. He inquires of Bonner: “But what doth my lorde meane, yf he schuld go to the best of them? wyll he make vs Iewes ageyne? wyll he make vs bonde seruauntes, and christ hath made vs fre chyldren?”⁷² He then warns Bonner that if “we clogge owr selues ageyne with that yoke, we fall from grace, we go quyte from christ, and hys deathe shall profyght vs nothyng.”⁷³ Bale reminds the bishop that “Bycause of the trust that the Iewes had in the commaunded ceremonyes, god detested them” and that true ceremonial offerings by Christians come from the heart.⁷⁴ For Bale, the rites and ceremonies of traditional religion represent the bondage of Judaism, in sharp contrast to an evangelical orthodoxy that promotes the worship of God “onlye in sprete and in veryte” rather than “in outwarde thynges, specyalle the outwarde thyng [it]selfe.”⁷⁵

In addition to his correlation between traditional religion and Judaism, Bale also associates Bonner and other ecclesiastical authorities with certain Jewish figures from the

⁷¹ Ibid., 77v.

⁷² Ibid., 77v-78r.

⁷³ Ibid., 78r.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 78v.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 78r.

New Testament that antagonized Christ and his disciples. Towards the beginning of his work Bale reminds his readers that the church's persecution against the faithful reveals which group represents Christ's true followers. He points out that by "non other token is the trewe church of Christ knowne from the false and cownterfett synagoge, but by persecucion for ryghtousnesse sake."⁷⁶ That *cownterfett synagoge*, of course, echoes his earlier condemnation of the traditional church the "Synagoge of sathan."⁷⁷ But more to the point it supports Bale's identification of Bonner as Annas the high priest from the Gospels in regards to the persecution of William Tolwyn: "In case lyke was Tolwyn whan my lorde of London examyned hym, as was Christ whan he came before Annas the high prest of the Iewes... Of hys dyscyples and doctrine ded Annas examyne hym, so ded my good lorde of London poore Tolwyn for the ordre of hys cure, and what lernynge he taught them."⁷⁸ Bale's association of Bonner with Annas here (or elsewhere, Caiaphas), a well-known figure who condemned Christ, allows Bale to question the legitimacy of Tolwyn's examination before an ecclesiastical court. He argues that the witnesses against Tolwyn were declared sufficient in number because Bonner chose individuals that "receyued the same doctrine, to the same selfe ende and purpose" and he leaves it up to the reader whether Bonner's witnesses were influenced by "goodes falsely gotten" or their loyalty to the "olde faythe."⁷⁹ Whether Bale is to be believed or not it allows him to associate Bonner and his co-religionists with traditional adversaries of Christianity, the Jews. He then explains that such "allowaunce of catholyck wyttnesses and recordes ageynst heretyques, for the vpholdynge of holye church, ys no newe thyng, yf ye

⁷⁶ Ibid., 16r.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 2r.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 42v.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 26r.

serche the scripturs and hystories.”⁸⁰ Bale then recites the ordeal of Christ and the apostles as they faced their persecutors and its contemporary relevance to the persecution of evangelicals:

For they that accused Christ for a malefactor, a supporter of synners, a deuylyshe persone, a subuerter of the peple, a blasphemouse heretyque, a breaker of ther Sabboth, a defyler of ther lawes, a sower of sedycyon, and destroyer of holye church, a traytour ageynst cesar, and soche lyke, were accepted and abeled of Annas and Cayphas for honest, credible, wyse, and suffycient menne, though all the worlde knoweth them for false periures and knaues. So sone as the Apostles beganne ones to preache after Christes ascencyon, by soche ghostlye chyldren of holye church were they accused and compelled to make answer in the spunal court of the Iewes. And sens that tyme hath the bysshoppes bene seldome without soche prodygyouse pykethankes and glaveringe glosers, to brynge menne *coram nobis*.⁸¹

A note in the margin seeks to expose his ecclesiastical opponent’s true spiritual colors:

“Bysshops are neuer without ther Iudas and Iewes.”⁸² With both Judas and the Jews in close association with Bonner, Bale seeks to undermine Bonner’s authority and delegitimize not only the proceedings against Tolwyn but Bonner himself as a legitimate representative of Christ, thus exposing him as *the manne of synne*.

The juxtaposition of Bonner with Jewish figures such as Annas and Caiaphas and Bale’s polemic against rites and ceremonies of the Church in relation to Judaism may help to explain a somewhat unusual reference toward the beginning of his text. The day in which Tolwyn publicly recanted his evangelical opinions and returned to the church was the fourth Sunday of Advent, which to Bale seems to be “sumwhat Iewyshe” because “we in owr owne consyence accordinge to the doctrine of saynt Paule, obserue neyther dayes nor monethes, tymes nor years in bondage, least we turnyng agayne to beggerly

⁸⁰ Ibid., 26r.

⁸¹ Ibid., 26r-v.

⁸² Ibid., 26v.

tradicyons and lowsye customes schuld haue of christ no profyght.”⁸³ Bale’s marginal note which states “Iewyshe rytes not yet abolished” reveals early on his intention to draw distinctions between evangelical faith and the traditional church through images of Jews and Judaism.⁸⁴

In the midst of all his polemical attacks, Bale finds space to respond to charges of sedition towards the end of his *Disclosyng*. Ecclesiastical authorities argued that the books in Tolwyn’s possession promoted sedition similar to what Anabaptists were calling for on the Continent, namely that all possessions should be held in common, a doctrine in which several leading reformers believed incited rebellion. Bale argues that the charge of sedition is not only a lie but he attempts to turn the tables on his critics. Not only have Luther, Melanchthon, Zwingli and several other evangelical leaders condemned and refuted Anabaptist doctrine through pamphlets and books, Bale argues that the Church of Rome has done nothing to combat Anabaptist error itself and has actually practiced that same doctrine, “sekyng to make all mennys goodes commen vnto them by tyttle of tythes, offerynges, deuocyons, pylgrimages, absolucyons, indulgences, bequestes, mortuaryes, monthesmyndes, yearmyndes, and the deuyll and all besydes, deuourynge vpp poore wydowes howses with the patrimonye of the desolate and fatherlesse.”⁸⁵ Furthermore, Bale argues that false charges of sedition from men like Bonner are nothing new since Bonner has learned to level false charges of sedition from “hys olde scolemasters the holye pharysees and scribes, whych first vnto Christ, than vnto Paule, and consequentye vnto the other dyscyples, that they were sturrers vp of sedycyon, whan

⁸³ Ibid., 13v.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 13v.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 91r-92r.

they se non other thyng wolde helpe them out of the waye.”⁸⁶ False charges of sedition, then, “hath contynued euer sens in Antichristes church as a necessarye polycye ageynst heretyques.”⁸⁷ Therefore, charges of sedition should not alarm the faithful since it has been the policy among the followers of Antichrist whether the scribes and Pharisees during Christ’s time or the ecclesiastical authorities who contend against faithful evangelicals in the sixteenth century. For Bale, being marked as seditious does not necessarily indicate something sinister at all, especially when one considers his chronicle about the late Lord Cobham, the faithful martyr who was executed for treason in the fifteenth century.

In 1544, Bale published *A Breve Chronycle concernynge the Examinacyon and death of the blessed martyr of Christ syr Iohan Oldcastell the lord Cobham*, a revisionist work which recalls the persecution and death of a true and faithful Christian and exposes the traditional church and its ecclesiastical authorities as servants of Antichrist.⁸⁸ Bale seeks to correct the official ecclesiastical record of John Oldcastle’s 1413 trial for his sixteenth-century audience, likely in an effort to develop Protestant hagiographies that would provide portraits of true Christian saints rather than traditional saints’ lives such as the *South English Legendary* or John Mirk’s *Festial*.⁸⁹ John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham, a notable lollard or at least sympathetic to lollard ideas, was examined by Archbishop Thomas Arundel and other ecclesiastical authorities, found guilty of heresy and sent to the Tower. He escaped and was on the run for several years until 1417 when he was

⁸⁶ Ibid., 92v.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 92v.

⁸⁸ John Bale, *A Breve Chronycle concernynge the Examinacyon and death of the blessed martyr of Christ syr Iohan Oldcastell the lord Cobham* (Antwerp: 1544; STC 1276).

⁸⁹ Leslie Fairfield, *John Bale: Mythmaker for the English Reformation* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 1976), 124-129; Peter Happé, *John Bale* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), 35.

captured, brought to London, and hanged for treason and burned for heresy in December of that year.⁹⁰ Bale includes much of this information in his chronicle but differences emerge from Bale's account and the official ecclesiastical record which support sixteenth-century evangelical doctrinal positions.⁹¹ Whether Bale sought to re-fashion a man who died as a traitor and heretic in the second decade of the fifteenth century into some type of proto-Protestant hero comprises of only one dimension of his chronicle about Oldcastle. The other dimension, of course, concerns the immediate religious climate in England and the struggle between evangelicals and the traditional church over questions about orthodoxy: the nature of a true Christian, the aspects of true religion as opposed to those of the Church of Rome and how true Christians behave as opposed to their fraudulent counterparts. Bale brings these issues to the foreground to address contemporary evangelical concerns while he revises the record or even resurrects a true Christian hero of the past. He attempts this feat through rhetoric that associates the practices and leaders of the traditional church with well-known images of Jews and Judaism.

⁹⁰ A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 2d Edition (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), 49; Margaret Aston, *Lollards and Reformers: Images and Literacy in Late Medieval Religion* (London: Hambledon Press, 1984), 24-27.

⁹¹ Fairfield, 127-128. He writes, "It appeared that Oldcastle had held certain beliefs – in purgatory, for example – which Bale had renounced, and that he had been dangerously vague on certain other points of doctrine. If Oldcastle had really been one of the 'faithful in all ages,' the surviving records must obviously have misrepresented his opinions, and the necessary corrections would have to be made in order that the English reading public should be properly edified. How Bale did this becomes apparent when one compares the version of a declaration of faith which Oldcastle made, as published in the 1530 'Marburg' edition, with the similar declaration in Bale's pamphlet of 1544. This particular declaration does not appear in Arundel's official account, so the changes in the 1544 version would seem to have been Bale's own work." Fairfield goes on to mention that the statements about purgatory and the Eucharist, the latter's language too imprecise for sixteenth-century Protestant standards, as well as the details surrounding Oldcastle's death, were part of Bale's "technique of revision and correction."

Bale uses the term *synagogue* sparingly. In the beginning of the chronicle he provides an exegetical comment on the words of Christ that relate to Oldcastle's ordeal and points to his antagonists, associating tyrants with the synagogue:

Most surelye fulfilled Christ that promes in him which he made to his Apostles. Cast not in youre myndes afore hande (sayth he) what answeere ye shall make whan these spirituall tyrauntes shall examine you in theyr synagoges and so delyuer you vp vnto kynges and debytees. For I will geue you soche vtterance and wysdome in that houre as all your ennemyes shall neuer be able to resyst.⁹²

Bale's scriptural technique serves a double purpose in that it not only uses the words of Christ himself to condemn Cobham's persecutors but it also demonstrates to Bale's audience how the Bible remains relevant to address more contemporary concerns, especially for those readers who may not hold the correct view about the primacy of scripture.

Bale becomes more explicit further down in the text. He identifies the group of ecclesiastical authorities who have been persecuting what Bale considers true Christians, the followers of John Wyclif. He explains that in order for the church to "make whole Christes coat without seam" leaders of the lollard movement would have to be targeted, including Oldcastle.⁹³ Bale identifies the church here as a "patched Popyshe synagoge" rather than anything resembling a true church because of its involvement in persecution.⁹⁴ The only other reference to the synagogue appears towards the end of the chronicle which relates to Christ dying an ignoble death "without the cyte & without the holy synagoge, acursed out of church" unlike the martyr Thomas Becket who died as head of the church, fully clothed and surrounded by friends and countrymen.⁹⁵

⁹² Bale, *A brefe chronycle*, 3r.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 12r.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 12r-v.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 52v.

Not surprisingly, Pharisees, scribes, Caiaphas and Annas appear at several points in the chronicle, linked to ecclesiastical figures. Although Bale praises King Henry VIII for limiting the church's power and ecclesiastical authority by "perseyuynge theyr slayghtes (tricks), so abated theyr tyranouse fercenes" he warns his readers that "the dredefull damsell (tyrannye) that was Cayphas dorekeeper dwelleth in the howses of Byshoppes and dayle compelleth poore Peter to deny his mastre."⁹⁶ The break with Rome was a good beginning for Reformation because it put a limitation on ecclesiastical power but bishops as the *doorkeepers of Caiaphas* continue to persecute and pressure true Christians to return to the church and thereby deny Christ.

Bale recalls the history of the lollard movement after John Wyclif's death in 1384. Wyclif's disciples, not small in number according to Bale, continued to heroically to "defende the lowlynesse of ye Gospell agaynst the exceadyng pryde, ambycyon... avaryce, hypocresye, whoredome... idolatrouse worshyppnges, and other fylthye frutes of those styfnecked Pharysees."⁹⁷ Ecclesiastical authorities mounted a campaign to seek out Wyclif's followers and their writings and set up a council of twelve inquisitors, which Bale describes as "hygh Prelates with theyr Pharysees and Scrybes" who were "against the Lorde and his worde."⁹⁸ Bale uses imagery from the New Testament to frame Oldcastle's appearance before the inquisitors. Several witnesses, designated as 'Iudas' give testimony about Lord Cobham's religious opinions and "Cayphas with his court of hyocrytes about him" find him guilty of heresy and sentence him to death.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Ibid., 10r-v.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 11r-v.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 11v.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 14r-15r.

Bale uses Cobham's testimony before the ecclesiastical court to advance several doctrinal claims while castigating ecclesiastical figures. A summary of what Cobham rejected as official church doctrine appears in folios prior to Cobham's testimony, mainly that he did not accept the church's teaching about the sacrament of the altar, penance, pilgrimage, the worship of images and ecclesiastical authority, views sympathetic to lollards of the fifteenth century as well as Bale's evangelical readers.¹⁰⁰ On trial before the ecclesiastical officials, Cobham describes how a true Christian priest behaves, that the scriptures only attest to two sacraments, that the sacrament of the altar does not completely transform into the body of Christ but rather Christ's body remains in the bread and advocates the primacy of the scriptures: "All these premyses I beleue partycularlye & generallye all that God hath left in his holye scripturs that I shuld beleue."¹⁰¹

During his examination Cobham makes several statements against his inquisitors and the Church of Rome that would appeal to sixteenth-century evangelicals. Cobham associates his inquisitors with "the olde Pharysees" who "ascrybed Christes myracles to Belzebub, and hys doctryne to the deuyll" and "as theyr naturall chyldren, haue styll the same self iugement concernynge his faithfull folowers."¹⁰² Furthermore, Cobham states that no "grounde have ye in all scripturs so lordelye to take it upon ye, but Annas and in Cayphas which sate thus vpon Christ and vpon his Apostels after his ascencyon."¹⁰³ The correlation between ecclesiastical authorities and Pharisees attributing Christ's miracles and teaching to the devil exposes Cobham's antagonists as not only confused but also

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 12v.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 18r-v.

