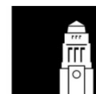

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Ben Jonson and Religion

Alison Searle

Abstract

This chapter examines the complex role played by religion in Jonson's life; his relationship to the theatre; his works in various genres (plays, poetry, and masques), and in the critical reception of his writings. It considers the biographical evidence surrounding Jonson's multiple religious conversions within the broader context of recusancy culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. It then examines some of the ways in which religion is represented in his plays and how this influenced and was shaped by the changes in religious culture that characterized Jonson's lengthy professional career from the 1590s until the 1630s. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the relationship between religion and the theatre as it impacted upon Jonson's writing and his own instrumentality—as a key cultural player—in redefining that relationship in early modern England.

Keywords

Catholic, Puritan, recusant, Scripture, conversion, Laudian, Arminian, poet, theatre

On 28 February 1616 the noted antiquarian John Selden responded to an enquiry from his friend Ben Jonson regarding 'the literall sense and historicall of the holy text usually brought against the counterfeiting of sexes by apparell', namely Deuteronomy 22:5.[1] Selden's letter demonstrates his extraordinary grasp of ancient sources and languages, particularly Hebrew; however, it is also a testimony to Ben Jonson's desire to determine whether the biblical objections being made by opponents to the transvestite practices of early modern theatres in London had any validity. Further, Selden encouraged Jonson to research his own well-stocked library 'for divers pieces of European Theologie dispers'd

in Latin & Greek autors of the Gentiles & Fathers of the church too . . . but your own most choice & able store cannot but furnish you incidently with what ever is fit that way to be thought of in the reading'.[2]

Reid Barbour has argued that Selden's letter on the legitimacy of cross-dressing is 'really an investigation of the cultural poetics implicit in theology'.[3] It is also, as David Riggs has noted, an exercise in philological scholarship designed not only to wrest the authoritative interpretation and application of Scripture away from 'rabidly partisan' Puritans like Zeal-of-the-Land Busy in *Bartholomew Fair*, but to place it firmly in the hands of 'disinterested scholarly' enquirers, such as Jonson or himself. This comparative philology has its own partisan political subtext: 'Selden's commentary completes the work of Jonson's satire by removing the holy text from the sphere of political debate altogether and locating it in a specific practice in the ancient world.'[4] Such scholarly hermeneutics underwrite the Erastian—that is, the belief that the state is supreme in matters relating to the church—approach to religion ultimately favoured by both Selden and Jonson.

On 4 September 1612 (or 25 August, by the English calendar) Jonson attended a debate concerning the nature of the Eucharist between a Protestant minister, Daniel Featly, and a Catholic, D. Smith (later bishop of Chalcedon). This occurred while he was acting as a tutor to the younger Walter Ralegh in Paris.[5] Six months or so later, Jonson's mischievous charge had caused him 'to be Drunken and dead drunk, so that he knew not wher he was, therafter laid him on a Carr which he made to be Drawen by Pioners through the streets, at every corner showing his Governour stretched out & telling them that was a more Lively image of the Crucifix then any they had'.[6] Shortly afterwards Jonson decided to travel from Paris to Brussels and requested a letter of introduction from John Beaulieu, Secretary to the English Ambassador. As he complied, Beaulieu noted, 'I suppose he was desirous to have to prevent the rumour of some cross business wherein he hath been interested here'.[7] This incident with its acrimonious sectarian debate concerning the nature of the real presence and subversive drunken action in a carnivalesque atmosphere (it was the Mardi Gras in Paris at the time of Raleh's gesture) echoes Jonson's brushes with English church authorities in the previous decade. Though Jonson willingly attended his parish church, he was reluctant to participate in communion

and when he did reconvert to Protestantism in 1610, 'after he was reconciled with the Church and left of to be a recusant at his first communion in token of true Reconciliation, he drank out all the full cup of wyne'.[8] Ian Donaldson has suggested that Jonson's experiences in Paris may have informed his representation of the governor, Humphrey Wasp, who is unable to control his charge, Bartholomew Cokes, in *Bartholomew Fair*.[9] Riggs, however, argues for a far more intimate connection between life and work, stating that *Bartholomew Fair* 'offers a fully parodic reworking of the story of salvation'; it is an attempt by Jonson to redeem his drunken caprice (that is the display of his body as a public, blasphemous spectacle) and to endorse carnival as a crucial tenet of Jacobean ideology in the face of Puritan opposition to James I's rule.[10]

These two incidents illustrate the complex role played by religion in Jonson's life; his relationship to the theatre; his works in various genres (plays, poetry, and masques), and in the critical reception of his writings. In the discussion that follows, I first consider the biographical evidence surrounding Jonson's multiple religious conversions within the broader context of recusancy culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. I then examine some of the ways in which religion is represented in his plays and how this influenced and was shaped by the changes in religious culture that characterized Jonson's lengthy professional career from the 1590s until the 1630s. I conclude with an analysis of the relationship between religion and the theatre as it impacted upon Jonson's writing and his own instrumentality—as a key cultural player—in redefining that relationship in early modern England.

I Recusancy and Conversion

Jonson's father was a Church of England minister who died before he was born; this certainly shaped the way in which Jonson understood his social status and educational prospects; it is impossible to determine whether it also affected his religious conversions. Following a varied range of careers as a bricklayer (his stepfather's profession), soldier, actor, and playwright, Jonson was imprisoned in 1598 for the murder of fellow actor Gabriel Spencer in a duel. He managed to escape hanging by pleading benefit of clergy; that is, evidencing his ability to translate at sight the first verse of Psalm 51 in Latin; he was, however, permanently branded on his thumb with 'T' for Tyburn. Whilst in prison,

William Drummond records in his later conversations with Jonson, that 'he took his religion by trust of a priest who visited him in prison. Thereafter he was twelve years a papist.'[11] It is probable that the priest who converted him was Thomas Wright. Unlike some Catholic priests, Wright believed that it was possible to convert to the Catholic faith and yet remain loyal to the English Crown; he was thus firmly opposed to the Jesuitical stance which saw secular or patriotic loyalty to a Protestant monarch in diametrical opposition to loyalty to the Pope and the Catholic Church.[12] This nuanced position was of great importance to Jonson who was to demonstrate his simultaneous loyalty to Catholicism and the English King and Parliament in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot (1605).