¹⁰² Ibid., 31v.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 31v.

unfit to sit in judgment against him. Since their judgment lacks a scriptural basis to sit in judgment against Cobham they only do so because they share a spiritual lineage of with their “fathers the olde Pharysees” who condemned Christ. Furthermore, Cobham’s polemic implies that his persecutors represent a spiritual wickedness similar to figures in the Gospels that ascribe the holy acts and teachings of Christ to the devil. Cobham reveals this spiritual wickedness in additional testimony. He contrasts the pope of Rome with Christ, the former described as rich, proud and murderous while the latter poor and forgiving, and he concludes that “Rome is the verye nest of Antichrist” and “out of that nest cometh all his disciples” that form a body of “Prelates, Prestes, and Monkes... and these pylde fryers.”¹⁰⁴ One ecclesiastical figure questions Cobham as to why he holds that opinion, noting that his accusation is uncharitable; Cobham responds citing the prophet Isaiah about telling lies and then explains himself through one of Christ’s condemnations against scribes and Pharisees from Matthew 23:

As you fryers and monkes be lyke Pharysees dyuyded in youre outwarde aparell and vsages, so make ye dyuysyon among the people. And thus you with soche other, are the verye naturall members of Antichrist... Christ sayth in his Gospell. Wo to you Scribes and Pharysees hypocrytes. For ye close vp the kyngedom of heauen before menne. Nether entre ye in your selues, nor yet suffre anye other that wolde entre into yt. But ye stoppe vp the wayes thervnto with youre owne tradicyons, and therefore are ye the howsholde of Antichrist.¹⁰⁵

Whether these words can be attributed to Cobham or not, they do reflect evangelical sentiments towards the traditional church and its ecclesiastical figures. Certainly some lollards shared the opinions expressed by Cobham or Bale here, especially the association of ecclesiastical authorities with Pharisees, scribes, Caiaphas, Annas and Antichrist. Here we find the issues of illegitimate, anti-Christian ecclesiastical power and persecution,

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 32r-v.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 32v-33r.

sentiments expressed by Wyclif and lollards but also shared by Bale and other evangelicals.

In a larger sense Bale exploits the figure of John Oldcastle and his trial to define the boundaries of orthodoxy, namely that a true Christian believes in two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper, and the primacy of scripture over ecclesiastical tradition or papal decree. A true Christian priest, then, should be "fyrst of all secluded from all worldynesse, shulde conforme theyr lyues vtterlye to the examples of Christ and his Apostles" and "shulde they be occupied in preachynge and teachyng the scripturs purelye, and in genyng wholsom counsels of good lyuyng" and be more "modest also, more louyng, gentyll, and lowlye in sprete shuld they be, than anye other sortes of people."¹⁰⁶ Bale then provides a portrait of ecclesiastical figures. By associating them with Jewish figures from the Gospels, Bale offers a contrasting vision between the true church and the false, superimposing a pattern of persecution provided by the Gospels to Cobham's ordeal, and by extension the ordeal of sixteenth-century reformers, in order to expose the traditional church's affiliation with those who originally contended against Christ: the Jews. Traditional ecclesiastical authorities who persecuted men like Cobham or who now persecute evangelicals in the 1540s must be in league with Antichrist because they act the same way as scribes, Pharisees, Caiaphas and Annas did against Christ. For a sixteenth century audience, Bale resurrects a figure who died as a faithful martyr, persecuted by a corrupt church that continues to do the work of Antichrist.

These contrasting images appear in another hagiographical work that tells the story of a young martyr, Anne Askewe, the first of her examinations published in

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 17r.

1546.¹⁰⁷ Bale offers commentary to Anne’s testimony during her examination primarily to emphasize the wicked and malicious nature of her persecutors, perhaps to the point of self-indulgence according to one modern commentator.¹⁰⁸ Whether because of self-indulgence or an unquenchable righteous anger over the persecution and murder of an innocent and faithful Christian woman, his editorial remarks do often seem to ignore Anne’s ingenuity, prudence and courage during her examination. But he does emphasize Anne’s stalwart courage and faith when he recalls her martyrdom. For Bale, Anne, along with fellow martyr John Lassels and two others, represent “stronge witnesses of Iesus Christ...verye gloryouse martyrs afore God...whome the bloudye remnaunt of Antichrist put vnto most cruell deathe in Smythfelde at London, in the yeare of our lorde, M. D. XLVI. in Iulye.”¹⁰⁹ Not only did they display such godly virtues as faith, wisdom, patience and love but they did so much like “the martyrs of the prymatyue or Apostles churche...and so boldelye obiected their bodyes to the deathe for the vndefyled Christen belue, agaynst the malygnannt Synagoge of Sathan, as euer ded they, for no tyrannye admyttyng anye create or corruptible substaunce for their eternall lyuyng god.”¹¹⁰

Bale’s description of Anne’s persecutors as members of the *synagogue of Satan* should not be missed. For Bale, it explains everything wrong with the traditional church: why Anne underwent an ecclesiastical examination, the methods her examiners employed and why she went to the stake. Bale reveals that the *synagogue of Satan* has persecuted the faithful in history before and since the days of John Wyclif: “Manye a blessed creature, both men & women, haue bene brent sens Iohan Wycleues tyme & afore, for

¹⁰⁷ John Bale, *The first examinacion of Anne Askewe latelye martired in Smythfelde, by the Romyshe popes vpholders, wyth the elucydacyon of Iohan Bale* (Wesel: D. van der Stratzen, 1546; STC 848).

¹⁰⁸ MacCulloch, *Thomas Cranmer*, 352.

¹⁰⁹ Bale, *The first examinacion of Anne Askewe*, 3v.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3v-4r.

onlye dysclosynge the pharisees yokes & teachyne the Gospels lyberte. And them haue that baw dye bloudye Synagoge of Sathan dyffamed, blasphemed, condemned, execrated & cursed to hell asmost detestable heretykes and dogges.”¹¹¹ Bale then offers more evidence about the nature of the traditional church. If ecclesiastical authorities “were of Christ, they ought...to suffre” their enemies and do good to them and pray for them in accordance to Christ’s instructions from the Sermon on the Mount and “not thus to vse more tyrannye ouer them, than euer ded Saracene, Turke, Tyrant or deuyll.”¹¹² For Bale, acts of violence that transgress the core teachings of Christ and an ecclesiastical tyranny worse than the enemies of Christ do not describe a Christian church at all; they do, however, describe something unchristian: the *synagogue of Satan*. And since the traditional church is a *synagogue* it is only natural that its ecclesiastical leaders resemble Jews. For this reason Bale frequently associates Anne’s persecutors with the Pharisees or Caiaphas.

Pharisees appear several times in Bale’s commentary. When Anne’s examiners ask her about the King’s Book and she replies that she could say nothing about it because she had not seen it, Bale remarks that in all “craftye ways possible, fought thys quarellynge qwestmonger, or els the deuyll in hym, to brynge thys poore innocent lambe to the slaughter place of Antichrist” which resembles exactly “the wicked Pharysees by serten of their owne faccyon or hyred satellytes...to brynge Christ in daunger of Cesar, & so to haue hym slayne.”¹¹³ When the examination turns to the issue of auricular confession, Anne replies with the words of Solomon: “By commonynge with the wyse, I

¹¹¹ Ibid., 4v.

¹¹² Ibid., 4v.

¹¹³ Ibid., 5r-v.

maye lerne wysdome, but by talkynge with a fole, I shall take skathe.”¹¹⁴ Anne’s ingenious response, however, seems lost on Bale. He only focuses on her examiners who tried to entrap her like the “olde generacyon the Pharysees and prestes with Christ, to brynge hym in daunger of the lawe.”¹¹⁵

Eventually Anne agreed to sign a statement of recantation Bonner composed, specifically identifying that she endorsed “the bodye and bloude of Christ in substaunce reallye” and no less and “in all other sacramentes of holye churche, in all poyntes accordynge to the olde catholycke faythe of the same.”¹¹⁶ But she added a statement to it at the end that enraged Bonner. Anne describes the moment:

Then my lorde sate downe, and toke me the wrytynge to sett therto my hande, and I writte after thys maner, I Anne Askewe do beleue all maner thynges contained in the faythe of the Catholyck churche. Then because I ded adde vnto it, the Catholyck churche, he flonge into hys chamber in a great furye.¹¹⁷

Here, Anne employed a clever tactic: she alters the statement of recantation to read “the Catholycke churche” rather than submit to a statement that read the “holye churche” or “the olde catholycke faythe.” Anne’s alteration meant nothing less than she believed in the *universal church*, the church to which the scriptures attest and one to which she belongs. In an age in which the very definition of the word *catholic* was contested between evangelicals and defenders of traditional religion, Anne exploits its ambiguity: on the surface it would appear that she submitted to no other church than Bonner’s

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 12v-13r.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 13r-v.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 36r.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 38r-v.

church.¹¹⁸ Bonner suspected and knew otherwise but could not possibly condemn her submission to “the Catholycke church.”

For Bale, Anne’s clever evasion here goes unnoticed. Instead he attacks his opponents and points out that the “worde Catholycke was not wante to offende them” but now does because they “knewe not tyll now of late years...the true sygnifycacyon therof. As that it is so moche to saye in the Englysh, as the vnyuersall or whole. Afore tyme, they toke it to meane their oyled congregacyon alone.”¹¹⁹ Bale then explains the true meaning of the “holye church” and points out how the clergy “seme moche to differ from the lewde lowsye layte or prophane multytude of the common people, by reason of their holye vnceyons and shauyngs whych came from their pope” and especially because they forbid marriage among the clergy the “Romysh father...bryngeth vp all hys chyldren in Sodome & Gomor. And thys poynt haue they lerned of their predecessours the olde pharysees and prestes, whyche were not...as the common sort of men are, but holye, spirytuall ghostlye fathers.”¹²⁰

Bale also associates Anne’s examiners with Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest who condemned Christ in the Gospels. When the Bishop of London attempts to send people to Anne to elicit some sort of confession from her, Bale describes this tactic as a “temptacyon, or craftye callynge vpon, to vtter her mynde, that he might saye of her, as Cayphas sayd of Christ...what need we anye more witnesses? Lo, now ye haue hearde a

¹¹⁸ Peter Marshall, “Is the Pope Catholic? Henry VIII and the Semantics of Schism,” in *Catholics and the ‘Protestant Nation’: Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England*, ed. Ethan A. Shagan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 40. Marshall writes, “Such reflections may on occasion have provided a casuistical lifeline for persecuted evangelicals. If recantation sermons required an affirmation of the Catholic faith, but those who recited them had a completely different conception of that faith from those who wrote them, then they might prove an uncertain instrument for fastening consciences...The issue comes most clearly into focus with the persecution of the Lincolnshire gentlewoman Anne Askew in March 1546.”

¹¹⁹ Bale, *The first examinacion of Annew Askewe*, 38v-39r.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 39r-v.

blasphemye or an heresy.”¹²¹ Anne, of course, did not fall into the trap. Although promised that she did not have to fear speaking her mind, “I answered hym, that I had nought to saye. For my consyence (I thanked God) was burdened with nothyng.”¹²² Bale then repeats his reference of Caiaphas. He describes her tormenter as a “ghostlye enemye...that he might crye with Cayphas...what need we further testymonye? Her owne mouthe hath accused her...Thus laye they wayte for bloude (sayth Salomon) and lurke payueleye for the innocent, without a cause.”¹²³ What Bale fails to notice is how Anne acted with prudence and ingenuity and recognized a trap when it appeared. When pressed about the sacrament of the altar and whether it matters if a priest has committed moral failures, Anne replies that what matters is “without faythe and sprete, I can not receyue hym worthelye” and “in sprete and faythe I receyued no lesse, the bodye and bloude of Christ.”¹²⁴ Bale excoriates Anne’s examiner, not only calling him Caiaphas but in league with Judas for his “wycked qwest had gathered of her answeere to them, to flatter and to please hys tyrannye therwith.”¹²⁵

Bale’s descriptions of the traditional clergy also include other images of Jews and Judaism. For example, at one point Bale points out that Anne’s antagonists resemble their “naturall predecessors the Iewysh byshoppes, pharysees, and prestes” because of how they threaten Anne.¹²⁶ He condemns the “papystyck Byshoppes” when Anne is sent back to prison instead of being released: these “delayes & these sendynges from Cayphas to Pilate, and from Pylate agayne to Annas in Paules, were not els but to seke more matter

¹²¹ Ibid., 22v.

¹²² Ibid., 23r.

¹²³ Ibid., 23r-v.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 24v.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 25r.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 33v.

agaynst her, and to knowe more depelye who were her fryndes and maynteners” should not only remind one of Pharaoh’s recalcitrance but “of the Iewes spirytualte concernynge Christ.”¹²⁷ Bale concludes his account with a searing critique of traditional religion and especially how defenders of the traditional church condemn the true followers of Christ. He exhorts his audience to resist their tyranny, just as Moses resisted Pharaoh, Elijah resisted Ahab, Daniel resisted idolators, John the Baptist contended against the Pharisees and Herod and after Christ the apostles resisted “Byshoppes & prestes” and Stephen resisted the Jews.¹²⁸ Lastly he encourages evangelicals not to be afraid to rebuke Christ’s opponents and hate “that synagoge of Sathan, as ded Anne Askewe, Amen.”¹²⁹ Bale’s audience may or may not have heeded his call but his other polemical works reveal that he himself did.

We end this section of polemical works, therefore, with Bale’s *Apology agaynste a ranke papyst*, a 1550 refutation of the traditional practice of taking vows by the priesthood and in particular for clerical celibacy.¹³⁰ Bale was personally invested in this issue having been married to a woman named Dorothy around the time of his conversion in the mid-1530s.¹³¹ The *Apology* reads as a dialogue between Bale’s *responsio* to the *objection* of an opponent sympathetic to traditional religion who enlists the aid of his chaplain and perhaps others. Throughout Bale’s *Apology* he associates the traditional clergy with images of Jews and Judaism to demonstrate the Jewish nature of traditional

¹²⁷ Ibid., 40r-v.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 45r.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 46r.

¹³⁰ John Bale, *The apology of Iohan Bale agaynste a ranke papyst answering both hym and hys doctours, that neyther their vowes nor yet their priesthode are of the Gospell, but of Antichrist. Anno Do.*

M.CCCCC.L. A brefe exposycyon also upo[n] the .xxx chaptre of Numerii, which was the first occasion of thys present varyaunce. Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum (London: Ihon Day, 1550). Note: ‘ranke’ here means ‘lustful.’

¹³¹ Fairfield, 48.

religion in contrast to a purified image of evangelical faith. In a few places he also incorporates images of pagans although he primarily relies on Jews to characterize his opponents.

Bale's introductory statements undergird much of his later refutation of clerical vows. He addresses his readers in the beginning and explains that the "hyghe priesthode and sacrifices of the Iewes, wyth all the temple ceremonies then ceased" after the appearance of Christ.¹³² Christ now serves as the high priest according to the priesthood of Melchizedek who has no relation to the priesthood of traditional religion. For Christ's "priesthode requireth neyther oyle nor shauen crown, neyther chalice nor aulter, neyther myter nor cope, neither vestiment nor cross, wyth such lyke toyes of Antichrist."¹³³ The traditional clergy, therefore, "is a false and decyful priesthed...the obseruacions therof borrowed of the Iewes shadowes and paganes supersticions."¹³⁴ Furthermore, the traditional clergy practice counterfeit rites and ceremonies. Not only have they "counterfeted Christes sufferings, in crossing one hande ouer an other, and in spredeinge theyr atmes abrode, Iudas in kyssinge, Cayphas in prelatyng, & Pilate in washinge their handes...yet were neuer ryght Christes, but such disgysed monsters with crownes shauen rounde, as ye neuer sawe the lyke."¹³⁵ These negative descriptions of the traditional clergy reinforce his remaining points in the beginning of the *Apology* as he seeks to undermine the practice of clerical vows.