The London Consistory Court records, on 10 January 1606, that Jonson and his wife Anne: 'refuse not to come to divine service, but have absented themselves from the communion, being oftentimes admonished, which hath continued as far as we can learn ever since the King came in'. The record adds further that: 'he is a poet and is by fame a seducer of youth to the popish religion'.[13] Jonson denied the latter charge, which carried heavy penalties in Protestant England. However, he did acknowledge that he had 'heretofore been of some other opinion in religion, which now upon better advisement he is determined to alter; he desireth such learned men to be assigned unto him to confer withal, he promising to conform according as they shall advise and persuade him'.[14] This was an astute manoeuvre on Jonson's part. The court responded by assigning five clergymen with whom he could consult, including the Dean of St Paul's, requiring that he meet one of them twice a week.[15] There is no evidence that these conversations were successful; Jonson appears to have remained a church papist, in the terms explored by Alexandra Walsham, until his return to the Church of England in 1610.[16] This is memorably recorded by Drummond in his conversations with Jonson as the occasion when he completely drained the communion cup as a symbolic gesture representing his return to the national church.[17]

Jonson's conversion to Catholicism while he was in prison in 1598 can be seen as a foolhardy move from a worldly perspective. Already in trouble with the law, choosing to adopt an outlawed religion would not make Jonson's public life, his attempts to earn a living as a dramatist, or his relationship with the state any easier. He was, however, in

good company. Anne of Denmark, wife of James I, was thought to be a church papist—attending divine service, but refusing to partake of communion. Similarly, Jonson's contemporary poet and friend, John Donne (later Dean of St Paul's), came from a well-known Catholic family and only converted to the state church after lengthy and serious soul-searching. Jonson found himself in particular difficulty following the discovery of the Guy Fawkes plot; the distinction that the Catholic priest, Wright, made between loyalty to church and state came under particular strain in the aftermath of an attempt to blow-up the Houses of Parliament. It did not help that Jonson had attended a supper party in October 1605 at the house of William Patrick which was attended by 'many of the leading conspirators in the Gunpowder Plot . . . Robert Catesby, Thomas Percy, Francis Tresham, Lord Mordaunt, Thomas Winter, John Ashfield, and another unidentified guest'.[18]

As a Catholic and potential conspirator, Jonson was immediately under suspicion. He attempted to redeem himself and prove his loyalty to the English state by acting as a spy on behalf of Sir Robert Cecil, Secretary of State, in the aftermath of the plot. Francis Teague has argued that Jonson was able to locate a Catholic priest as requested—probably Thomas Wright—and thus ensured the future good will of the Privy Council towards him.[19] Jonson wrote to Cecil stating: 'So that to tell your Lordship playnly my heart, I thinke they are All so enweau'd in it, as it will make 500 Gentlemen lesse of the Religion [i.e. Catholicism] within this weeke, if they carry theyr vnderstanding about them.'[20] Jonson, though, was not one of the 500 gentlemen, remaining a convinced Catholic until 1610. Even after this, his participation in a debate as to the nature of the real presence in the Eucharist, and his observation to Drummond in 1618–19 that he was 'for any religion, as being versed in both' suggests that Jonson's studies and personal experience had led him to adopt a broad, non-sectarian and ecumenical approach to religious practice.[21]

II Representations of Religion in Jonson's *oeuvre*

When compared with the lives of his contemporary playwrights, William Shakespeare and James Shirley—both of whom have been claimed as Catholic recusants—there is an abundance of biographical evidence enabling us to track Jonson's various conversion

experiences. However, a religious interpretation of Jonson's plays, masques, and poems is more problematic. Richard Dutton, for example, has argued that Jonson's successful comedy *Volpone, or, The Fox* (performed 1606; published in quarto 1607) was directed primarily against his protector, Robert Cecil, throughout the crisis following the Gunpowder Plot. Donaldson notes that:

> The tributary verses prefixed to the quarto text give some sense of Jonson's social and intellectual friendships at this moment; admirers of the play included the historian and poet Edmund Bolton, who had been summoned on recusancy charges with Jonson in January of that year; George Chapman, Jonson's recent collaborator and cell mate; Lord Aubigny, his Catholic patron and protector; and John Donne, himself a recent convert from the Roman church, with whom Jonson seems to have been on close and friendly terms since the 1590s.[22]

This supports Dutton's argument that far from unambiguously asserting his endorsement of the English Protestant state, Jonson's first major play subsequent to 5 November 1605 was an attack on the state official who persecuted the Catholics involved in the Gunpowder Plot. Dutton's postulate rests strongly on his interpretation of the famous metempsychosis passage in *Volpone* (I.ii.1–65). While the 'show itself is based on Lucian's parody of Pythagorean thought in his *Dream, or The Cock*, with some details from Diogenes Laertius' account of Pythagoras', 'there are moments when it veers into unmistakably modern reference' (ll. 28–32, 42–46). We move from the classical past into a post-Reformation world of religious controversy. Jonson's 'transmigratory soul inhabits firstly a Protestant, "Countering all old doctrine heresy" (a line which presumably amused the Catholic Jonson and his confidants), and latterly a strict Puritan ("a precise, pure, illuminate brother"), who is clearly parodied for his self-righteous conviction of his own election, and for his . . . refusal to say "Christmas" (with its resonance of the Catholic "mass").'[23]

Dutton suggests that Jonson is not simply engaged in 'conventional Puritan-baiting' here—'the Pythagorean ban on eating "forbid meats" is extended "into a metaphor of cannibalism'. If 'forbid meats' and 'devouring flesh' are considered in terms of Christian doctrine, they can be understood as referring to the Eucharist—'consuming

the bread and wine in commemoration of Christ's body and blood, as enjoined in the Last Supper'. However, as Dutton notes further, the significance of this act had been a central point of contention since the Reformation; Jonson's failure to take communion according to the rites of the Church of England 'since James' accession is what led to his arraignment (along with Edmund Bolton and eighteen others) in the Consistory Court.' Following R. B. Parker, Dutton argues that these lines on devouring flesh also echo Paul's epistle to the Galatians: 'But if ye bite and consume one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.' These lines do not simply target sectarian Puritans, they are clearly situated in a post-Reformation context where Christians of both Protestant and Catholic persuasion 'consumed one another in the name of their respective faiths, a situation that the Gunpowder Plot seemed bound to seal in place in England for generations to come. And the man that most Catholics blamed for that was Robert Cecil.'[24]