Bale argues that vows as the traditional church interprets them have ceased: the vows from the Old Testament that the "nacyon of the Iewes" once practiced are no longer

¹³² Bale, *Apology*, 7v.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 8r.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 8r.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 8r-v.

valid since Christ's advent.¹³⁶ Furthermore, he explains that in "the Testament of Moyses, is onely the priesthode of Aaron, and in the Testament of Christ, the only priesthode of Melchisedech. The fyrste as a figure was fynysht in Christ, in the other he perpetually reygneht at the right hand of God the father."¹³⁷ For Bale, the vows of the traditional clergy, which include celibacy, "is a staunge kind of vowing, neither taught of Christ nor yet persuaded of his Apostles, but expreslye condemned of them both, fo an horryble hypocryse and manyfeste doctryne of deuyls."¹³⁸

On the pastoral side Bale argues that vows do not promote godliness. While some defenders of clerical vows might view them as a godly practice, Bale argues otherwise. He seems quite sure that "vowes maye wele make pharisees, hypocrytes, dyssemblers, ydolatours, and beastly buggerers, as they haue done without nombre" and they may set forth pagane prestes, masking monkes, turkysh nunes and vestalles...with other disguised apes of antichrist but they can make no godly christianes."¹³⁹ He exhorts his audience to forsake the "wicked doctrine" of vows lest they "drynke of the cuppe of Gods heaue wrathe" according to Revelation 14.¹⁴⁰ For Bale, vows do not represent merely a difference of opinion regarding Christian practice but something quite sinister. He calls his audience to resist the bondage of Antichrist: "conuert thyselve agayne into the fredome of Gods chydren, & be not a captiue slaue in the lithesome kingdom of Antichrist."¹⁴¹ If the clergy protest and attempt to convince one not to abandon vows, Bale advises his audience not listen to "the vnlearned and wytlesse persuasyons, of such

¹³⁶ Ibid., 15r.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 3v.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 3v.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 9r.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 9v.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 11r.

bablynge papystes” for they “vnprofytablye crye, doctours, doctours, as the Iewes sumtyme cryed, the temple, the temple, but trust not thou fasle lying wurdes.”¹⁴² These statements not only reflect Bale’s polemical style but his pastoral concern for his audience. Bale’s inclusion of images of Jews and Judaism as well as pagans and Antichrist does negatively characterize his opponents but they also provide his audience with a clear picture of the larger struggle between good and evil and their choice as Christians to be on the side of Christ. Bale does not write in an aloof, disconnected manner but one that aims to invigorate his audience to eschew the wickedness of traditional practice. For some this will require repentance.

Although other non-Jewish images appear in Bale’s introduction, images of Jews and Judaism remain his dominant polemical device in much of the *Apology*. I will provide several examples. As he begins to refute his opponents regarding clerical vows, he repeats some of his earlier assertions: the traditional clergy’s maintenance of vows does not comport with Christian teaching since it derives from Judaism. At one point, then, he wonders why the traditional church has been willing to extend the practice of vows to the priesthood and thus “willynge therby to make it also Iewysh.”¹⁴³ At the heart of the dialogue, however, involves a discussion of Old Testament texts, namely Numbers 29-30.

One of the justifications offered by Bale’s opponent refers to the Feast of Trumpets from Numbers 29 where votive offerings were accepted and therefore vows of chastity are permitted as an offering to God. This new line of argument seems to follow

¹⁴² Ibid., 11r.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 17v.

Bale's refutation of the chaplain's exegesis of Numbers 30, which is a scriptural passage that addresses vows directly. Bale responds:

But where as ye plucke those vowes from the feast of trumpet blowynge, ye do them great wronge. Better had ye done for them, to haue lefte them there styll, or els in some other place fitt for them, than to haue lefte them here so desolate, not knowynge where to become. For there is now neyther age nor tyme fytt for them among christianes, though yow, not onlyke a Iewysh Rabi, appoynte them al tymes & ages. Neither haue they bene sens Christes ascension lawfull. S. Paule setteth so lytle by them, that he calleth them feble tradycyons and beggarly ceremonies, threttenyng the Galathianes dampnacion, fortunynge to them agayne. Gala. iiii.¹⁴⁴

Bale's description of his opponent (likely the chaplain advising him) as "not onlyke a Iewysh Rabi" might appear somewhat ridiculous but it fits Bale's overall strategy to condemn certain aspects of traditional religion as Jewish. And Bale does not relent. He reveals that he has entrapped the chaplain by offering a possible rationale for vows of clerical celibacy from the votive offerings in Numbers 29. It was a way to trump "ye as a toy to help ye forward your Iewysh creacyons, bycause ye sought so earnestly to establish the chastyte of your presthode by that. xxx. chaptre of Nume. I gaue ye it by the waye to make yow mery wyth and not to ground any christen doctryn vpon it."¹⁴⁵

Bale derides other justifications for vows of celibacy. If the vows in Numbers 21 and 1 Kings 1 justify the traditional church's views on vows of celibacy, Bale replies "we shulde dedycate oure chyldren afore they were borne, to the seruyce of the olde Iewysh synagoge, & offer vp calues or yong bullockes with them."¹⁴⁶ Bale then reiterates that Jewish devotions have no place among Christians and that the chaplain's argument about vows exposes the chaplain's "owne pharysaycall leuen, wherewith the deuyll and yow wolde corrupt the whole batche" because "Iewish shaddowes ar not for al tymes, though

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 53v.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 54v.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 59r.

your Iewish heade so appoint them.”¹⁴⁷ Bale then summarizes: “Chryst wyll not haue hys pure Gospell, myngled with Iewyshnesse.”¹⁴⁸ If these statements fail to convince his opponent, Bale remarks that his opponent can keep all the vows he wants “to play therwith the Iewysh papyste.”¹⁴⁹ Bale ends his *Apology* with an exhortation to his readers:

The presthode & the vowes about whom we haue all this long tyme contended, what are they els but Iewyshe supersticions in theyr best aperell? Lete vs than with all godly endeuour, abhorre them both, and be no longer obstinate papystes to Gods hyghe dyshonoure and our princes dysobedience.¹⁵⁰

Bale’s *Apology* contains a major difference from his other works. He uses the word *Iewyshe* more frequently than his other works to characterize his opponents and the practices of traditional religion. On the surface one might assume that it serves merely as a polemical device to negatively characterize opponents. But for Bale, *Iewyshe* not only connotes obsolescence like the practices of the Old Testament but something sinister and anti-Christian: more to the point, something that characterizes traditional religion as a whole. It represents something that must be expurgated from faith and practice. It is why Bale expands his refutation of clerical vows well beyond traditional religion’s incorporation of Old Testament practices from Numbers 30. Bale’s *Apology* presents two opposing views on whether or not true Christianity should incorporate any practices from Judaism, part of a larger vision that defines the boundaries of evangelical orthodoxy. In his vision of orthodoxy, Jewish practices ceased with Christ and therefore should not be a part of the faith and practice of true religion. They serve as a sign of corruption and the presence of Antichrist. Many of Bale’s views on Antichrist and Judaism seem to solidify

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 60r-v.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 60v.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 62v.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 148v.

in some respects from his commentary on Revelation, a significant work he published five years before his *Apology*.

III

During his first exile Bale wrote a number of works, including perhaps his most influential. In 1545 he published *The Image of Bothe Churches*, a commentary on the Apocalypse of St. John with whom Bale identified as a fellow exile.¹⁵¹ In this work of biblical commentary, polemic and cosmic history Bale reveals the characteristics, practices and faith of two opposing forces: the true church under the headship of Christ, a vision of true orthodoxy, which includes the faithful Christians in earlier times as well as contemporary evangelical reformers struggling in England and elsewhere, and the false church of Antichrist epitomized by the Church of Rome but supported by a number of historical and contemporary allies. At several points in his commentary, Bale includes a number of references to Jews and Judaism in his characterizations of the false church and its members. Much like his earlier works and the works of his evangelical predecessors Bale utilizes these images to bolster the veracity of his own claims to orthodoxy while castigating his opponents.

Bale also includes non-Jewish enemies of Christ, namely the followers of *Mahomete*, a sixteenth-century term for Muhammed who represents a major theme of the work.¹⁵² Like images of Jews and Judaism, Bale's employment of *Mahomete* reflects

¹⁵¹ John Bale, *The image of bothe Churches after the most wonderfull and heauenly Reuelation of saint Iohn the Euangelist* (London: Richard Iugge, 1548; STC 1297); Bale's first edition was written in 1545 with subsequent editions published in 1548, 1550 and 1570. This examination will give primacy to the 1548 publication. For Bale's identity with St. John as a fellow exile, see Fairfield, 71-72. For a brief discussion of the influence of *The Image of Bothe Churches*, see Gretchen E. Minton, ed., *John Bale's The Image of Both Churches, Studies in Early Modern Religious Tradition, Culture and Society, Volume 6* (New York: Springer Dordrecht, 2013), 2, 28-31.

¹⁵² Other spellings of *Mahomete* include 'Mahomet' and 'Machomet' as well as 'Mahound' and 'Mahoun.'

more of his imagination or the imaginations of others than actual Muslims or Islam: Bale's negative characterizations reveal not only his sixteenth-century prejudices but also his ignorance. But English audiences were not unaware of Islam and reformers like Bale could exploit the image to attack his traditional enemies. In some ways, however, Bale has no choice given the complex imagery Revelation presents: apparently Christ and his followers have more enemies than just the Jews and the Church of Rome. Bale employs images of *Mahomete* in a similar way that he employs images of Jews and Judaism in that it points to and explains the corruption and wickedness of the traditional church.

In the preface, for example, he associates a number of images of *Mahomete* with the traditional church and clergy. The figures of 'Gog' and 'Magog' from Revelation 20 allows Bale to associate the traditional church with Muhammed and Islam. The pope and *Mahomete* represent Gog and Magog and so "glorouse are the pretenses of Romyshe pope and Mahomete,

that they seme unto them which regarde not these warnynges, the very angels of light, and their churches moost holye congreacyons, being very deuyls with thr filthy dregges of darkenesse. The pope in hys churche hath ceremonyes without nombre....On the other side Mahomete in his churche is plentuouse also in holye obseruacions.¹⁵³

And just as the pope boasts that he is the successor of Peter and cannot err, "Mahomete braggeth also, that he is the great Prophete, the promised Messiah, the apostle of bothe testaments, abled both by the law and the gospell, and that he hath his name from the eternall throne of God."¹⁵⁴ And while both pope and *Mahomete* value the Law of Moses, the Psalms, the Prophets and the Gospels "they haue theyr owne filthy laws preferred aboue them, the pope his execrable decrees and Mahomete his wicked Alchorane, els wil

¹⁵³ Bale, *the image of bothe Churches*, I. sig. B4v-B5r.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, I. sig. B5v.

they murder men without measure. Thus though they outwardly appere very vertuous, yet are they the malignaunt ministers of Sathan, denying the Lord which hath redeemed them.”¹⁵⁵

Mahomete appears numerous times beyond the preface. On Revelation 3.13, a verse that describes the forces of temptation arrayed against the followers of Christ, *Mahomete* stands “in the way of sinners, and the Romish pope sittynge in the most pestilent seate of errorrs, will come upn al the world by execrable sectes of fasle prophetes, lyars, hypocrites, blasphemers and teachers of deuilyshe doctrine.”¹⁵⁶ Bale’s commentary on Revelation 6.5 about the rider on the black horse allows him to present all the powers against Christ, past and present, to include such “christophers of the deuill” as “Phassur and Semeias in the old lawe, Annas and Caiphas in the newe lawe, Mahomete and the Pope in oure tyme, with all suche prelates, priestes, monkes, doctours and other spyrituall dowsipers” who do not sincerely preach God’s word.¹⁵⁷ *Mahomete* appears with the pope in Bale’s commentary on Revelation 8 as well, both of whom are responsible for turning Christianity and holiness “into supersticious sectes.”¹⁵⁸

In his commentary on Revelation 11.4 that refers to the temple of God, Bale explains that “the holy Temple of God...is his congregation or Church” and exhorts his readers to carefully discern whether beliefs be right or not and whether works “spring of Gods commaundmentes or of mens tradicions.”¹⁵⁹ This is done with the scriptures and by them one can identify “the people of God from ye synagoge of sathan, and delay not to

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., I. sig. B5v.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., I. sig. F7v.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., I. sig. K6v.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., I. sig. P3v-P4r.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., II. sig. A6v-A7r.

nourish them with the sweete fruits of the spirit.”¹⁶⁰ Bale instructs his readers from verse 5, which refers to the altar, to measure “the Aulter also, which is Iesus Christ, vpon whom the full sacrifice of redemption was offered.

For many false Christes are abrode in the worlde, to seduce the people. The pope bosteth hymself for Gods owne vicar. Mahomete calleth hym selfe the great prophete of the Lord. And both they to subdewe the gospels hath set vp new laws. The pope his detestable decrees, and Mahomete his abhominable Alchorane. Both they haue wrought such wonders and suche signes in supersticion, as myghte deduce into errour (yf God were not mercifull) the very elect persons.¹⁶¹

Other instances in which Bale describes the pope and *Mahomete* together include his commentary on Revelation 13 in which he explains that the seven heads of the beast comprise come from one body, “one universal Antichrist...comprehending in hym so well Mahomete as the Pope, so well ye ragying tyraunt as the still hypocrite, and all that wickedly worketh are of the same body.”¹⁶² One can find both pope and *Mahomete* in a score of other references throughout Bale’s commentary.¹⁶³

In Bale’s vision of the cosmic battle between good and evil, the association between the traditional church and *Mahomete* sometimes works in concert with the Jews. On the image of the dragon that pursues the woman with child from Revelation 12, the child represents Christ and his congregation of true Christians to whom the dragon “torment and punish by hys mytred Mahoundes and hys shauen Sodomites, subduynge unto them for that purpose the power of kyniges, and might of magistrates. Then sitteth Annas in consistorye, and Cayphas in sessions upon lyfe and death.”¹⁶⁴ We also see these enemies collectively punished by God as well, such as in Bale’s comments on Revelation

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., II. sig. A7r.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., II. sig. A7r.

¹⁶² Ibid., II. sig. G6r.

¹⁶³ Ibid., II. sig. 1v, sig. I3v, sig. M1v, sig. M2v, sig. N7r, sig. P2v, sig. P3v-P4r, sig. Q3r, sig. R6r; III. sig. Bb7r, sig. Gg6r-v, sig. Hh7v, sig. Ii1r, sig. Kk3r-v, sig. Rr8r-v.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., II. sig. F3r.

19. This particular section is missing from the 1548 publication but we do find it in later versions of the commentary. Bale identifies those who will suffer along with the devil when he “was throwne forth at the death of Christ” to include “the prelates and Pharisees of the Iewes, as the head with the body, so shall at that tyme Antichrist with his church, the Pope with his clergy, and Mahomete with his sectes, as ye head with the body also.”¹⁶⁵ All of these forces, then and now, collectively work against Christ but will eventually suffer just punishment from God.

Bale’s emphasis on *Mahomete* does not mean that he ignores the role of the Jews in his cosmic vision of good versus evil. He includes numerous images of Jews and Judaism such as the synagogue, Caiaphas, Annas, Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes and Jewish ceremonies. Like his other works and those of his evangelical predecessors these references reveal features about the traditional church in terms of its allegiance to Antichrist and Satan, its future judgment by God, its religious practices, the sinful nature of its ecclesiastical figures and how they persecute the true flock of Christ. In the preface he explains what the title of his commentary means: a struggle between “the true Christen church (which is the meke spouse of the lambe without spot) in her right fashyoned colours described” and “the proud church of hypocrites, the rose coloured whore, the paramoure of Antichrist, and the sinfull sinagoge of Sathan.”¹⁶⁶

The synagogue stands out as the most prominent among the Jewish images in the commentary and Bale frequently deploys the term *the sinagoge of Sathan* as a major theme throughout, undoubtedly inspired by its two appearances in the Book of Revelation

¹⁶⁵ John Bale, *The image of both Churches after the most wonderfull and heauenly Revelation of saint Iohn the Euangelist...* (London: Thomas East, 1570; STC1301), III. sig. Fff5r.

¹⁶⁶ Bale, *The image of bothe Churches* (1548), I. sig. A2v.

itself.¹⁶⁷ But we should not dismiss the image of the synagogue in general as it would be understood in the religious imaginations of Bale's audience or Bale himself. In late medieval and Reformation England, the *sinagoge* undoubtedly represents something akin to the *church* of the Jews, something devoid of Christ and even something anti-Christian since popular belief often regarded the Jews as the enemies of Christ. That basic notion of the synagogue is not lost on Bale; in some ways it serves as part of the foundation of his evangelical vision or orthodoxy: Jews and Judaism should not have anything to do with authentic biblical faith and any practice or belief that resembles those images indicates some type of anti-Christian corruption.

But in his commentary on Revelation Bale does not seem content with the image of synagogue representing *only* the Jews. He does not divorce the synagogue from its negative Jewish context; he harnesses his polemical imagination to expand its confines. For Bale, the synagogue not only includes the Jews but other enemies of Christ, namely the Church of Rome. This allows him to exploit all the negative implications the synagogue has to offer; in addition to *the sinagoge of Sathan* Bale creates numerous qualifiers or variations of the term in his commentary: *paynted, dark, Antichristes, Jewish, malignaunt, of hypocrites, of proud hypocrites, of the diuell, carnal, malicious, of shauelings, of shorelinges, cursed, of sorcerers, sinful, proude, Iewes, and of perdition.*¹⁶⁸ Most of these creations serve to expose the corrupt and insidious nature of the traditional church, its clergy and its practices. For Bale, the Church of Rome is *the sinagoge of Sathan* under the headship of Antichrist and much of his commentary seeks to expose its role as part of a nefarious and widespread conspiracy against Christ and his true

¹⁶⁷ The phrase 'synagogue of Satan' is found in Revelation 2.9 and 3.9 respectively.

¹⁶⁸ Bale uses the image of the synagogue some 40 times in the work.

followers. Bale's interpretation of Revelation provides a blueprint to understand the cosmic battle between good and evil not only in history but in the present and immediate future.

Primarily Bale deploys the image of the synagogue to specifically refer to the Church of Rome. One example appears in his comments on the message to the Church of Thyatira from Revelation 2. He characterizes the figure of Jezebel as "the malignant church and the synagogue of Satan" and "the mother holy church herself" which promotes devilish doctrines, errors, hypocrisy, deception, idolatry, wicked laws and "blasphemous traditions."¹⁶⁹ Other groups of people serve in the *sinagoge* such as those who persecute the true Christians:

Now doth his synagoge of prelates, priestes, hipocrytes, and tyrauntes, make wicked lawes against them. Now do they persecute them for kepinge the commaundementes of God, in marryage, in receyuinge meates with thanksgeuing, and in not goinge out to seke Christ here & there in their Masses and mutterynges, in their outwarde colours and shaddowes.¹⁷⁰

The message seems rather straightforward: the Roman Church is a dwelling place of Satan and therefore a false church, a *sinagoge* that comprises of hypocrites who persecute true Christians, practice false religion and owe their fidelity to Antichrist.

The term *sinagoge* also finds itself attached to descriptors that express similar sentiments. Bale's comments on Revelation 4 discuss the four beasts that resemble a lion, a calf, a man and an eagle representing four dimensions of Christian faithfulness and virtue. But here we find the term synagogue with the adjective *peinted* meaning something that is artificial or meant to deceive. "By these iiii. symylytudes" Bale explains, "the threw congregacion of God knowne from [that] painted sinagoge and

¹⁶⁹ Bale, *The image of bothe Churches* (1548), I. sig. E4v-E5r.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, II. sig. E6r.

counterfeite church of Sathan” characterized by, among other things, vainglory, murder, rape, cruelty and tyranny.¹⁷¹

On Revelation 6 Bale describes the persecution of the faithful not only in times past but also in recent memory. The pale horse represents Antichrist in Europe whose head is “the prynce of hypocryse, the man of synne, the father of errours, and the master of lyes, the Romish pope.”¹⁷² The body of the pale horse comprises of ecclesiastical figures, from patriarchs and cardinals down to priests, abbots, monks, canons, friars, nuns “and with all those that consent with them in the Romysh faythe, obeyenge their eycked laws, decrees, bulles, preuyleges, decretales, rewels, tradicyons, tytles, pompes, degrees, blessings, counsels, and constitucions, contrarye to Gods truth.”¹⁷³ Christ, however, has delivered the faithful from this “dark synagoge” and through God’s word the faithful have been able “to detect their shamefull abhominacions.”¹⁷⁴ The opening of the word of God caused a “maruelouse earth quake” and in England “was this fullylled soche tyme as Wyllam courtneye the archebishop of Caunterburye with antichristes synagoge of sorcerers sate in consystorye agaynst Christes doctrine in Johan Wicleue.”¹⁷⁵ After Wyclif, Bale describes how the Church of Rome persecuted John Hus and Jerome of Prague too and most recently in England, Rome brought about resistance “againste the kynge (whan he sett forth the gospell) [in] the sediciouse rising of Lincolneshere, and the traterouse uproar of Yorkshere, in their pilgrimage without grace...to subdue the verite” of Christ’s gospel.¹⁷⁶ For Bale, the Pilgrimage of Grace of 1536 was not an uprising due

¹⁷¹ Ibid., I. sig. H4r.

¹⁷² Ibid., I. sig. L8v.

¹⁷³ Ibid., I. sig. L8v-M1r.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., I. sig. M1r.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., I. sig. M1v.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., I. sig. M1v-M2r.

to legitimate grievances but a concerted effort by the traditional church to stop the spread of the gospel.

At certain points *sinagoge* refers to Jews but Bale directs his polemic at his traditional church opponents. He connects the destruction of the Jews in ages past with the projected fall of the traditional church in England who will come under God's judgment as well: "And lyke as the Jewyshe synagoge dyd at that tyme whollye peryshe for reiectinge Gods worde, and neuer could recouer sens, so maye that false counterfayt churche of antichriste come to destruccion for condemninge the same, and neuer rise up agayne."¹⁷⁷ In addition to sharing the same fate as the Jews, Bale draws a distinction between the true church and the false church over the issue of the primacy of scripture, for both the Church of Rome and the Jews have rejected the authority of the word of God. After all, if the Church of Rome attempts to "stoppe Gods worde as they haue begonned" they will suffer the same fate as "the Jewes at the syege of Hyerusalem" by either "the Turke now or by some other worse than he."¹⁷⁸

Besides the synagogue, Bale also draws upon various types of Jews or Jewish figures frequently found in Christian discourse and evangelical rhetoric in particular, such as Caiaphas, Annas, Pharisees and scribes and the Jews as a whole. Bale employs these images of Jews to expose the roots of the church's persecution of the faithful, to condemn church practices and to expose the corruption of ecclesiastical authorities. In terms of persecution, Bale implicates the Church of Rome with those who have persecuted the faithful since the time of Christ. In his commentary on Revelation 19 and the image of the rider on the white horse he reveals that persecution began with the persecution of

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., I. sig. N5v.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., I. sig. N5v.

Christ by Annas and Caiaphas, who caused Herod and Pontius Pilate to put Christ to death. One can therefore trace the history of persecution back to the Jews, even the persecution evangelicals undergo now:

To make ferce warre or veye sharpe battayle agaynst the moste valeaunt capitayne Iesus Christ, which sat upon the afore sayd whyte horse, and agaynst the mighty stomaked souldyers of hys faythfull army of true Christians. Neuer was the holy Gospell yet sincerely taught, the glorie of God proponed, and the inordinate lyuinges of men reprehended, but suche vprour of hypocrites, and suche tumult of tyrauntes hath folowed...None ether caused Herode and Pylate to putte Christ vnto death but Annas & Cayphas. None other moued Felix the president of Jury to empreson Paule, but the puffed vp prelate Ananias. Tratanus the Emperour wolde neuer so extremely haue persecuted the Christen church, nor yet other cruell tyrauntes euer sens, had they not bene propped forewarde by soch pampred palfrayes of the deuell. Not only against Christ do they moue thys bolde battayle, but also agaynst those that faithfully belue hys worde, whyche are the dere membres of hys misticall bodye.¹⁷⁹

Bale then reveals that Caiaphas and the Jews had the mark of Antichrist, for so “sealed Cayphas the hartes of the wauerynge multitude of the Jewes with that markyng yron of Sathan, that they coulede be but his ministers.”¹⁸⁰ The result, of course, was that Christ was crucified and a murderer, Barabbas, was set free. They did not have the power to do anything else “but to crucifie him in dede whiche is to worshippe the beastes Image or to folow the wicked intent of that beastly generacion, as their faithful clyentes doth yet styll to this daye.”¹⁸¹ Thus, Bale reveals that the persecution of true Christians began with the Jews and continues through Satan’s *faithful clyentes* now, undoubtedly the traditional church.

In terms of church practices, Bale connects the crucifixion and Jewish culpability to the traditional church’s central sacrament, the Mass. In his commentary on Revelation

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., III. sig. Ff6r-v.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., III. sig. Ff7r.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., III. sig. Ff7r.

11, Bale employs perhaps some of his most aggressive polemic against the traditional church. He explains that among “this consecrate multytude or sinered sort

is Christe yet crucified, as he was amonge the Jewes whiche knew hym not, and yet boasted themselues outwardely for the peculiar chosen people of God. Not only is Christ amonge them persecuted, scourged, punished, and put vnto death in his membres, but also he is proued of them an vnsuffycient Sauer without their dayly doinges. Their masses must be satisfactory sacryfyces, profytynge both the quicke and the dead. And that must men belueu vnder payne of death and damacion. Thus crucfye thei Christ again, and make a mocke of him as witnessed Paule, and yet do they call hym their Lorde, not vnlyke to the tourmentours, which crowned him with thorne, and saluted him Ave rex Judeorum.¹⁸²

Bale’s polemic against the Mass seeks to re-define the traditional church’s central sacrament not as a sacred practice but a sacrilegious event. For Bale, evangelical orthodoxy insists in the sufficiency of Christ’s sacrifice and to repeat the crucifixion in the Mass repeats what the Jews did to Christ. Ecclesiastical authorities who promote the Mass do not represent Christ but the torturers and murderers of Christ.

The association between ecclesiastical authorities and those who crucified Christ represents only one example of how he associates them with the Jews. Bale also employs images of Jews to emphasize the corruption of traditional church authorities, namely the sins of pride, blasphemy, stubbornness and blindness. For example, Bale condemns the traditional churchmen for holding onto traditions and “beggerie ceremonies” above the commandments of God and thus the blind lead the blind into a ditch, a reference to Matthew 15 regarding the Pharisees.¹⁸³ Bale then explains the reference in more detail: “Such were the pharyseys and saduces, with oure monkes, chanons, and fryers, succedinge in their wicked examples.”¹⁸⁴ The image of Jewish blindness, of course, has a

¹⁸² Ibid., II. sig. C1r.

¹⁸³ Ibid., III. sig. L15r. Bale is likely referring to Matthew 15.14 although he does not cite it in the marginalia.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., III. sig. L15r-v.

long tradition in Christendom, from Augustine to representational art during the Middle Ages that depicts the victorious Ecclesia in contrast to the often-blindfolded Synagoga.¹⁸⁵ For Bale, the traditional clergy are no less blind than the scribes and Pharisees during the time of Christ.

Bale's commentary on Revelation 9 ties the themes of persecution and corruption together to condemn the traditional church and forecast its eventual downfall. He draws upon the apocalyptic imagery of the star falling from heaven, the bottomless pit and the armored locusts that emerge from it to explain the legacy of the church's persecution and corruption. These *locusts* corrupted the church with "carnall tradicions, domme darke ceremonies, and doctrine of devils" which led to sophistry, false doctrine and errors.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore they established numerous religious orders, of which Bale mentions twenty-nine by name.¹⁸⁷ Bale describes these *locusts* as "rygorous in examinacions" and "fearce in excommunicacions" who sought "shynyng titles of hyghe prehemynence vnderued" such as "most holy fathers, mooste gracious lordes, and mooste reuerend masters."¹⁸⁸ Furthermore, these churchmen "made large theyr phylacteries, and set abrode theyr skyrtes, they sought the highest places in the synagoges, and salutacions of reuerance in the stretes."¹⁸⁹ Bale explains that the armor that covers these *locusts* "signifieth their obstinate malice" and "hard forward stubborn hartes agaynst the verite of God...blasphemyng the holy ghoste with the Pharisees and scribes, whose synne shall

¹⁸⁵ See chapter 1 above; for Christian views regarding Jewish blindness, see Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 36, 191-192.

¹⁸⁶ Bale, *The image of bothe Churches* (1548), I. sig. P7r.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, I. sig. Q1v.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, I. sig. Q5v.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, I. sig. Q6r.

neuer be remitted in thys worlde, nor in none other.”¹⁹⁰ For Bale, the ecclesiastical authorities of the Church of Rome have committed the unpardonable sin like the scribes and Pharisees did in Matthew 12.

On several occasions Bale contemporizes his commentary with specific references to his native England. In addition to the Pilgrimage of Grace discussed earlier, he addresses the traditional church’s resistance to the gospel. The presence of *Jewish ceremonies* indicates to Bale that officials of traditional religion continue to refute and confound reform. Bale describes the “mortal wound” suffered by the beast from Revelation 13 as the Gospel having been preached in England, Henry VIII’s separation from Rome and his subsequent dissolution of the monasteries from 1536-1541. But despite these initiatives, England “remayneth styll as the Antichristes left it” with their “Jewyshe ceremonyes, their prestybulouse presthode” along with their vows of celibacy, the sale of masses, processions and auricular confession.¹⁹¹ Bale explains that the scriptures command none of these ceremonies at all but the trend has become worse than before: “I thynke it is now muche worse. For nowe thei become laudable ceremonies, wher as before tyme they were but ceremonies alone.”¹⁹² The notion of *Jewish ceremonies* appears at the end of Bale’s work too where he explains to his readers how they will know the difference between the true church and the false one: the church that is maintained only by the preaching of God’s word is the true church while the other is maintained “by all kinds of Jewish ceremonies and heathenish superstitions.”¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., I. sig. Q6v-Q7r.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., I. sig. G6v-G7r.

¹⁹² Ibid., I sig. G7r.

¹⁹³ Ibid., III. sig. Rr8r.

Despite the frequent negative associations and imagery of Jews and Judaism in the *Image of Bothe Churches*, Bale's view of the Jews is not wholly negative. Bale's extensive treatment of Revelation 14, a passage that describes 144,000 Israelites from the twelve tribes sealed by Christ, yields an interesting comment by Bale: "For so well is the gentyle that hath fayth a perfect Israelyte, as is the Chrysten Jewe."¹⁹⁴ It is not unusual to designate a Gentile Christian as a *perfect Israelite* nor is it in a late medieval context to identify Jews who have converted to Christ as *Christians*. What seems more unusual is to use the terms "Christian" and "Jew" together to identify a particular type of follower of Christ. Here, Bale seems to retain the ethnic distinction of those believers because the text of Revelation 14 demands it. He reminds his readers that in coming to Christ everyone's "former synnes...shall not be imputed vnto them" and that they "are remitted in Christe, and so forgotten afore God."¹⁹⁵ But then he explains that though "thys that here hath bene spoken be concerninge the whole Christen multitude and her preachers, yet doth it most specially touche the Jewes or Israelytes that shall in this latter age be conuerted vnto Christ."¹⁹⁶ Thus, conversion of the Jews concerns Bale, who counsels his reader to understand that in this latter age one should expect them to turn to Christ, "for the mount Syon after the flesh was theirs."¹⁹⁷ Bale's commentary on Revelation 14 seems to temper his entirely negative portrayal of Jews and Judaism throughout the work only in the sense that in his view the Jews have hope of redemption through conversion. It should not lead one to think that he developed a patient tolerance for the Jews. His portrayal of Jews and Judaism in this and many of his works strongly suggests otherwise.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., II. sig. 11v.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., II. sig. 15v.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., II. sig. 15v.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., II. sig. 15v.