The Reformation and its consequent division of Christian Europe into Protestants and Catholics is clearly an important context within which to explore Jonson's plays with their satirical depictions and subtle nuance. It is necessary though to avoid overly programmatic interpretations of Jonson's major plays either as the works of a 'Catholic poet', or as simply reflecting the views of an anti-Puritan supporter of the Stuart establishment. Robert S. Miola has observed that 'the complex balances between the faiths continually shifted in the man as in the culture, responding to the pressures of internal change and external event'.[25] This can be demonstrated through a consideration of two of Jonson's best-known comedies and their critical reception, *The Alchemist* (1610) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). It is often argued that Jonson presents a strongly anti-Puritan critique in these two comedies: this is true, to a point. However, it is important to recognize that Jonson is as astute and observant as his contemporary Shakespeare when it comes to dramatizing religious extremists of various types. For example, Anne Barton has noted that Maria in *Twelfth Night* (1601) claims of Malvolio 'that poker-faced enemy of cakes and ale, bear-baitings, and all "uncivil rule"'—that 'sometimes he is a kind of Puritan'. Barton adds, however, that Maria retracts even this qualified statement almost immediately: 'the devil a Puritan that he is, or anything constantly, but a time-pleaser, an affectioned ass'. Maria 'insists that Malvolio's defects

spring from his own hypocrisy and self-love. They are not, as Sir Andrew Aguecheek wants to believe, associated with a particular religious and political alignment in Elizabethan England.'[26]

Jonson, as Patrick Collinson and Peter Lake have demonstrated, exercised a similar care in his dramatic portrayal of religious types. Collinson has even suggested that Jonson helped to create the stereotypical Puritan which then played a constitutive role in the self-understanding and religious identity of the godly themselves.[27] He argues that it was the anti-Martinist reaction to the vitriolic pamphlets of Martin Marprelate that 'seems to have created the stock figure of the stage Puritan, a type with which Shakespeare experimented in *Twelfth Night* and which helped to make a career for Ben Jonson and, further, to create the stereotype of the Puritan himself, who from now on was always presented as seditious, avaricious, randy, but, above all, as an arch-hypocrite'.[28] Lake is not persuaded fully by this argument from fictional depiction to social reality, though he acknowledges that 'negative images did intersect with and help to shape the self-projection and protection mechanisms with which the godly subsequently sought to meet the challenge of what they took to be a hostile world'.[29] In *The Alchemist*, Jonson is dealing with religious radicals on the extreme wing of Puritan separatism. He deliberately calls them Anabaptists, a pejorative term frequently applied by contemporaries, which was designed to evoke memories of the violent, sexually licentious, apocalyptic reign of the Anabaptists in the German city of Münster in the early years of the Protestant Reformation (1533–35). Jonson further locates his pastor, Tribulation Wholesome, and deacon, Ananias, in Amsterdam; this was a common destination for English ecclesiastical refugees, seeking freedom to worship outside the increasingly strict protocols of the state church. Jonson, as Lake notes, evidences an attentiveness to the vocabulary and speech cadences of this separatist religious group—as, for example, in Tribulation Wholesome's conclusion that he will 'make a question of it', that is as to the lawfulness of casting money, 'to the *Brethren*'(III.ii.157).[30]

Lake has argued that this exploration of cases of conscience (casuistry)—whether it involves casting money or eating roast pig at a fair—is an important element in Jonson's dramatic portrayal of religious extremism in *Bartholomew Fair*, as well as *The Alchemist*. However, in *Bartholomew Fair*, we are no longer dealing with religious

separatists, such as the Anabaptists. Rather, Jonson is presenting a carefully crafted stereotype of Puritanism, developed through localized references and contexts (such as Zeal-of-the-Land Busy's origins in Banbury and his former profession as a baker). Jonson, Lake suggests, deliberately avoids any direct reference to the university-educated Puritans at the heart of the religious and civil establishment in London; his apparent target is the ignorant lay preacher from a rural outpost. Nonetheless, despite this careful distancing, Lake argues that 'Busy's entirely hypocritical and self-serving treatment of eating pig represents a satire on clerical puritan attitudes to outward conformity' in general.[31]

The example of Busy suggests that Puritan ministers could start with a clear premise, though the ceremonies themselves were indifferent ('pig may be eaten') they should not be used in the current setting of the English Church because of their idolatrous connotations and of the probable offence of the godly and the weak in faith ('pig may be eaten but not at the fair'), this ministerial stance was often reversed under pressure from their patrons or the authorities. Now, the offensive circumstances could be handled and the ceremonies' inherent indifference could combine with the pure intentions of the minister to triumph over any suspicions of idolatry ('pig may be eaten at the fair with a reformed mouth'). Finally, a virtue could be made of necessity and the use of the ceremonies justified as a demonstration of Christian liberty put on for the benefit of the over-scrupulous godly and the potentially idolatrous weak in faith ('I will eat pig at the fair to demonstrate that I am not a Judaiser'). Thus could claims to ideological purity be squared with entirely self-serving and contradictory behaviour, and apparently godly principle be combined with the preservation of one's living and the gratification of one's patron. (In Busy's case he could gorge himself on pig at the fair, mollify Dame Purecraft and retain his standing as a man of godly principle and scruple).[32]

Here is Collinson's hypocritical stage-Puritan stereotype to the life. Lake speculates 'that in the cadences and catches, the rhythms and repetitions of Zeal-of-the-Land Busy's speech we approach as closely as we are ever likely to get to what certain forms of puritan pseudo-extempore preaching actually sounded like'.[33] Leah Marcus has noted that Busy and Dame Purecraft's antipathy to the fair can be seen as symptomatic of broader Puritan objections to festivity, particularly when these occurred on the Sabbath.[34]

Lake concludes that Jonson's primary objection to the Puritans is the fact that they operate as a kind of anti-society that lives off the broader society, while self-righteously critiquing its affirmations of human community. According to this view, the stereotypical Puritan was absolutely crucial to the structural unity of Jonson's play: 'That is, in order to validate the intensely ambiguous world of the fair (and the theatre) which after all was at once the repository of the only sort of human solidarity and community on offer in the play and one of the most atavistic, atomized impulses of a thoroughly commercialized carnivalesque, Jonson needed the godly as an antitype, an antisociety.' The two fattest characters, Ursula and Busy, are mutually interdependent—they represent extremes of self-serving excess and hypocritical control—between this 'some sort of golden mean of restrained festivity, of controlled communalism, might notionally be located'.[35]