CONCLUSION

John Bale's struggle for orthodoxy against traditional religion occupied much of his life and writing career. One could argue that he had as much influence over the evangelical movement as Tyndale before him and John Foxe after him. Bale stands out amongst his evangelical predecessors and peers because he crossed the boundaries of genre from drama and biblical commentary to dialogue and revisionist history. In none of his works does he appear to lose sight of his audience, an audience that he exhorts to remain faithful, warns not to fall away and tries to convince that the faith that brought him out of the life as a Carmelite friar is more authentic and pure than the old one. He retained the basic strategy of his evangelical predecessors of associating traditional religion with Jews and Judaism but he expanded it in new ways. In *the Image of Bothe Churches*, Bale explores the uses of the figure *Mahomete* as part of his strategy to delegitimize the Church or Rome, in addition to his typical polemic involving the Jews.

We can safely assume that a majority of the lay readership of Bale or other reformers could not necessarily articulate in perfect evangelical fashion the opinions of Luther, Melanchthon, Tyndale or Frith.¹⁹⁸ Therefore, although Bale expends a great amount of his effort railing against traditional religion, interspersed among his polemic we find him promoting evangelical ideas, an orthodoxy that could be identified in distinct ways from traditional religion. In Bale we see a simple call to Christ, especially in his dramatic works, the primacy and sufficiency of the Bible as the authority for faith and practice, the promotion of two sacraments and calls to godliness. In his hagiographical works he promotes an image of the true Christian martyr who serves Christ to the end.

¹⁹⁸ Happé, *John Bale*, 27. Happé makes the point that for Bale, the Reformation was unfinished and Protestant doctrine was not universally accepted, even among people who accepted it.

Persecution has always been the mark of the true Christian as Bale understands it, from Christ to Cobham to Anne Askewe and others, perhaps himself. Bale rages against persecution; in *Anne Askewe* he seems completely pre-occupied with exposing the wickedness of his opponents that he practically ignores Anne's own struggle for orthodoxy. But we should understand Bale's thinking: here stands a true believer in Christ being killed by the traditional church for holding opinions taught by the Bible itself.

Lutheran or evangelical ideas were still new in the 1530s and 40s, and as revisionists have rightly pointed out a large majority of English laypersons remained committed to and found meaning in traditional religion. Bale's polemic, all the more ferocious because he found similitude between his opponents and Jews, aimed to disrupt and even shock his readers out of their reflex loyalties to the only religion they ever knew. It is not clear whether Bale was seeking converts from traditional church as much as he was reinforcing truth claims of his own side through contrasting images between evangelical faith and traditional religion. He may have been primarily concerned with bolstering and encouraging his own co-religionists not to recant their new faith rather than try to convince hardened adherents of the traditional faith that their religion was corrupt. Yet we cannot dismiss the latter. Given enough time, saturation and examples, some might have been convinced that something was indeed wrong with Rome. But the polemical sword cuts both ways. The consequences of utilizing polemic of this nature, especially the way Bale thinks with Jews and Judaism, likely caused reactions that not only incensed ecclesiastical authorities but also drained any sympathy a traditional neighbor might have had regarding their neighbor who had heretical opinions. Although

Bale might have us believe that the witnesses that testified against William Tolwyn did so because they were paid in kind or loyal to their traditional faith, perhaps they were motivated by righteous anger and saw evangelicals tearing their church apart and condemning what they regarded as sacred, meaningful and true.

I will end this chapter with some final words about why Bale matters to Reformation historiography. Scholars have just begun to recognize Bale's significance, especially his influence on John Foxe. But I think his influence began to be felt well before his second exile. He was able to articulate evangelical concerns and vigorously fight against what he regarded as the church of Antichrist. But his thinking with Jews had long lasting repercussions and surely influenced the rhetoric later in the century and into the next. Furthermore, Bale connects the Reformation in England with its Lollard past by re-fashioning and reiterating lollard rhetoric against the traditional church. While much of the doctrinal content of the reformers came from the Continent, Bale demonstrates that the long-held criticisms of the church by lollards were not only relevant but could be utilized in a new fight against Rome.

Chapter 8

Defending Traditional Orthodoxy against the Evangelical Onslaught

After the executions of both Fisher and More in 1535 some defenders of traditional orthodoxy in the mid-1540s employ images of Jews and Judaism much like their opponents, devoid of the nuance of those two martyrs. For William Peryn, providing a contrast between traditional religion and heresy necessarily involved a premise that characterized Jews and Judaism in negative ways, designed to push back against a stubborn evangelical tide of rhetoric that associated traditional religion with Jews and Judaism. Stephen Gardiner, however, wrote in a style much more muted in its polemic than Peryn. For him, images of Jews provided opportunities to contrast traditional orthodoxy with heterodox views and exhort audiences to stay faithful in an uncertain religious climate. With an ailing king on the throne and a young son who was surrounded by friends who were anything but traditional, Gardiner and Peryn attempted to stem the tide of an evangelical assault on one of the core tenets of traditional religion: the real presence in the sacrament of the altar.

I

William Peryn, ex-Dominican friar, theologian and active preacher, escaped England in 1534 after the Act of Supremacy, returned in 1543 when the religious climate became more favorable and then fled again after Henry VIII's death in 1547 when he was forced to recant his views on images.¹ But he stayed in England long enough to join his fellow co-religionists in their defense of traditional orthodoxy in the mid-1540s. In 1546,

¹ Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 396, 427; Peter Marshall, *Heretics and Believers: A History of the English Reformation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2017), 296, 306.

he published a sermon collection dedicated to Edmund Bonner, Bishop of London, entitled *Thre godly and notable sermons, of the moost honorable and blessed sacrament of the aulter*.² Peryn's sermons were part of a brief printing campaign organized by Bonner in 1546 to defend traditional views on the Eucharist.³

Peryn seeks to not only defend the veracity of the sacrament of the altar and the doctrine of transubstantiation against critics but also reinforce Eucharistic piety. At several points he condemns heresy but points out the futility of restoring heretics to a proper view of the sacrament since his opponents use reason as a pretext to deny the real presence. For Peryn, reason and carnality are synonymous. He assures his audience that “these carnall infidels” have no scriptural support for their heresy even though they “violently wrynge it & wreste it...toose it and rugge it, wyth tropes and fygures, catacreses, allegories, and metaphers, to force it to bowe vnto theyr phanaticall frensyne, and frantyke heresyne.”⁴ Because these heretics exhibit “blynde obstinacie...there semeth lytle remedye, to recouer them, sythe they subuerted, are (as saynt Paule sayeth) condemned in theyr owne iudgement.”⁵ However, Peryn does promise to encourage and comfort the faithful with his study of the sacrament of the altar, which not only attests to God's miraculous power but also the “infinite power of goddess myghtye worde.”⁶ Through the scriptures and Patristic texts, Peryn explains and defends the blessed sacrament at length; curiously, on a few instances he employs images of Jews and

² William Peryn, *Thre godly and notable sermons, of the moost honorable and blessed sacrament of the aulter. Preached in the Hospitall of S. Antony in London, by Wyllyam Peryn preest, bachelor of diuinite, [and] now set forth for the auancement of goddes honor: the truthe of his worde, and edification of good christen people* (1546; Bodleian Library, STC 19786).

³ Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 131; Marshall, *Heretics and Believers*, 306.

⁴ Peryn, *Thre godly and notable sermons*, sig. A5r-v.

⁵ *Ibid.*, sig. A5v.

⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. A5v.

Judaism to reinforce his points not only in reference to Eucharistic piety but also to condemn his opponents. Those images include the rather typical and well-known figure of Judas; it also includes a more peculiar image: the *Capernaites*.

Peryn speaks about the Capernaites, who, strictly speaking, refer to those Jews from Capernaum who rejected Christ's offering to eat his flesh and drink his blood as recorded in John 6. In the first sermon he associates "the natural man, that wanteth fayth, and belueth nomore, then fleshe and bloode...reuelyth to hym" with the Caperanites, both of whom "be offendyd...at this moost miraculous and holy sacrament, where in are wrought, so manye wonderous workes of God."⁷ But Peryn employs this image to refer to those who reject the efficacy of the sacrament of the altar and the doctrine of transubstantiation, primarily evangelicals. For example, when he discusses how Melchizedek's offering of bread and wine to Abraham represents the blessed sacrament, he describes those who reject this interpretation as "a subtil & a craftie Caphernaite" who "might iudge, thys argument to be of no force or strength."⁸ These *subtle and crafty Capernaites* relate to the Jews of Capernaum who reject Christ's literal body and blood but refer to Peryn's contemporary evangelical opponents who reject transubstantiation. The association between the Jews of Capernaum and evangelicals becomes even more explicit as the sermon continues.

Through an examination of Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, Peryn attempts to unravel the mystery of Melchizedek.⁹ Over the course of several pages, he provides a long explanation on the nature of Melchizedek, his relation to Christ in terms of perpetual

⁷ Ibid., sig. A7v.

⁸ Ibid., sig. C7v.

⁹ For Peryn and many of his sixteenth-century contemporaries, both co-religionists and opponents alike, the predominant view was that Paul wrote Hebrews. Modern biblical scholars, however, generally reject Pauline authorship.

priesthood, the differences between Christ's sacrifice in relation to the Levitical law and how "Christ fulfilled the figurative sacrifice of Melchisedech upon maundy thursday, when he (eatynge the paschal lambe with hys disciples) made an ende, both of the passe ouer & presthode, & set in place the perfect sacrifice of his bodie & blood in the forms of bread & wyne."¹⁰ He then explains the significance of the paschal lamb and the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, both of which signify the sacrifice of Christ and thereby deliverance from "the spiritual Pharao, the deuel, synne, death, & hel."¹¹ Therefore, the sacrament of the altar replaces the paschal lamb and he reminds his audience that Paul instructed the Corinthians to eat the sacrament with dignity and worthiness. He then provides two contrasting images of how one receives the sacrament: the sacrament of the altar

shulde not be eaten, eyther receyued, with the olde leauen, neither with the leauen of malice, neyther wyth the leauen of wyke[d] ones. That is to say, in obstinate Iewyshnes or forward heresie, neither wyth wycked mynde, or vnpure lyfe. But wyth swete flower of synceritie and veritie. That is, wyth syncere fayth & catholyke veritie, wyth godly lyfe and pure mynde.¹²

Peryn's warning, then, comprises of both a didactic and a polemical message, one that both reinforces traditional orthodoxy and condemns heresy. Christians, in his view, must strive for sincerity, godliness and purity as they receive the sacrament according to the doctrine of the traditional church; an unworthy manner resembles Jewish obstinacy or heretical impertinence, both of whom exemplify wickedness and impurity. Although Peryn's notion of *obstinate Jewishness* recalls the Capernaites from John 6, he employs that image to reinforce his condemnation of his primary opponents: evangelicals who reject the church's doctrine of transubstantiation.

¹⁰ Ibid., sig. D1v.

¹¹ Ibid., sig. D2r.

¹² Ibid., sig. D2v-D3r.

Peryn then defends the veracity of the blessed sacrament through further examples from scripture. In Job 31, Job's servants desire to eat his flesh in his tabernacle for satisfaction, which according to Chrysostom, Christ fulfilled.¹³ Among the prophets he cites Malachi in which God rebukes "the olde ieweshe sacrafyces, and auarice, as well of the prestes as of the people, shewynge them howe, they had polluted the name of God, in that they had offered, polluted breade, vpon the aulter of God."¹⁴ Peryn explains that this sacrifice is the blessed sacrament of the altar and that Malachi prophesied the end "of al the imperfect carnall sacrifices, of the leuticall lawe, and the institucion, of one moost perfect holy sacrifice, of the bodye and bloode of Christ."¹⁵ He anticipates Sacramentarian critics who might argue that Malachi's prophecy only alludes to the actual sacrifice of Christ on the cross, not the Eucharist. Peryn explains, however, that sacrifice the prophet speaks about "shulde be offered and sacrificed, in euery place, syngifyenge (with out doubt) the sacrifice of the aulter."¹⁶ He affirms the uniqueness and preeminence of the Eucharist, not only in view of Old Testament sacrifices but also to refute evangelical memorializing. The Eucharist is not merely plain bread; Malachi's prophecy does not merely refer to "the oblacyon or sacrifice of faith, of prayer, and of al other godli dedes" like heretics believe, even though Luther himself teaches the detestable heresy that "al our good dedes...are synfull."¹⁷

¹³ Ibid., sig. D5v-D6r; the specific reference is Job 31.31, *si non dixerunt viri tabernaculi mei quis det de carnibus eius ut saturemur*, 'If the men of my tabernacle have not said: Who will give us of his flesh that we may be filled?'

¹⁴ Ibid., sig. D6r; see Malachi 1.

¹⁵ Ibid., sig. D6v.

¹⁶ Ibid., sig. D6v.

¹⁷ Ibid., sig. D7r-v.

Peryn's premier scriptural example, of course, is John 6. In that passage, Christ taught that "My fleshe (sayeth he) is verily meate, & my blod is verely drinke."¹⁸ He then challenges heretics who claim Christ's statements do not refer to the sacrament of the altar and exhorts his audience to "consider diligently...how this place of the scripture hath ben vnderstanded, of the churche of Christ...

and not, to geue credens, to rashely, vnto the erronyus expositours & very coruptures of the scriptures, as are al suche Iewyshe Caphernaites, and obstinate sacramentaries, whiche are voyd of the trueth, lackyng the spirite of Christ, by cause that they are seperated, from the churche by theyr detestable herysies. But rather, leaue vnto the exposition, & vnderstanding, of the catholike church of the lyuing god which is (as saint Paul sayth) the pyller & ground of veritie and trueth.¹⁹

The association between Jewish Capernaites and Sacramentarians reveals a concerted effort on the part of Peryn to characterize those who doubt transubstantiation as defiant enemies of Christ and the church. Evangelicals who reject the church's teaching concerning the Eucharist hold the same view as the Jews of Capernaum who rejected Christ's teaching in John 6 about consuming his body and blood.

The image of Capernaites appears at another instance when Peryn commences with an examination of Patristic authors, namely Origen, Chrysostom, Cyril, Cyprian and Augustine, all of whom "wold neither flater, neither faine" and whose "fayth & vnderstanding, was none other, but the fayth and the vndertanyng of the churche of Christ, which cold not erre."²⁰ Peryn then narrates John 6, that after Christ crossed the Sea of Tiberius he came to Capernaum and multiplied five loaves of bread to feed thousands. This miracle should have led the Jews of Capernaum to belief when Christ offered his own body and blood as food, for how "much more was, & is he able, to make

¹⁸ Ibid., sig. D8r; see John 6.55.

¹⁹ Ibid., sig. D8r-E1r.

²⁰ Ibid., sig. D8v-E3r.

of bread his fleshe, & to gyue it, to be eaten without any diminution of it.”²¹ He mentions that Cyril rightly rebukes the Capernaïtes for their unbelief and argues that “bycause they were beastly, or carnall (as Paul sayth) they could not vnderstand, the spirituall thyng, but so great a mysterie, semed vnto them a very folyshnes.”²² The word *foolishness* seems to provoke Peryn to warn his audience to retain “a firme and stable faith” and that one should “neuer, eather thinke, eather speake, that worde...For it is a Iewyshe worde.”²³

Surely, however, evangelicals consider transubstantiation *foolishness* as well, just like the Capernaïtes. That would associate Peryn’s opponents with the Jews. Peryn alludes to this association when he reveals the signification of the manna that fed the Israelites. He explains that manna represents a miracle from God just like the blessed sacrament, for the “table of manna in the deserte, was the table of god” which never spoiled on the Sabbath or any day after and was distributed equally to all with “the taiste of al swetnesse, accordyng to euery good & faythfull mans apeteite.”²⁴ He then confronts his evangelical opponents as Capernaïtes:

Is not thys a much more gorgeous & more noble banket, then to feast vs with bare bread & wine? For (as oure Caphernaïtes saythe) there is nothyng done miraculously, in the supper of our Lord. But bycause that they can brynge, no euiden nether playne scriptures, (as they require of vs) to proue thys erreure, therefore we...denye it, as they do affirme it.²⁵

Here, Peryn attempts to expose evangelical sacrilege regarding the sacrament of the altar and reminds his audience of their nature as Capernaïtes. The evangelical rejection of the miraculous nature of the blessed sacrament cannot be supported from the scriptures and

²¹ Ibid., sig. E3v-E4r.