It is at this point of dialectical tension reaching the apparent resolution of a 'restrained festivity' or 'controlled communalism' that Jonson's satirical anti-Puritanism needs to be reassessed. The situation is rarely so simple, particularly in *Bartholomew Fair*, which is justly celebrated as the broadest and most humane of his comedies. Ian McAdam has argued that: 'The dialectical spectrum of too much versus too little law can best be understood in light of, or having its historical roots in, the Puritan ideological dilemma of the early modern period, which must be considered central, rather than (satirically) marginal, to the play's conception of social behavior.'[36] McAdam's view is a helpful corrective to perceiving Jonson in somewhat simplistic terms as anti-Puritan. The Puritans as a religious group played a key role in defining and formulating the ideological agendas of Jacobean England; the way in which Jonson structures the relationship between law and grace, or liberty and restraint in *Bartholomew Fair*, is indebted to the theological interrogation of these subjects undertaken by Puritan divines. It is important to take this into account when summarizing Jonson's views on the relationship between grace and works: they cannot be accounted for completely by reiterating that he adhered to a Catholic or Arminian theology. The broader contours of contemporary religious debate must be kept in mind.[37]

McAdam demonstrates that Jonson's understanding of masculine authority, gender, and the role of the playwright, is, to a large extent, determined by doctrines at the heart of English Puritanism: namely, the complete dependence of an individual's

salvation on the free, unmerited grace of God; the importance of faithful discipleship within the context of a congregation of believers following conversion, and the need for a male to prove his character and conduct in the management of his home before being able to exercise authority in the broader social sphere of church and state. McAdam concludes that to read *Bartholomew Fair* ‘as simply an exposure or exorcism of Puritan hypocrisy, or a refutation of Puritan antitheatrical writers, is to miss Jonson’s engagement with ideological and cultural issues deeply implicating him, as artist and thinker, in Puritan and Protestant constructions of gendered identity and sexual control’. The play primarily indicts the ‘aspirations to complete self-sufficiency’ of the (male) Renaissance humanist—as exemplified by Adam Overdo, JP—this involves ‘a masculine appropriation of spiritual authority that conveniently contains men’s sexual and ideological dependency on women’; an ideological construction borrowed from Puritan theological understandings of the relationships between marriage, the household, church and state. The dialectic between law and grace at the heart of Puritanism—in terms of salvation and masculine authority—also lies at the heart of Jonson’s play. To dismiss Puritanism as ‘(satirically) marginal’ is thus a failure to recognize just how indebted Jonson is to his religious and cultural context in the way he constructs masculinity, marriage and authority in *Bartholomew Fair*.[38]

Jonson, as is to be expected of an intelligent, observant, and politically involved playwright (who converted twice himself), engaged with the full spectrum of religious views articulated in English culture during his professional lifetime. This is perhaps most evident in the last play he wrote as a convinced Catholic, *Epicœne* (1609). Richard Dutton has argued that religion ‘is a comically serious issue in *Epicene*’. While ‘the context of farcical action suggests that ‘we are scarcely invited to linger over the theological implications of the language used’, the play’s repeated emphasis on ‘matters of providence, fate, doctrine, sin, suffering, retribution, redemption and martyrdom’ are finally too insistent ‘for us to dismiss it as verbal embroidery’.[39] Dutton surmises that the play is a dispersion of different parts of Jonson’s persona—‘the ultra-confident, yet conflicted playmaker to the court and the man who suffers repeatedly for his faith at the hands of the authorities’.[40] Dutton suggests that while Jonson is known elsewhere for his anti-Puritan satire, in *Epicœne*, where silence is a mark of unnatural behaviour, the

emphasis on Puritan silence is almost sympathetic. Truewit plagues Morose (hater of noise) 'with the consequences of a 'precise' wife: 'you must feast all the silent brethren once in three days, salute the sisters . . . ' (2.2.78ff). 'The brethren had been "silenced" in the sense that those who refused to accept the canons of the 1604 Hampton Court conference lost their licences to preach.'[41] Dutton suggests that Jonson, also interrogated by the Consistory Court (1606), for his failure to conform to state practices of worship, may be expressing solidarity here with others oppressed in their consciences by the state religious regime; this is confirmed by his decision to make Otter, the parson who assesses the grounds for annulling Morose's marriage, a Puritan.[42]

Perhaps more telling are the references littered throughout the play to the Guy Fawkes' plot (1605), formulated by disaffected Catholics, to blow up King James and the House of Lords. Dutton enumerates the recurrence of the terms 'plots' and 'powder' throughout the play; he also identifies the importance of 'equivocation'—which notoriously enabled Catholics to swear to a partial truth in order to save themselves. This was a key Jesuit defence and gained much publicity prior to the execution of Father Henry Garnet for his alleged involvement in the treasonous plot on 3 May 1606. The Hampton Court conference similarly required Church of England ministers to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles and Morose is told by Truewit that he must be brought 'to the faith i' the article'. The Oath of Allegiance was specifically designed to distinguish between spiritual loyalty to the Pope and patriotic loyalty to the king of England; Dutton postulates that Jonson probably had to take this oath without any 'equivocation, or mental reservation, or secret reservation whatsoever' as an employee of the English court. Morose is frustrated in his attempts to find a legal way out of his marriage through consultation with a minister and desires to geld himself in order to be freed from the bondage of a union that makes him a martyr to the noise he most feared. Dutton concludes by suggesting that *Epicœne* is the play in which Jonson gives fullest expression to his own conflicted position as a subject who 'was for any religion as being versed in both'.[43]

But Ian Donaldson makes a case for the religious implications of *Epicœne* to be taken further than a simple projection of Jonson's own complex religious position. He notes the parallels between Morose's situation hidden in 'a room with double walls and

treble ceilings, the windows close shut and caulked', with that of the Jesuit archpriest, George Blackwell, who finally resisted pressure from Rome and advised English Catholics to take the Oath of Allegiance, despite contrary advice from the Pope who encouraged him to pursue martyrdom instead.[44] As Dutton comments, '[i]f early audiences actually recognized such allusions and construed them as comments on the Jesuits and the martyrdom debate, this may help to explain the famously negative reception of the play which Drummond records.'[45] He speculates further: 'If at one level Jonson was writing about a Jesuit pseudo-martyr' (Blackwell did not, after all, follow the example of Sir Thomas More or Bishop Fisher), 'he was at another acting out himself. Whatever exactly his involvement in the Gunpowder Plot, it must have been another "exercise" of sorts, setting his spiritual faith against his political loyalty'.[46] To a certain extent all such biographical speculations about Jonson's plays remain tenuous. However, in a critical climate where we are often more attune to the implications of cross-dressing and a transvestite theatre for gender identity, it is important to remember the religio-political resonance of words such as 'silence', 'equivocation', 'exercise', 'plot', and closed rooms for Catholic recusants, silenced Puritan ministers, and their audiences (whether in the playhouse or the parish church).

I would like to conclude this section on the representation of religion in Jonson's writings with an exploration of the reception of one of his later plays, *The Magnetic Lady* (1632). Like Jonson's first successful play *Every Man in His Humour* (1598), *The Magnetic Lady: Or Humours Reconciled*, was based in part on the principle that dramatic characters could be built around a single dominant 'humour': this could find expression as a mood or a goal. While Jonson's later plays, including *The New Inn* (1629), *The Magnetic Lady* (1632), *A Tale of a Tub* (1633) and his last unfinished play *The Sad Shepherd* (1637), have often been dismissed pejoratively by critics as evidence of the playwright's 'decline'—a regrettable turn from the satirical exuberance of his middle period to the romanticism favoured by the Caroline court—*The Magnetic Lady* touched a raw religious nerve, evidencing Jonson's continuing ability to engage with issues of contemporary import in his drama. Jonson's play was licensed by the Master of the Revels, Henry Herbert, for performance on 12 October 1632. However, on 17 November, 1632, Sir John Pory wrote to Sir John Scudamore that:

> The Players of the Blackfryers were on Thursday called before the high Commission at Lambeth, and were there bound over to answer such articles as should be objected against them. And it is said to be for uttring some prophane speaches in abuse of Scripture and wholly things, which they found penned, for them to act and play, in Ben Jonsons newe comedy called the Magnetique lady.[47]

It appears that the authorities' objections to the play were not finally resolved until October, 1633, when Herbert records:

> Upon a second petition of the players to the High Commission court, wherein they did mee right in my care to purge their plays of all offense, my lords Grace of Canterbury bestowed many words upon mee, and discharged mee of any blame, and layd the whole fault of their play, called *The Magnetick Lady*, upon the players. This happened the 24 of Octob. 1633, at Lambeth. In their first petition they would have excused themselves on mee and the poett.[48]

It was the ecclesiastical, rather than secular, authorities who were concerned by 'some prophane speaches in abuse of Scripture and wholly things' that they identified in the play. Martin Butler has suggested that, while Jonson in general endorses the Arminian stance of William Laud (who was to become Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633) throughout the play, it is the sensitivity of Jonson's reference to this topic (potentially elaborated upon and played up by the actors in performance), which led to its censorship. The passage in question (I.v.10–23), when the complexities and malapropisms have been disentangled, makes a biting satirical comment in Jonson's usual vein on the involvement of women and laypersons (particularly Puritans) in theological discourse. Dame Polish, the primary speaker here, is one of Jonson's most impressive comic creations; as Butler notes:

> Though she has been unable to get their names right, the three groups she has distinguished correspond to what were essentially the three major theological alignments recognized in the English church under Archbishop Laud: the ordinary body of the faithful (the lukewarm Protestants); the militant Calvinists (precisians or Puritans); and the Arminians, the

> theological radicals of the right, with their preferences for ceremony and ritual, stained glass and vestments, praying rather than preaching (hence, "worse then Papists").

Butler argues that the text, as it stands, was fairly innocuous from the point of view of the Laudian authorities.[49] As he sees it, the depiction of Arminianism opened the opportunity for the players to elaborate on stage in a way that the Caroline church could not tolerate.[50]

The incident thus illustrates not only the unexpected pitfalls faced by playwrights at the hands of ecclesiastical censorship, but also Jonson's ongoing commitment to the exploration of contemporary religious issues in his drama. Far from retreating into a kind of benighted romanticism, Jonson is satirically interrogating the social implications of Caroline ecclesiastical reforms in his later plays—especially *The Magnetic Lady* and *A Tale of a Tub*. Julie Maxwell critiques Butler for being too narrow in his definition of Jonson's religious satire suggesting that Jonson 'invented a new sub-genre' of 'parish comedy' in order to explore 'the implementation of Laud's reforms in the specific localities that constituted . . . the early Stuart parish'.[51] Maxwell argues that Jonson works through the smokescreen of anticlerical stereotypes and the careful accumulation of historical and biographical detail (that is specific and traceable, but which does not directly target eminent Laudians) in order to express his broader 'disenchantment with Caroline religious culture'.[52] Clerics, such as the Laudian Dr John Grant, who Maxwell offers as a probable source for the vicar in *The Magnetic Lady*, or John Elborow in *A Tale of a Tub*, become relatively safe, representative stereotypes for Jonson's satirical attack upon the ecclesiastical (rather than the theological) agenda of Laudianism. This enabled Jonson to 'visually jibe' through his theatre at Laud's attempt to embrace 'the beauty of holiness' in church ritual and worship, without undercutting the Arminian theology that accompanied the archbishop's ecclesiastical reforms (and which, as Butler also notes, was close to Jonson's own theological position, favouring a voluntarism that allowed 'for self-determination' in conversion).[53]

Maxwell's analysis of Jonson's satirical attack upon Laudian ecclesiastical reforms here is very similar to Lake's reading of Jonson's earlier mixture of topical historical detail and cultural stereotypes when targeting Puritan conformists in *Bartholomew Fair*. However, Maxwell is careful to note that Jonson's anti-Laudian satire

does not align him with his erstwhile Puritan opponents. She suggests that Jonson recuperates a pre-Reformation model offered by Chaucer (with his 'occupational typecasting') and that Jonson's focus on the ecclesiastical (rather than theological) agenda of the Laudians enables his anticlerical stance to be distinguished from that of Puritan critics of the establishment, such as William Prynne.[54] Jonson's attack on the Laudian party in the early 1630s caused him more grief than his satirical critique of Puritan conformists in the 1610s; his targets had far more political clout and Jonson himself, though still an employee, was no longer in favour at court. However, the public 'failure' of his late plays in performance can best be seen as an indicator of Jonson's ongoing ability effectively to satirize his contemporary culture through a flexible and innovative dramaturgy, rather than a retreat into pastoral romance motivated by nostalgia and an inability to engage with the political and religious agendas of the Caroline court.