²² Ibid., sig. E4r-v.

²³ Ibid., sig. E4v.

²⁴ Ibid., sig. F3v-F4r.

²⁵ Ibid., sig. F4r.

therefore can be legitimately denied. Furthermore, Peryn counters the evangelical argument that the supper of the Lord only commemorates Christ's sacrifice with the notion of participatory faith: "we do participate or partake (in fayth) the body & blode of Christe" which consists in the "excellencie of the supper of Christe."²⁶ He then argues that if the blessed sacrament "be but a memoryall figure, of Christes deathe (as the herytykes sayen)" then by that logic Moses' paschal lamb sacrifice would be a "moch more eident figure and apter sacrament of Christes death, than bread and wyne."²⁷ The paschal lamb sacrifice under the Mosaic law included the actual shedding of blood which, Peryn argues, represents Christ's sacrifice more authentically than the evangelical memorialization of a sacrament devoid of any real miracle or any real blood. In fact, Peryn argues that if his opponents are correct then there "is no cause why, that this sacrament shulde excell, the other figures" in the scriptures.²⁸ In his view, the evangelical doctrine of the Lord's supper, of merely bread and wine, not only undermines its essence as a sacrifice but it also strips the sacrament of its true miraculous efficacy. Peryn concludes that the consequence of this doctrine accomplishes nothing for "it appeirith that the exchange of the olde sacramentes mosaical, for the sacramentes of the new testament, brought vnto vs, no auale neyther auauuncemente & consequentlye the institution of them by Christe, was in vayne."²⁹

In the third sermon, Peryn reinforces Eucharistic piety, specifically as it relates to receiving the sacrament. He explains that those who receive the consecrated body of Christ in an unworthy manner do not affect the Host at all, but it does affect an unworthy

²⁶ Ibid., sig. F4r.

²⁷ Ibid., sig. F4v.

²⁸ Ibid., sig. F4v.

²⁹ Ibid., sig. F4v.

recipient: if taken unworthily “he eateth and drynketh it, vnto his owne judgement.”³⁰

Peryn then instructs his audience that when

we shall receaue hym, we ought to haue recourse vnto confession, and penans, and to dyscusse curiously, all oure actes, and yf we perceaue mortall synnes in vs, we ought speadely to make haste to washe them a waye, by confession and penans, lest we (lyke Iudas that traytor) hyding the deuyll with in vs, do perishe.³¹

Here, Peryn reinforces not only the gravity of partaking in the blessed sacrament but the coherence of the traditional sacramental system: confession and penance, when properly undertaken, provide the faithful access to partake of the blessed sacrament in a worthy manner. The image of Judas, of course, conjures up notions of the diabolical, deception and betrayal, a figure with a legacy in the Christian world of eternal perfidy that elicits widespread condemnation. No Christian would want to be associated with this figure, which Peryn describes shortly before through Chrysostom as the traitor who sold the blood of Christ for thirty pence and incites Chrysostom to exclaim, “O the madnes of Iudas.”³²

Towards the end of the third sermon, Peryn defends the real presence in light of evangelical criticism and again exhorts his audience to receive the sacrament in a worthy manner. He explains the three ways one could receive the sacrament: sacramentally, spiritually or sacramentally and spiritually.³³ Peryn argues that one must receive the sacrament both sacramentally and spiritually; to receive the sacrament only in a sacramental manner denies the participant the merits of Christ and to receive the sacrament only in a spiritual manner denies the participant entry into his natural body.

³⁰ Ibid., sig. K3v.

³¹ Ibid., sig. K3v.

³² Ibid., sig. K2v.

³³ Ibid., sig. M7v.

But to receive the sacrament both sacramentally and spiritually “doth incorporat vs, vnto Christes naturally bodye, & maketh vs the membres of hys moost blessed bodye, of hys fleshe, and of hys bones, and worketh in vs eternall lyfe, of body and soule.”³⁴ As for heretics and those caught in mortal sin, the blessed sacrament brings upon them judgment. He explains the consequences of receiving the sacrament in an unworthy manner through an illustration of medical malpractice:

For lyke as, of a moost excellent medicine, receaued of the pacient, out of dewe tyme and order, and therby diminisheth not the dysease, but encreaseth it, we maye saye, that (vnto hym) thys was no medicine, but a present poison. Euen so maye we saye, of all suche christians and heretikes, that (lyke Iudas) vnworthy receueth, the sacrament that they receaue not, the bodye & bloode of Christe, whych (as a mooste helthsome medicine) worketh lyfe in the good, and in the bad it worketh present death.³⁵

The image of Judas, again, likely provokes in worthy audience members a sense of seriousness and even dread. However, Peryn expands on the image to associate it with his evangelical opponents in order to not only exploit the image’s enduring legacy but clearly identify those cut off from Christ, namely heretics.

Towards the end of the third sermon Peryn addresses the issue of natural reason as a rationale to reject transubstantiation and deny the real presence. He explains that reason and one’s natural experience negate faith, for “what so euer thyng, that a man belueth, only bycause that he seyth...[the] natural reason therof, this belefe is no fayth, neyther shall such belefe, be regarded, eather rewarded before God.”³⁶ But Peryn points to a darker side of reason as well: if one searches the mysteries of faith with reason “it is non other, then a playne subuersion of the christaine faith, and such curious serchers and reasoners of oure fayth, are lyke vnto heathen greycians, in Paules tyme, of whom paule

³⁴ Ibid., sig. M8r.

³⁵ Ibid., sig. M8v.

³⁶ Ibid., sig. N3r.

spake.”³⁷ He then addresses the current controversy over the blessed sacrament and specifically condemns evangelicals with an image of the Jewish Capernaites. He explains that the Jews require “tokens wonders or myracles (and the heathen grecyans, worldly wysedome)” but “oure Ieweshe Capharnaytes require to see this myracle in the sacrament, or else to haue it manifest by reason, or else they wyl not beleue.”³⁸ These *Ieweshe Capharnaytes* refer to evangelicals who, because they do not see “the fleshe and bloode in the natural shape of fleshe and blood” in the sacrament, they reject the real presence and therefore do not share in the benefits of Christ.³⁹

The Jews of Capernaum rejected Christ in John 6 because they could not understand Christ beyond what natural reason dictated. Evangelicals, as contemporary Jewish Capernaites, likewise deny the real presence because reason governs their understanding of the sacrament rather than faith. But the faithful believe in the real presence in the sacrament, believe in the miracle God brings forth after consecration and therefore enjoy the benefits of Christ. Through the image of the Capernaites and to some extent Judas, Peryn provides real contrast between heresy and orthodoxy regarding the sacrament of the altar and a real contrast between those who participate in Christ fully through the sacrament and those who are cut off from his grace.

II

Peryn was not the only defender of traditional orthodoxy to utilize images of Capernaites in 1546. Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester and diplomat, also wrote about Caphernaites in a treatise entitled *A detection of the Deuils sophistrie wherwith he*

³⁷ Ibid., sig. N3r.

³⁸ Ibid., sig. N3r.

³⁹ Ibid., sig. N3r-v.

*robbeth the vnlearned people, of the true byleef, in the most blessed sacrament of the aulter.*⁴⁰ Gardiner's treatise warns his audience about how the devil, through confusion and crafty arguments, obscures the doctrine of the real presence. But he restrains his polemic much more than Peryn in favor of simple clarification, refutation and exhortation. He does make a few associations between images of Jews and Judaism and those who deny the real presence but those occasions occur in much less explicit ways. For Gardiner, the image of the Capernaite serves a didactic purpose rather than a polemical one.

Gardiner begins with a rather bleak statement to his readers, "how ful of iniquite this tyme is, in whiche, the hyghe mysterie of our religion is so openly assaulted."⁴¹ That assault on traditional orthodoxy, engineered by the devil, involves a sophistry rooted in the carnal senses and propagated by heretics who reject the traditional orthodox view of the real presence. He explains that "to the carnall man, the deuyll bringeth carnall reasons, and for conformation, and proufe of them calleth to witness, the carnall sense, both of the bodye and soule."⁴² The Epicureans relied only on their senses "as some heretiques do, in this micheuous deuellysh misbeleefe, against the moost blessed Sacrament of the aulter."⁴³

According to Gardiner, an example of the devil's sophistry involves some critics who wonder how the sacrament of the altar could be Christ's actual body if it is eaten by a mouse, damaged or becomes spoiled. Therefore, they claim that the sacrament must be

⁴⁰ Stephen Gardiner, *A detection of the Deuils sophistrie wherwith he robbeth the vnlearned people, of the true byleef, in the most blessed sacrament of the aulter* (London: John Herforde, 1546; British Library, STC/11591.3).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 2r.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 6r.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6r.

an idol and not actually God because clearly any injury to the sacrament contravenes the notion of divine impassibility.⁴⁴ Gardiner, however, responds with a clever refutation that points to Christ's suffering and explains the consequences of such an argument: "And thus the deuilles disciple, wyll reason. God is impassible, Christ suffred: Ergo he was not god. Or thus, God is impassible, Christ was god: Ergo he suffered not."⁴⁵ Neither of these possibilities could any Christian accept. Furthermore, Gardiner explains that Christ can no longer suffer or be violated, and "therfore what so euer mans senses affyrme of the violation, corruption or destruction of the hoste consecrate" one can be assured that the "body of christ, there present in that host, is not violat, is not corrupted, is not destroyed" in accordance with Paul's statement in Romans 6: *Christus resurgens ex mortuis, iam non moritur, mors illi ultra non dominabitur*.⁴⁶

Gardiner then employs images of Jews to buttress his argument about the inviolate nature of Christ's body in the sacrament with examples of how Christ was preserved in the Gospels among the Jews. Just as Christ was preserved before his passion when he was "amonge the maliciouse Iewes" or in Luke 4 "when the furieuse Iewes wolde haue precipitate him" or when Herod murdered the infants of Bethlehem,

so in the most blessed sacrament of the aulter, how soeuer the same be abused by mans malice or negligence, or otherwise broken in the mystical vse of it...the very body of our sauour Christ there present, continueth inuiolate, impassible, and is beyond the reach of any violence to be inferred by man, beste, or nay other accidental occasion.⁴⁷

For Gardiner, the sacrament of the altar remains inviolate despite any circumstance it might encounter; faithful Christians can be assured of its efficacy because the Gospels

⁴⁴ Ibid., 9r-10r.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 10r-v.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 12v; see Romans 6.9, 'Christ, having been raised up from the dead, dieth now no more, death shall no more have dominion over him.'

⁴⁷ Ibid., 12v-13r.

attest to Christ's preservation and therefore his continued preservation in the sacrament. In addition to this exhortation, however, Gardiner's illustration of the Jews and Herod from the Gospels reveals a polemical subtext as well. Religious texts of the period often employ the term *malice* to describe Jews, namely in their treatment of Christ; Gardiner exploits the term *malice* to explain some of the reasons why people abuse the sacrament.⁴⁸ But he has a specific group in mind: the devil "now a dayes, diuulgeth by his wicked mynysters, his leude tales, of the abuses of the host consecrate, when by to impugne the faith of the presence, of the bodye of our sauoure Christ."⁴⁹ Those wicked ministers undoubtedly refer to evangelicals who deny the invulnerable nature of the sacrament of the altar and attempt to undermine the doctrine of the real presence.

Gardiner explains that the rejection of the real presence derives from a "carnall vnderstandyng" or the reliance on the carnal senses, the consequence of which "shall empayre the true faythe of goddess inward workynge with vs, and for vs: we maye worthely be called *Gens incredula, quae signum quaerit, & non dabitur ei.*"⁵⁰ People who look for a sign and only rely on their senses represent an incredulous generation Christ had condemned in Matthew 12 and Luke 11. Specifically however, Gardiner points to the Capernaïtes of John 6, who "loste the fruite of Christes teachynge" because they did not believe; but he exhorts his audience to imitate the faith of the disciples: "we shulde knowledge (as the disciples of Christe dyd) that Christes worde be lyfe, euerlastynge."⁵¹ He then implies how the devil influences his evangelical opponents,

⁴⁸ See above, chapter 1.

⁴⁹ Stephen Gardiner, *A detection of the Devils sophistrie*, 13v.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 26v; Gardiner cites Matthew 12, Luke 11 and John 6 all of which carry the notion of 'incredulous generation, which seeks a sign and it will not be given.'

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 26v.

who being lyfted vp by the deuill in vayneglory, of knowlege...thynke they had more wytte & learning then al bysshoppes & priestes that be mynisters of the temple. But now commeth the deuill, as a mediatour, in an other cote, and vnder pretence to satisfye all vnderstandynges, he wolde haue the beleef in the sacrament in one poynt releued, & wolde we shulde beleue, the remaynyng, of the substaunce of bread, wherewith to assoyle the arguments of the mouse, and yet graunte the substaunce of the body of Christ to be there, for the substaunce and foode of christen men...⁵²

Gardiner describes a view of the sacrament that violates the specific words of Christ, what he considers sophistry. He then asserts traditional orthodox doctrine: the bread, when consecrated, changes, “for it can not be maynteyued of Christes wordes, who spake playnely...when he sayd, *This is my body*...the bread, was altered and chaunged into his body, wherby the substaunce of bread was conuerted in to the substaunce of his moste precieuse body.”⁵³ Thus a carnal understanding of the sacrament, or Capernaite incredulity, denies the real presence in the sacrament.

There is little doubt that Gardiner understands the Capernautes to be Jews; he includes a citation of John 6 as a marginal note. For Gardiner, those who reject the doctrine of the real presence share similarities with the Capernautes who epitomize Jewish incredulity and carnality: the Capernautes through their carnal senses rejected Christ’s offer of his body and blood; evangelicals through their carnal understanding reject the doctrine of the real presence. But the polemical edge of Gardiner’s association between Jews and evangelicals seems somewhat muted; Gardiner does not explicitly describe the Capernautes as Jews like his co-religionist William Peryn. Instead he focuses on the differences between a traditional orthodox view of the real presence and a carnal understanding that denies its miraculous nature.

⁵² Ibid., 27r.

⁵³ Ibid., 27v.

When Gardiner cites John 6 again several pages later, he contrasts the Capernaïtes with the disciples in terms of faithfulness to Christ. Christ spoke of the mystery of the nature of his flesh “before the vnfaithfull Capharuaites, they asked, howe god could giue his flesshe to be eaten, and went their waye, but the disciples, whom god had prepared by the former miracle of fiue loues...tarried & confessed Christe, to haue the wordes of lyfe.”⁵⁴ Gardiner exhorts his audience to follow the way of the disciples, not the Capernaïtes who walked away from Christ. The Capernaïtes and the disciples illustrate the choice Gardiner’s audience must make: whether they will remain with Christ, and by implication believe in the real presence, or whether they will depart. In the middle of the treatise, when Gardiner denounces a figurative understanding of the sacrament of the altar, he recalls what Christ “sayde to the Iewes, that yf ye eate not the flesshe of the sonne of man, and drinke his bloud, ye haue not lyfe in your selfe, for my fleshe is very meate, and my bloud is very dryncke.”⁵⁵ Gardiner exhorts his audience to approach the sacrament “with a fearfulness, a clean conscience, and stedfast fayth, and then in al thynges shalbe to vs as we byleue constantly.”⁵⁶ Clearly the Capernaïtes of John 6 refer to Jews. For Gardiner, the Capernaïtes largely provide illustrations that depict actions, motives and beliefs traditional orthodox Christians should avoid and provides contrast between true faith and carnality, especially as it pertains to the sacrament of the altar.