III Religion and Theatre

> . . . the licentious Poet and Player together are growne to such impudencie, as with shameless *Shemei*, they teach Nobilitie, Knighthood, graue Matrons & ciuil citizens, and like Countrey dogs snatch at euery passengers heeles. Yea, Playes are growne now adayes into such high request *(Horresco referens)* as that some prophane persons affirm, they can learne as much both for example and edifying at a Play, as at a Sermon. *O tempora, O mores*, O times, O manners, tremble thou Earth, blush yee Heauens, and speake O head, if euer any *Sodomite* vttered such blasphemie within thy gates. Did the diuell euer speake thus impiously in this conflict with the Archangell? To compare a lasciuious Stage to this sacred Pulpet and oracle of trueth? To compare a silken counterfeit to a Prophet, to Gods Angell, to his Minister, to the distributer of Gods heauenly mysteries? And to compare the idel and scurrile inuention of an illiterate bricklayer, to the holy, pure, and powerfull word of God, which is the foode of our soules to eternall saluation? Lord, forgiue them, they knowe not what they say.[55]
>
> I cannot think there's that antipathy

> "Twixt *puritanes* and *players*, as some cry;
> Though LIPPE, at Paul's, ran from his text away,
> To inveigh 'gainst plays, what did he then but play?[56]

> Ben Johnson satirically Exprest the vaine disputes of Divines by Inigo Lanthorne disputeing wth a puppet in Bartholomew faire: It is so, It is not soe; It is soe, It is not soe, crying thus one to another a quarter of an houre together.[57]

I conclude this essay by exploring the relationship between religion and the theatre in early modern London in so far as it impacted upon Jonson's own writings and his understanding of his role as a playwright. The first two epigraphs to this section clearly demonstrate the ways in which contemporary preachers and playwrights saw themselves in competition with one another; both pulpit and stage involved an element of play; both sought to edify their audiences through exhortation and example. Jonson's own ambivalence about the medium of theatre by which he gained his living is well documented; in some respects he shared the reservations and even repulsion voiced by various segments of the population of early modern London, including certain Puritans. However, despite his consciousness of affinities with the preachers who railed against him as an 'illiterate bricklayer', idle and scurrilous in his inventions, Jonson continued to write for the stage until the end of his life. In this section, I look briefly at the role of moral instruction in Jonson's self-construction as a playwright and the ways in which morality or ethics interact with religion in his life and writings. Finally, I consider the famous exchange between Zeal-of-the-Land Busy and the puppet Dionysius in *Bartholomew Fair*; referred to by John Selden in the third epigraph above. This theatrical exchange represents Jonson's serious engagement with biblical authority—as demonstrated in his correspondence with Selden—transformed into a dramatic encounter for the stage and designed effectively to answer the theatre's religious critics.

George A. E. Parfitt has suggested that:

> In Jonson God and the gods are largely aloof. Never an atheist, he seems to have seen ethics, rather than metaphysics, as the potential means of salvation for the individual and society. In other words, if humankind is to be saved from its own folly—if it is to succeed in achieving and sustaining

> 'a good and consistent life'—it will do so with the help of accumulated, time-honored, ethical wisdom and not through Christ's sacrifice or by placating Jupiter.[58]

This divorce of ethics, or moral instruction, from religion was certainly a realistic existential option, perhaps even the norm, for educated individuals in the classical pre-Christian world of ancient Rome. Despite the importance of classical models for Jonson's drama, however, Parfitt's argument entails a construction of Christianity—the separation of ethics from metaphysics—that was almost unthinkable in early modern England. It fails adequately to account for Jonson's two, well-documented conversions, or for the union of ethics and metaphysics frequently found in his poems touching on religious subjects. Jonson's poem, 'The Sinner's Sacrifice', addressed to the Trinity, demonstrates that Jonson did not believe that the 'good and consistent life' could be achieved without repentance or the aid of Christ's sacrifice:

O HOLY, blessed, glorious Trinity
Of persons, still one God in Unity
The faithful man's believed mystery,
Help, help to lift
Myself up to thee, harrow'd, torn, and bruis'd,
By sin, and Satan; and my flesh misus'd,
As my heart lies in pieces, all confus'd,
O take my gift.
All-gracious God, the sinner's sacrifice,
A broken heart thou wert not wont despise;
But 'bove the fat of rams, or bulls, to prize,
An offering meet,
For thy acceptance: O, behold me right,
And take compassion on my grievous plight!
What odour can be, than a heart contrite,
To thee more sweet?
Eternal Father, God, who did'st create
This all of nothing, gav'st it form, and fate,

And breath'st into it, life, and light, with state
To worship thee.
Eternal God the Son, who not deniedst
To take our nature; becam'st man, and diedst,
To pay our debts, upon thy crosse, and criedst
ALL'S DONE IN ME.
Eternal Spirit, God from both proceeding,
Father and Son; the Comforter, in breeding
Pure thoughts in man: with fiery zeal them feeding
For acts of grace.[59]

Ironically, Robert Milles captured Jonson's own ambition to edify his audience through his plays—as expressed in the Prologue to *Volpone*, for example—far more effectively than Parfitt in his dismissive reference to profane persons who asserted that 'they can learne as much both for example and edifying at a Play, as at a Sermon'.[60]

In holding to this view, however, Jonson was not evidencing profanity, idleness, or scurrility. His question to John Selden regarding 'the literall sense and historicall of the holy text usually brought against the counterfeiting of sexes by apparell',[61] demonstrates his personal desire to interrogate and determine whether the purportedly biblical arguments against the early modern theatre aired by its opponents had any validity. His concern with profanity is amply demonstrated by his response to John Donne's *Anniversary* poem: that it was 'profane and full of blasphemies . . . he told Mr. Donne, if it had been written of the Virgin Mary it had been something'.[62] Even if Jonson had not been motivated by personal faith, or conscience, the response of the ecclesiastical authorities to *The Magnetic Lady* make it clear that both self-censorship and sensitivity to the religious views of church and state were crucial if a playwright wished to avoid prison, fines, or physical mutilation. But the best way to explore Jonson's views on the inter-relationship between religion and theatre, particularly the most common objections raised by religious critics of the institution, is to examine his satire of the 'vaine disputes of Divines by Inigo Lanthorne disputeing wth a puppet in Bartholomew faire'.[63]