Capernaïtes also provide Gardiner with an illustration to address doubts or uncertainties. In a discussion about the difference between two sorts of questions regarding divine mysteries, Gardiner illustrates the differences between the two through

⁵⁴ Ibid., 33v-34r.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 54v-55r.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 55r.

Mary's questions to Gabriel on the one hand and the Capernaïtes' interaction with Christ in John 6. He explains that

thou mayest marke two sortes of questions, wherof one proceeding of pride arrogancie, doubtfulnes and mystruste, declareth incredultie, such as the Caphernaïtes made when they said, How can this man gyue vs his fleshe to eat? And another in mekenesse and humilite, with desire of so moche knowlege only, as the secrecie of the thinge permitteth, wherin the hole is remytted to goddess power and omnipotencie, with which our Lady contented herself...⁵⁷

Gardiner's negative description of the Capernaïtes refers to their arrogance, faithlessness and doubt. Although he cites John 6 again in the marginalia and some of his co-religionists would consider these Capernaïtic traits to be the hallmarks of his evangelical opponents, he refrains from making an overt polemical statement. Rather, Gardiner prods his traditional audience to examine whether their questions or even doubts about the sacrament come from a place of meekness and humility or whether they resemble the Capernaïtes.

At one point Gardiner explains the difference between the flesh and the spirit and refutes critics who might cite Christ's words from John 6.63: '*Spiritus est qui vivificat caro non prodest quicquam*' or 'the spirit quickens; the flesh profits nothing.'⁵⁸ That verse, Gardiner argues, is "misconstrued and cokedly expounded...as thoughe it were to be vnderstanded, that the presence of the natural bodye and bloude of our sauour our christ, were not fruteful to vs, & therefore by theyr reason shulde not be there."⁵⁹ But critics misunderstand transubstantiation and the real presence much like the Capernaïtes.

Gardiner explains that Christ

refelled in those wordes the grosse vnderstandynge of the Capharnaïtes, as thoughoure sauour christ had ment to distribute his natural body in lumpes of flesshe,

⁵⁷ Ibid., 61v.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 74r.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 74r-v.

and so make them a feest of it, and thervpon gaue a generall lesson vnto them...that is borne of the flesshe, is flesh, and that is borne of the spirite is spirite...for the flesshe manne can not se goddess mysteries, and they that dwell in the flesshe can not please god, and thus scripture speaketh of the flesshe, the carnal parte of man not illuminate by the spirite of god, and the Capharnaites fancied of Christes flesshe grossly to be cutte as buchers do in the market, whiche...profiteth nothing, but onely the spirite giueth lyfe.⁶⁰

Gardiner then explains the the traditional orthodox view of Christ's flesh as distinguished from the Caparnaitic view: "the fleshe of our sauour christes moost precious bodye, being *caro viuifica*, lyuely flesshe, and whiche hath the holy spirite inseparablye annexed vnto it, is not improued but as it is by goddess high power ministred vnder fourme of bread & wyne."⁶¹ For Gardiner, critics who use John 6.63 to refute the doctrine of the real presence have come under the influence of the devil, "for the deuill wrangleth with it, as he doth in sustaining heresydes with many other."⁶²

Towards the end of the treatise, Gardiner makes a more explicit association between Jews and evangelicals. After he affirms that Christ instituted the sacrament of the altar which the church now preserves, he describes how the devil sows division regarding ceremonies, vestments, prayers and even church attendance. Above all, however, those influenced by the devil's sophistry assault the sacrament of the altar wherein "Christ hym selfe...is despised, mocked & skorned, with suche toydes and termes, as the Iewes deuised not more spiteful, euen when they saluted him, with *Auer ex Iudeorum*, and spette in his teeth."⁶³ Gardiner condemns those who sow divisions in the church and mock the sacrament of the altar as people far worse than the Jews who mocked Christ, which undoubtedly refers to evangelicals. This condemnation reflects a

⁶⁰ Ibid., 74v-75r.

⁶¹ Ibid., 75r.

⁶² Ibid., 76r.

⁶³ Ibid., 150v.

style of polemic similar to Peryn; it is visceral and perhaps persuasive but largely seems to be an exception. At the end of the treatise, Gardiner explains the purpose of his work, that “the conseruation of true belefe is only desired, for the maynetenaunce of gods glory” will direct his audience “to the atteyninge of al truth, which is only in our sauour Iesus christ...whom all good christen men haue from the beginning, & do still beleue, most assuredly, to be present really, in the sacrament of thaulter...to fede our weake bodies & soules, wherby to make vs strong to come to him, & liue without end.”⁶⁴

III

When Mary Tudor ascended the throne in 1553, Catholicism re-emerged in England after five years of devastation during the reign of Edward VI. John Standish, who had once demonstrated allegiance to the evangelical cause and even got married, now repudiated his wife and reconciled with the Marian regime. In 1554 he published *A discourse wherin is debated whether it be expedient that the scripture should be in English for al men to reade that wyll*.⁶⁵ The question he poses involves whether the realm should retain the Bible in English or return to its traditional Latin form. Standish provides fifty probations on why the Bible should return to the latter. At several points, Standish employs images of Jews and Judaism to support his argument, namely to negatively characterize the evangelical legacy in the church and demarcate true religion from its recent heretical predecessor. I will provide a few examples.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 155r.

⁶⁵ John Standish, *A discourse wherin is debated whether it be expedient that the scripture should be in English for al men to reade that wyll* (London: Robert Clay, 1554; Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, STC/23207).

In the third chapter of his discourse, Standish argues that the scriptures in English, or *the letter*, “doth kyl (as S. Paul saith) and that diuerse ways, the ignoraunt people ought to be sore aferde to couet after that whiche causeth present death.”⁶⁶ He argues that the letter kills the Jew who observes the law and therefore “will not know that all was written for vs, and that all chaunced to them in figure, but wyll stycke styll to theyr sacrifice, circumcision, choyse of meates, cleane and vncleane. &c, and wyll not fynde fourth Christ there.”⁶⁷ Not only do the scriptures kill various sects of heretics who read the Bible in the most literal ways possible but the letter kills the Pharisees too, “which supersticiously doe wryte the commaundementes in the hemmes of their garmentes, in scrolls on postes. &c. bycause God bad kepe them in theyr heartes, and talke of theym euenynge and mornynge. &c., they dyd not marke that God ment nothing else by that phrase of speaking, but only a vehement studie and desire to obserue the law.”⁶⁸ But then Standish associates the image of the Pharisee with an evangelical practice too: “Haue not our Englyshe men (namely in the citie of London)

had now of late lyke Iewish affection in settinge vp wrytynges on the Churche walles and pyllers, euer falsely wrasting them awrie and applying them to an euyll purpose? And thusse they painted vp textes of the new testament vpon theyr walles: which onely doo serue agaynste the Iewyshe fastes to blynde and deceiue the simple sorte therewith, as though they had ben spoken against our holy Vigils and fastinges.⁶⁹

Here, Standish describes the evangelical desire in parishes in London to post English scriptures on the walls and pillars in the church as a *Jewish affection*, but with a sense of irony: those texts were used to repudiate certain practices and fastings of traditional religion because evangelicals deemed them as Jewish.

⁶⁶ Ibid., sig. D3r.

⁶⁷ Ibid., sig. D5v.

⁶⁸ Ibid., sig. E1r-v.

⁶⁹ Ibid., sig. E1v.

In the fourth chapter Standish explains how the letter kills when the scriptures present a deep mystery but simple readers “wyl sticke styll to the bare wordes, as the Iewes dyd being prohibited to plow with oxe and asse together.”⁷⁰ But he explains a deeper meaning too, that certain things should not be joined together, namely that “Iudaisme and Christianisme could not be ioyned in one, nor that a Christian could serue both God and the world.”⁷¹

Standish also addresses how the translation of the scriptures into English has led to a liberty in which “all holye mysteries been despised” because they do not appear in the scriptures. He offers a rhetorical question about whether evangelicals have brought the church to a worse state than the Jews and then explains that at least the Jews “had *Cabala* their tradition left among them by Moyses without writyng” but “this damnable heresy our men haue whollye condemned all that is not expressed in the letter of theyr Englishe.”⁷²

In one of his probations, Standish argues that if heathen philosophers do not permit youths to read moral philosophy and the Jews do not allow youths to read all the books of the Old Testament, Christians should not allow it either. As for philosophers, he asks “What then shall we saie shal we admit vnto the handling of our heauenly philosophy whome the heathen thought vnmete, & vnworthy to handle theyr lerning whiche but prophane?”⁷³ He then asks, in a more strident tone, whether England will be

⁷⁰ Ibid., sig. D3v-D4r.

⁷¹ Ibid., sig. D4r.

⁷² Ibid., sig. F1v-F2r.

⁷³ Ibid., sig. H7v.

worse than the Jews, “worse than the prophane ethnicketes and more out of order? O Lord be mercifull vnto vs.”⁷⁴

These brief examples provide us with a glimpse of how rhetoric involving Jews and Judaism continued to survive into the Marian regime, a strategy that perhaps many defenders of traditional religion copied from evangelicals in years past. But now that rhetoric, at least for Standish, was used to promote traditional orthodoxy and cleanse England from its heretical past. Of course, Mary died just four years later another queen ascended the throne. Standish managed to survive under Elizabeth for over ten years but the rhetorical strategy he employed, like the evangelicals and defenders of traditional religion before him, would last well beyond 1570.

⁷⁴ Ibid., sig. H7v-H8r.

Conclusion

I owe a great deal to Professor Eamon Duffy in how this project began. It was in his *Stripping of the Altars* that I first encountered the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, a Host-desecration miracle play that occupies a significant part of Chapter 3 of this thesis. My initial question wondered why English Christians have a play with Jews at all since Jews were expelled from England in 1290. I learned, of course, that images of Jews were fairly common in late medieval England, especially in late medieval drama. As I read interpretation after interpretation of the Croxton play none of them seemed to make sense. Is the play about lollards or is it about Jews? It came to the conclusion that it is really about both: the playwright associates lollard rejection of transubstantiation with Jews who commit violence against the Host. Thus the basic premise of this project was born: images of Jews associated with one's religious enemies. But I had no idea that lollard dissidents or later evangelicals would be far more adept at developing a rhetoric that could associate images of Jews with their opponents. I learned something else out of my investigation of the Croxton play: the play's sharp polemical edge was not just a way to merely denigrate or castigate lollardy. There was something at stake: a fundamental doctrine that differentiated truth from error. What was at stake was orthodoxy.

Thus, Professor Duffy's book became a launching pad for this project and helped me conceptualize how it could contribute to the historiography of the Reformation. This thesis can contribute in two ways. First, I would challenge him about the significance of lollardy, its historical significance he had sought to dismantle in the preface of the second edition of *Stripping of the Altars*. In the preface he regards lollardy as nearly an irrelevant phantom of the past and fairly insignificant on the whole in the fifteenth century, which I

think is an example of revisionism gone off the rails and seems to reflect more about modern confessional concerns than it does about the actual historical evidence. He could have written in the preface simply that lollardy was present in England, a concern for some bishops but not necessarily a sign of massive amounts of discontent among the laity for traditional religion like we find in A. G. Dickens' account, and then move on. Instead of moderating Dickensian historiographical excesses Duffy goes too far in the other direction. In other words Professor Duffy could have taken the historians of lollardy more seriously rather than open up a space for even more hyperbolic forms of revisionist historiography to appear, like Richard Rex's book *The Lollards*.

The other issue with Professor Duffy relates to his handling of late medieval images of Jews and Judaism and the Christian attitudes towards them. He should be commended for at least including the subject in his book at all. Most historians of late medieval and Reformation England have not even bothered to discuss Jews and Judaism at all. That being said, in my view Professor Duffy's book greatly distorts lay conceptions about Jews and Judaism. Chapter 1, in some sense, serves as a corrective to this distortion. Jews were not simply generic 'unbelieving outsiders of culpable unbelief' as Duffy describes, but the enemies of Christ and the church, the torturers and murderers of Christ, those under God's perpetual judgment, guilty of deicide and who rejected the grace of God when it came for their salvation. My primary objective for that chapter was to show not only that images of Jews and Judaism were part of late medieval Christianity in England but provide examples of how those images were understood, by and large, in negative terms. I chose Nicholas Love's *The Mirror*, the *N-Town plays* and John Mirk's *Festial* because those sources were prevalent in the period and quite familiar to the laity.

It follows, then, that images of Jews found in those texts became familiar too much of the English laity, and most of those images are negative. But I included Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection* because I did not want to give the impression that images of Jews and Judaism were always seen in straightforwardly negative ways. For example, Hilton implores his audience to crucify one's sins to the cross, just as the Jews cry out '*tolle, tolle crucifige eum!*' Hilton's message calls his readers to look at themselves and acknowledge their own sins, and so the negative image of the Jews becomes ambiguous. At one point too, Hilton condemns heretics as people even worse than Jews and pagans because they should know better. I also included Margery Kempe in chapter 1 because she is an example of how Love's *Mirror* and images from the *N-Town Play* filtered down to the late medieval laity, specifically images of Jews and Judaism.

A critical question comes to mind. Are the images of Jews and Judaism understood to be Jews and Judaism by both author and audience alike or are they really just merely generic figures who oppose Christ or Christianity? In Mirk's *Festial*, Jews appear unambiguously as Jews in various miracle stories, which comprise of about one-third of the homilies of the *Festial*. In his *Mirror*, Love portrays Christ's opponents as Jews through various images such as the synagogue, scribes and Pharisees, high priests of the Jews and subjects such as the Sabbath. In the *N-Town* cycle plays, Jews appear as scribes, Pharisees, Caiaphas, Annas and generic Jews, to include the four Jews who crucify Christ during the Passion sequence. And in Margery Kempe's text we find a woman who understands who the Jews are and at one point when she spars with ecclesiastical authorities in York someone thinks she actually might be a Jew. Furthermore, she envisions her persecutors as Jews and her visions of the Passion involve

the Virgin Mary condemning the Jews. This invariably leads us to how the lollards understood these images. Were they intentionally exploiting late medieval images of Jews and Judaism?

There is no reason to believe otherwise. When lollard writers, defendants or preachers employ images of the scribes and Pharisees, Caiaphas, the synagogue or Judas, for example, not only do they mean for these to be images of Jews but their audience would not think they were anything but Jews. One lollard writer even explains that the Pharisees were a sect of Jews.¹ And lollard defendants under ecclesiastical examination clearly understand the inflammatory implications of calling one's bishop Caiaphas. Opprobrium of that sort sought to communicate two important and fundamental beliefs. First, it argues that one's bishop is anti-Christian and a persecutor of Christ, just like the Caiaphas of the New Testament who condemned Christ. Second, it seeks to bolster the legitimacy of those being persecuted: if Caiaphas persecuted Christ for being true and one's bishop persecuted those under examination the same way, it allows lollard defendants to identify with Christ as his true followers, since they suffer under the same type of persecution. This theme would continue to be exploited during the Reformation. John Bale, with his brilliant rhetorical imagination, tried to awaken England to its lollard past by actually recounting the trial of Lord Cobham and using the image of Caiaphas to reiterate the same point the lollards made at the time.

As with any large project such as this thesis one must ask, of course, why does it matter? In terms of historiography, it is virtually a missing dimension of not only lollard studies but the historiography of the Reformation. Anne Hudson did notice that lollards would reference scribes and Pharisees; Norman Tanner points out that trial records from

¹ See above, Chapter 2, note 110.