Bartholomew Fair—object of Zeal-of-the-Land Busy's horrified declamations against idolatry—in medieval times hosted theological disputes between students. This

was a prime attraction for visitors.[64] Jonson stages just such a theological dispute at the climax of *Bartholomew Fair*, which, as Riggs has noted, 'mirror[s] the preoccupations of the lawyers and scholars who heard Jonson read it aloud in 1613. Selden saw Busy as a foil that threw his own viewpoint into sharp relief. The sectarian preacher's approach to Scripture is presented as incurably partisan, whereas the hero of Jonson's "Epistle to Master John Selden" personifies the ideal of disinterested scholarly inquiry.'[65] On this occasion, however, Busy's opponent is not a scholarly hero, but a genderless puppet. Jonson places in Busy's mouth a deliberate allusion to the attack made upon him by Milles, and aligns Busy against the authority of the King and the Master of the Revels:

> LAN. Sir, I present nothing but what is licens'd by authority.
>
> BVS. Thou art all *license*, euen *licentiousnesse* it selfe, *Shimei!*
>
> LAN. I haue the Master of [the] *Reuell's* hand for't, Sir.
>
> BVS. The Master of [the] *Rebells* hand, thou hast; *Satan's!* Hold thy peace, thy scurrility, shut vp thy mouth, thy profession is damnable, and in pleading for it, thou dost plead for *Baal*. (V.v.14–22)

Ironically, the puppet wins the debate through his superior casuistry and knowledge of Scripture. He quotes from a New Testament passage that effectively challenges Busy's commitment to Old Testament Hebraism: 'there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28); the argument is definitively proven by the puppet lifting up his garment and demonstrating that there is literally nothing beneath. Busy acknowledges his defeat on both theological and dramatic grounds and is converted: 'Let it goe on. For I am changed, and will become a beholder with you' (V.v.116–17).

Jonson's metatheatrical solution to those who criticized drama on biblical grounds was to stage a religious debate and model the comprehensive humiliation and conversion of those who betrayed a 'rabidly partisan' view of Scripture—not by simple denunciation or farce, but through a superior casuistry that demonstrated the logical implications of the anti-theatricalists' point of view: 'in the world the puppet presents to Busy, there is no [direct correspondence] or relationship between sign and thing because there is no 'thing' under the sign, no genital under the costume for the sign to refer to . . . This is part of the power the puppet has over the anti-theatricalist. He forecloses the very possibility of meaning and therefore of knowledge itself.'[66]

Jonson's effective satire here is something of a Pyrrhic victory: in demonstrating the logical fallacies inherent in religious arguments against the theatre, he also undercuts the semiology of performance that underlies his own artistry on stage—there is 'nothing' underneath. Laura Levine suggests that Jonson acknowledges 'an uneasy analogy between his own sterility and the anti-theatricalists he so viciously attacks' in the performance of Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*—staged by the puppets—where everything 'other in the poem is reduced to a version of the self—the self of the spectator watching the puppet show'.[67] Levine suggests that the figure of the mad Trouble-All, who is clearly distinguishable from Quarlous, is Jonson's attempt to posit a symbol for that which is authentically real outside the fiction of *Bartholomew Fair*; costume is not constitutive within the world of the play as a whole.[68] This is, however, a rather slender foundation on which to base a poetics of performance, particularly when so much ground has already been yielded to the anti-theatricalists. Jonson's seventy-fifth epigram, often read (rightly) as a satirical shot at Puritan ministers, can also be interpreted as a wry acknowledgement of his complicity in the same world of slippery signification and performance:

I cannot think there's that antipathy
'Twixt *puritanes* and *players*, as some cry;
Though LIPPE, at Paul's, ran from his text away,
To inveigh 'gainst plays, what did he then but play?[69]

Ultimately, even Jonson himself—despite all his attempts to claim the moral high ground—can only play on stage.

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[1] Cited by Jason P. Rosenblatt, *Renaissance England's Chief Rabbi: John Selden* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 55.
[2] Cited by Rosenblatt, 56. Recent work on the contents of Jonson's 'choice & able store' of books confirms the accuracy of Selden's assumption about his friend's library and reading habits. See Robert S. Miola, 'Ben Jonson, Catholic Poet', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 25: 4 (2001), 107–108.
[3] Reid Barbour, *John Selden: Measures of the Holy Commonwealth in Seventeenth-Century England* (University of Toronto Press, 2003), 111.
[4] David Riggs, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 197–198.
[5] Ian Donaldson, 'Jonson, Benjamin (1572–1637)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct. 2008 [www.oxforddnb.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/15116, accessed 26 March 2012]. For further discussion of this incident see Rocco Coronato, '"Was it just an anecdote?": Ben Jonson and the Eucharist, Paris, 1612', *Ben Jonson Journal*, 4 (1997), 35–46. Coronato explores the ways in which different theologies of the Eucharist (as discussed in the debate Jonson witnessed) result in a diversity of representational theories and the implications of these for an interpretation of the masques Jonson wrote for the Stuart court both before and after his trip to Paris in 1612.
[6] Cited by Riggs, 190.
[7] Cited by Riggs, 190.
[8] From *Conversations with Drummond* in C. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn M. Simpson (eds), *Ben Jonson*, 11 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925–52), vol. 1, 141. All subsequent citations of Jonson's works, other than those embedded in quotations from secondary sources, come from this edition.
[9] Donaldson, 'Benjamin Jonson'.
[10] Riggs, *Ben Jonson*, 206–211.
[11] Cited by Miola, 101.
[12] James P. Crowley, 'He Took his Religion by trust': The Matter of Ben Jonson's Conversion', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 22: 1 (1998), 53–70.
[13] W. David Kay, *Ben Jonson: A Literary Life* (London: Macmillan, 1995), 77.
[14] Cited by Kay, 77.
[15] Kay, *Ben Jonson*, 77.
[16] Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity & Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 1993).
[17] Herford, Simpson and Simpson, vol. 1, 141.
[18] Donaldson, 'Benjamin Jonson'.
[19] Frances Teague, 'Jonson and the Gunpowder Plot', *The Ben Jonson Journal*, 5 (1998), 249–252.
[20] Herford, Simpson, and Simpson, vol. 1, 202. Contractions silently expanded.
[21] Cited by Kay, 163.
[22] Donaldson, 'Benjamin Jonson'.
[23] Richard Dutton, 'Jonson's Metempsychosis Revisited: Patronage and Religious Controversy', A. D. Cousins and Alison V. Scott (eds), *Ben Jonson and the Politics of Genre* (Cambridge: University Press, 2009), 155–156. Alizon Brunning has suggested that Jonson is presenting a more conflicted theological position in *Volpone* than that suggested by Dutton—'a second, more convincing, but complex reading in which Jonson himself is equated with the energetic and vital trickster who is set to meet a harsh end in the stocks but ends by asking the audience to set him free'. 'Jonson's Romish Fox: Anti-Catholic Discourse in *Volpone*', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, 6: 2 (September, 2000), 4.1–32 <URL: http://purl.oclc.org/emls/06–2/brunvol.htm>.
[24] Dutton, 'Jonson's Metempsychosis Revisited', 156. Peter Lake has argued that Jonson undertook a similar critique of the Elizabethan establishment in his earlier tragedy *Sejanus* (1603)—'a strikingly absolutist and Catholic version of the "civic republican tradition"'. 'From *Leicester his Commonwealth* to *Sejanus his Fall*: Ben Jonson and the Politics of Roman (Catholic) virtue', E. Shagan (ed.), *Catholics and the 'Protestant Nation': Religious Politics and Identity in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 128–161. Gary Taylor has also argued that Jonson's Catholicism plays an important role in his representation of pagan ritual in *Sejanus*. 'Divine [ ]Sences' *Shakespeare Survey*, 54: 1 (2001), 22–24.
[25] Miola, 'Ben Jonson', 112.
[26] Anne Barton, 'Plays for Puritans', *London Review of Books*, 2: 24 (18 December, 1980), 14.

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[27] Patrick Collinson, 'Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*: The Theatre Constructs Puritanism', David L. Smith, Richard Strier and David Bevington (eds), *The Theatrical City: Culture, Theatre and Politics in London, 1576–1649* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 157–169.
[28] Patrick Collinson, 'Literature and the Church', David Loewenstein and Janel M. Mueller (eds), *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 390.
[29] Peter Lake, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat: Protestants, Papists and Players in Post-Reformation England by Peter Lake and Michael Questier* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 582.
[30] Lake, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 585–586.
[31] Lake, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 587.
[32] Lake, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 587.
[33] Lake, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 602.
[34] Leah Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth: Jonson, Herrick, Milton, Marvell, and the Defense of Old Holiday Pastimes* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1989), 24–63.
[35] Lake, *The Antichrist's Lewd Hat*, 597.
[36] Ian McAdam, 'The Puritan Dialectic of Law and Grace in *Bartholomew Fair*', *Studies in English Literature*, 46: 2 (2006), 415–433.
[37] As for example in Miola, 'Ben Jonson', 108–109 or Julie Maxwell, 'Religion', Julie Sanders (ed.), *Ben Jonson in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 233–234. 'Arminian' is a term used to describe followers of the Dutch theologian, Jacobus Arminius; his views were presented in opposition to those of classic Calvinism at the Synod of Dort (1618–19). Arminius argued against the doctrine of predestination to salvation; he also asserted that humans have free will and can choose either to accept or reject God's grace.
[38] McAdam, 'The Puritan Dialectic', 415–433.
[39] Richard Dutton, *Epicene, or The Silent Woman* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 26.
[40] Dutton, *Epicene*, 26.
[41] The Hampton Court conference (1604) was held between King James and leaders of the Church of England; it was designed to deal with a series of reforms requested by Puritans within the established church.
[42] Dutton, *Epicene*, 32–33.
[43] Dutton, *Epicene*, 33–39. Father Henry Garnet's defence of the use of 'equivocation' on the part of the Catholic English subject is discussed at length by Paula McQuade in 'Truth and Consequences: Equivocation, Mental Reservation, and the Secret Catholic Subject in Early Modern England', *The Ben Jonson Journal*, 8 (2001), 277–289.
[44] Cited by Dutton, *Epicene*, 39–41.
[45] Dutton, *Epicene*, 41.
[46] Dutton, *Epicene*, 42.
[47] Cited by Martin Butler, 'Ecclesiastical Censorship of Early Stuart Drama: The Case of Jonson's The *Magnetic Lady*', *Modern Philology*, 89:4 (1992), 470. See also Richard Dutton, '"Discourse in the Players, Though no Disobedience": Sir Henry Herbert's Problems with the Players and Archbishop Laud', *The Ben Jonson Journal*, 5 (1998), 37–61.
[48] Cited by Butler, 'Ecclesiastical Censorship', 471.
[49] 'Laudian' refers to those who were seeking to reform the Church of England by adopting a more ritualized form of worship and a stronger emphasis on the sacraments; such individuals also held to an Arminian theology, see note 37.
[50] Butler, 'Ecclesiastical Censorship', 475, 477.
[51] Julie Maxwell, 'Ben Jonson Among the Vicars: Cliché, Ecclesiastical Politics, and the Invention of 'Parish Comedy', *The Ben Jonson Journal*, 9 (2002), 38, 47.
[52] Maxwell, 'Ben Jonson Among the Vicars', 62.
[53] Maxwell, 'Ben Jonson Among the Vicars', 37–68.
[54] Maxwell, 'Ben Jonson Among the Vicars', 62–63.
[55] Robert Milles, *Abrahams Svite For Sodome. A Sermon Preached at Pauls Crosse the 25. of Avgvst. 1611* (London, 1612), D5v–D6v.
[56] Ben Jonson, *Epigrams*, 75 in C. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn M. Simpson (eds), *Ben Jonson*, 11 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925–52), vol. 1, 671.

[57] Frederick Pollock, ed., *Table Talk of John Selden* (London: Quaritch, 1927), 119–120.
[58] George E. A. Parfitt, 'Ethics and Christianity in Ben Jonson,' James Hirsch (ed.), *New Perspectives on Ben Jonson* (London: Associated University Presses, 1997), 81.
[59] Ben Jonson, 'Poems of Devotion', 1, *Underwood: Consisting of Divers Poems* in C. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn M. Simpson eds, *Ben Jonson*, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925–52), vol. 1, 687.
[60] Milles, D6r.
[61] Cited by Rosenblatt, 55.
[62] *Conversations with Drummond*, cited by Miola, 109.
[63] Pollock, *Table Talk*, 119. Selden is recalling a reading of the play given by Jonson to several friends; either the text has changed, or Selden is not remembering the scene accurately. Riggs *Ben Jonson*, 197.
[64] Sean McEvoy, *Ben Jonson: Renaissance Dramatist* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 122.
[65] Riggs, *Ben Jonson*, 197.
[66] Laura Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization 1579–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 101.
[67] Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing*, 106.
[68] Levine, *Men in Women's Clothing*, 103.
[69] Jonson, *Epigrams*, 671.