Norwich include some references to what he labels Judaism. First and foremost then, I believe, as I think any historian would, that if something is missing in the historiography it is always good to uncover it. I think it is important that we know that William Tyndale really did believe that the ceremonial corruption that originally entered the church during its early years came from Jews who converted to Christ but who, upon entering the church, could not abandon the ceremonies from Judaism. The type of Christianity Tyndale envisioned then – his orthodoxy – eschewed Judaism and Jewishness. Thomas More, however, could not simply eschew Judaism outright since the church affirmed that the Jews were the people of God prior to the advent of Christ. Therefore, More had to nuance the image of the Pharisee as well as the synagogue, threading the needle while balancing himself on a high wire, to ensure that he refutes Tyndale but does not defend Jews and Judaism to the point that his readers wonder if Tyndale is correct about the church after all.

A second reason why this project matters is that if anything it proves that images of Jews and Judaism were not only very much a part of the religious landscape of late medieval and Reformation England but that they are historically relevant in assisting, namely dissidents of the church, in developing contrasts between themselves and their opponents. Specifically, lollards and evangelicals developed a rhetorical strategy that employed images of Jews and Judaism that could persuade audiences, and even shock audiences out of their traditional religious reflexes, to embrace something new. If the church considered someone a heretic, one's only real rhetorical recourse was to attack them with one of the other images of the enemies of the human race: the Jews. And since both lollards and later reformers placed a premium on the scriptures, those passages that

involve friction between Christ and the Jews, and especially passages where Christ outright condemns the Jews like Matthew 23, become particularly useful to fashion rhetorical arguments against the church. This leads me to my third and final point, the link between sixteenth-century reformers and their fifteenth-century lollards.

Reformers in the sixteenth century imitated the basic strategy of thinking with Jews from their lollard predecessors, but then expanded it well beyond what the lollards were able to do. Tyndale used it to explain the origins of corruption; John Bale thought with Jews across several genres and actually connects evangelicals to their lollard predecessors through the issue of persecution. For example, Cayphas persecuted lollards and Cayphas is now persecuting evangelicals. Therefore, true Christians, whether in the fifteenth or the sixteenth century, will suffer under bishops who resemble Caiaphas, just as the real Caiaphas persecuted Christ.

I end with a question about the implications of evangelical rhetoric, particularly the rhetoric that included Jews and Judaism. To what extent did it play a role in convincing people to cross over from an adherent of traditional religion to a Christian movement considered by church authorities to be not only heresy but the work of Satan? Why would a member of a traditional parish, who found traditional religion meaningful and coherent, join the ranks of heretics? It would be foolish, perhaps even insane. But an effective campaign of rhetoric that could simultaneously condemn the church through images of Jews and bolster evangelical legitimacy through accessible scriptural arguments might convince audiences that evangelicals were the bearers of true religion. One might take the risk and cross over, especially if one was convinced by a rhetoric that proved to one's satisfaction that the church was corrupt, that churchmen were like the

scribes and Pharisees and that evangelical faith was pure and biblical. It would be possible to cross over if one were convinced that bishops really do behave like Caiaphas did towards Christ and therefore the other rhetorical arguments about how the church authorities are like the scribes and Pharisees made sense. Those images of Jews and Judaism, if effectively connected to ecclesiastical authorities or church practices and beliefs could very easily shock some English Christians out of their traditional religious upbringing to embrace something new. And for some later Protestants, like Thomas Whittel, it was the reason to die a martyr's death rather than recant one's evangelical faith as England became a *Jewish* England.

Epilogue

In 1577, the historian and martyrologist John Foxe delivered *A sermon preached at the christening of a certaine Jew at London*, published in English the following year.¹ The 1578 publication also includes the public confession by the Jew in question, Nathaniel, a convert from “the vttermost parts of Barbarie” who according to Foxe had arrived in England six years prior to his baptism.² In this sermon Foxe directly addresses the Jews and condemns them for their arrogance and unbelief even though he firmly believes in their ultimate conversion. Towards the end he warns his Christian audience of the dangers of pride and briefly condemns certain practices in churches that he considers idolatry, undoubtedly an attack on the remnants of Catholic ritual. The primary focus of the sermon, however, concerns the Jews, and he fixates on them much like Luther did in his treatise *Against the Sabbatarians* back in 1538: in fact, both authors wonder why the Jews continue to resist conversion to Christ after fifteen hundred years of wandering as an accursed people without a nation or temple.³

Foxe explores the image of the olive tree from Romans 11 and examines the issue of why the Jews, because of their arrogance and unbelief, have for the most part been broken off from fellowship with God. Despite this unbelief he realizes that their ultimate

¹ John Foxe, *A sermon preached at the christening of a certaine Jew, at London, Containing an exposition of the .xi. Chapter of S. Paul to the Romanes*, trans. James Bell (London: Christopher Barker, 1578; STC/11248).

² *Ibid.*, sig. A1v.

³ See Martin Luther, “Against the Sabbatarians: Letter to A Good Friend, 1538,” trans. Martin H. Bertram, in *The Christian in Society IV*, vol. 47 of *Luther’s Works*, American Edition, eds. J. Pelikan and H. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 66. For similarities between Foxe’s sermon and Luther’s notorious 1543 treatise *On the Jews and Their Lies*, see Sharon Achinstein, “John Foxe and the Jews,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 106. I tend to view Foxe’s sermon much more in the spirit of *Against the Sabbatarians*, however. Luther’s 1543 treatise contains no hope of conversion and more or less advocates policies that would lead to expulsion; in 1538 Luther seemed satisfied to condemn Judaism as more or less a defunct religion. Some of Foxe’s statements, however, contain a certain harshness to them that reflects the prevailing attitude among European Christians of the period, to include Luther.

conversion is assured because of the promise of Romans 11.26, an eschatological view similar to what we find in John Bale's *Image of Bothe Churches*.⁴ Foxe specifically notes that God has not utterly rejected the whole nation of the Jews; although God has "estranged a greater part of them from himself" some have come to faith in Christ such as Paul the Apostle and, of course, Nathaniel the Jew.⁵ These positive examples, however, at least for now prove to be the exceptions.

Foxe explains that the Jews have been broken off from fellowship with God because of their unbelief and pride. He parses the notion of unbelief for his audience too: there are different types of unbelief with different consequences. One type of unbelief relates to ignorance, which although "is tost to and fro, with many wandering cloudes & doubtfull vapoures, yet because it peepeth nowe and then abroade... it seemeth not to rest in despayred estate."⁶ Another type refers to the unbelief exhibited by some of the disciples like Thomas and Peter, both of whom Christ rebuked, as well as those Christians perhaps in the audience who "doe entrude vpon the possession of Christian Title, which can gloriously vaunte of Christ with their tongues, but denye him vterly in their deeds, beleeuing nothing lesse in their hearts stedfastly, then that whereof they carrye an outwarde resemblaunce in their talke courageously."⁷ But these examples of unbelief do not compare with the worst type of unbelief, an "infidelitie...

most horrible & execrable, when as men do rushe headlong into such obstinate resistance, that they wil not only not acquaint themselues with the trueth, being layd open before their eyes, but will wittingly shut vp their senses from the beholding thereof, because they will not see it, & wil spourne thereat not in words

⁴ See 371 above in which Bale discusses the Jews of Revelation 14 who accept Christ as Jews.

⁵ Foxe, *A sermon preached at the christening of a certaine Iew...*, sig. A8v. For Foxe's acknowledgment of the Jewish lineage of Paul and the other apostles, see sig. B5r.

⁶ *Ibid.*, sig. B1v-B2r.

⁷ *Ibid.*, sig. B2r-v.

and profession only, but wil cruelly persecute the same also with al maner of outrage, slaughter & blood, blasphemies & most despiteful execrations.⁸

Foxe identifies this type of unbelief as particular to the Jews, an infidelity that manifests itself in hostility towards Christ and Christians:

And this is that vnbeliefe, which being more noysome then any pestilent botch, may rightly & properly be called the Iewish Infidelitie, & seemeth after a certaine maner their inheritable disease, who are after a certaine sort, from their mothers wombe, naturally caried through peruerse frowardnes, into all malitious hatred, & contempt of Christ, & his Christians.⁹

This type of unbelief, apparently a condition from birth and passed down from generation to generation, explains why most of the Jews remain unconverted to Christ. His description of Jewish contempt for Christ and Christians reflects persistent, longstanding Christian hostility towards and negative conceptions about Jews and Judaism, likely accepted among Foxe's Elizabethan audience just as much as it was among their late medieval forebears. This typical Christian hostility appears in other parts of the sermon as well. For example, He accuses the Jews of committing blasphemy in their synagogues against Christ, a claim that seems to echo Luther's harsh invective of 1543.¹⁰

Furthermore, Foxe condemns the Jews regarding circumcision and the Sabbath: circumcision because their "vncircumcised hearts ouerflowe with spyderlike poison" and the Sabbath because not only did they profane it during the time of Christ "when [they] murdered the Lord him selfe" but also because they "professe in wordes the letter of the lawe, but vtterly disclayme from the spirituall meaning of the lawe in your deedes."¹¹

⁸ Ibid., sig. B3r.

⁹ Ibid., sig. B3r.

¹⁰ Ibid., sig. G4r; Martin Luther, "On the Jews and Their Lies, 1543," trans. Martin H. Bertram, in *The Christian in Society IV*, vol. 47 of *Luther's Works*, American Edition, eds. J. Pelikan and H. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1971), 39, 53.

¹¹ Ibid., sig. E4v.

As for why the Jews remain largely unconverted, Foxe seems not only bewildered but astonished at what he considers Jewish obduracy. He cannot understand why the Jews not only remain obstinate in light of “many yeres and ages enduring [that] sharpe & seuere scourge of Gods dreadfull displeasure” but also how they have beguiled and flattered themselves into thinking there is hope for both a new terrestrial kingdom and their Messiah’s deliverance, neither of which to Foxe has any scriptural basis.¹² Worse still he cannot fathom how “a people most abhorred of God, & men” still consider themselves worthy in the sight of God than all the other nations “and therefore could not by any means be defrauded of the power of his promise, nor be sequestered from the true Oliue tree, whereof they were the natuall branches...”¹³ This arrogant blindness regarding their esteemed status, despite “wallowing continually in a most filthy puddle of pestilent error” reminds Foxe of his Catholic opponents. Here Foxe exploits the notion of Jewish obstinacy and arrogance in typical evangelical fashion to condemn Rome, the other *synagogue*. The Jews were

not much vnlike to the Romish Synagogue in this our age, whose senses seeme to be tippled with the same doldreanche: which kinde of people being of all other nations most needie of the mercy of God, it is a wonder notwithstanding, to see how trimly they play wylye beguilie with themselues in the dispensation of pardons, whereof they falsely challenge to themselues chief stewardship vnder the title of the Church, and inheritable succession of Peters chayre, which they haue established at Rome for euer and euer...¹⁴

Furthermore, Foxe condemns Rome’s claim to the perpetuity of apostolic succession not only as *counterfaite* but subject to God’s judgment just like the Jews whose temple and city were destroyed even though at one time they were established by God.¹⁵

¹² Ibid., sig. C1v.

¹³ Ibid., sig. C1v-C2r.

¹⁴ Ibid., sig. C2r.

¹⁵ Ibid., sig. C4r-v.

At the end of the sermon Foxe turns his attention to the subject of idolatry, which is nothing more than a thinly veiled condemnation of the last remaining vestiges of traditional religion within the Elizabethan church, undoubtedly inspired by his association with Swiss reformers. His complaint includes “images, and counterfaites of hee saintes and shee saintes...and to conueye the pure worshipping of ye inuisible God, to the repretation of visible things, contrary to the prescript ordinance of ye Law of God” such as the “pestilent Botches of imageworship, breadworship, wineworship, crosseworship, signes & pourtraictes of visible creatures...”¹⁶ This idolatry, Foxe argues, has been a great hindrance to the Jews: “what maruel was it,” he asks, “if they being offended with this open idolatrie, did so long refraine from vs, and from the discipline of our faith?”¹⁷ Foxe calls for a church to be cleansed of “offensiue baggage & image worshippings” and replaced by “the ancient puritie of christian profession” because the Jews cannot accept “the filthie puddles of our superstitions.”¹⁸ He then calls for the removal or cleansing of the vestiges of popery such as the images, the ceasing of “stagelike gestures and pelting trumperies...the praying for the dead, worshipping of creatures & signes, forbidding priests marriages, & such pieuish absurdities...”¹⁹ The removal of this idolatry will then “open an entry to the Iewes and Turkes, to conceiue an inward desire to be ioyned to the sonne of God” or at least for the sake of the Jews; if not for that reason then certainly to avoid God’s judgment through the chastening of “Turkes and Saracens for our idolatrie...”²⁰

¹⁶ Ibid., sig. M7v; *pourtraictes*, portrayed.

¹⁷ Ibid., sig. M8r.

¹⁸ Ibid., sig. M8r-v.

¹⁹ Ibid., sig. N1r.

²⁰ Ibid., sig. N1r-v.

Foxe's sermon contains similarities not only with his evangelical predecessors but Christians in general stretching back to at least the late medieval period. His condemnation of and hostility towards Jews and Judaism shows that after decades of religious turmoil among Christians themselves, Christian attitudes towards the Jews have remained largely consistent in England since the expulsion in 1290. Foxe regards the Jews, like most of his predecessors on either side of the religious divide, as the enemies of Christ and Christians. This basic negative assumption about Jews and Judaism allows Foxe to associate those images with Catholicism in terms of Rome's claim as the true church and inheritors to apostolic succession, imitating the rhetorical strategy of his evangelical and lollard predecessors. Overall, as one scholar points out, one could see that the sermon presents a justification for the Reformation: since God broke off the Jews would it would naturally follow that Rome would be broken off as well.²¹

But Foxe's attack on his Catholic opponents is more opportunistic than premeditated: Foxe did not set out to write a sermon against popery. Rather, he set out to preach a message about the mystery of Romans 11 and the eventual conversion of the Jews, likely induced at least in part by the conversion of Nathaniel. Foxe takes seriously the promise of Romans 11.26 and the example of Paul and other apostles in that they were Jews who did convert to Christ. On the other hand, he still finds a way to advance his vision of Reformation orthodoxy, a Protestantism devoid of any vestiges of its Catholic past. Given the hope of Jewish conversion, then, Foxe argues that the churches must be cleansed of idolatry. Here Foxe thinks with Jews to condemn his opponents, but it is a novel way to incorporate images of Jews to promote one's particular brand of orthodoxy: the traces of popery are not just idolatry but a hindrance to God's eventual

²¹ Achinstein, "John Foxe and the Jews," 100.

plan for the salvation of all Israel, a point Nathaniel the Jew reiterates in his public confession.

For over a century, England had been in the throes of religious controversy on a significant scale. Images of Jews and Judaism populated the rhetoric used by both dissidents and defenders of the church who sought to define or re-define orthodoxy. When Nathaniel the Jew publicly confessed Christ and underwent baptism in April 1577, that image of the Jew came to life, albeit in the form of a convert. At least the English audience in attendance would regard him as a Jew: although undoubtedly his public confession was redacted by those in charge of his spiritual care, including perhaps Foxe himself, Nathaniel utilizes Hebrew terms such as *Moshe* for Moses and *Mashiach* for Messiah and speaks from the vantage point not as a Gentile but as an Israelite. He says everything that evangelicals of the past and men like Foxe would approve: he refutes the prominence of the Virgin Mary, affirms the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper only, professes Christ as the only means to salvation and condemns idolatry, arguing that followers of Christ cannot be a holy people unless "we keepe this commandement, Thou shalt haue none other Gods but one: and this, Thou shalt not make to thy selfe any grauen image, nor the likeness of any thing."²² Whether Foxe inspired Nathaniel's confession or perhaps Nathaniel influenced Foxe's sermon, the figure of Nathaniel the Jew, convert to Protestantism, now living in England as a Protestant, appears to think with Jews as a critic of Catholicism just like the dissidents before and during the Reformation.

²² Ibid., sig. B5r.

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