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Sin and Salvation in the sermons of Edwin Sandys: ‘Be this sin against the Lord far from me, that I should cease to pray for you’.

Sarah L. Bastow

Introduction: Sin in the Elizabethan era

The way to salvation was at the heart of the concerns of the religious reformers of the sixteenth century, and through this the nature of sin also came under greater scrutiny. Reformers asserted that the medieval Catholic Church had fallen too far away from the true and primitive Church, that its many rules were not based on the scriptures but on the whims of the papal-antichrist. This lead to the Catholic notions of sin also to be questioned; sin could not be erased through the purchase of indulgences or by paying for prayers.¹ If we accept John Addy’s view that ‘Protestantism retained the medieval conception/idea of sin but without the medieval insurance policy of confession and absolution’ then the men and women of the sixteenth century were living in very uncertain times.² Moreover as Alec Ryrie has pointed out the removal of Catholic devotional items which were parts of the work of salvation meant that the early modern Protestant was without these aids and instead reliant on an inner experience.³ If personal conscience was to be the arbiter of what was sinful for the godly then the individual was to some extent self-reliant in determining what sinful behaviour was and how salvation was to be achieved. Tipson has argued that in making scripture accessible what some found was not a gospel of salvation but one of damnation. Moreover references to unpardonable sins were to be found in the gospels.⁴ Failing to see that pardon was being offered or resisting true religion was an unpardonable act and thus an indication of

¹ Debora Shuger, ‘The Reformation of Penance’, *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 71, 4 (2008), 557. Covers reformation narratives of triumphalism and fall, plus Catholic notions of salvation.

² John Addy, *Sin and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1989), p. 16.

³ Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 1-2.

⁴ Baird Tipson, ‘A Dark Side of Seventeenth-Century English Protestantism: The Sin against the Holy Spirit’, *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 77, No. 3/4 (1984), pp. 301-330.

who was to be found amongst the elect and who was revealed as reprobate. The Church's concern with moral behaviour has been well documented, but the identification of sinful behaviour based upon personal conscience no longer just concerned such things as adultery and gambling, but also on less visible shortcomings, such as the failure to see the true path to salvation. Whilst personal conscience was important, in reality the populace was not left alone to seek out their own personal truths, to determine if their behaviour was sinful or not, but was guided through this process through reading of scripture assisted by marginal annotations, hearing passages read aloud and of course hearing sermons. Carlson argued that 'late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century English preachers built a new relationship with their hearers - one in which they were effectively the indispensable agents of salvation'.⁵ The importance of preaching has been emphasised by Hunt, Morrissey and Ryrie, with the latter noting that '[t]he sermon was the defining event of early modern Protestant worship.'⁶ For Edwin Sandys the failure of many to see that godly religion was the truth was indeed a great sin. Sandys was adamant that the key to salvation was to be found by following true godly religion and rejecting popery, but he was equally as clear that the godly would reject unnecessary reform. This difficult path was best followed by obedience and co-operation with those in authority, particularly ministers and the godly magistrate. It is clear that his advice on sin and attaining salvation was often tailored to his audience, whether this was the Queen herself or a congregation in York. This chapter will examine the sermons of Sandys both in the light of the religious controversies of the Elizabethan period and also to show that Sandys was very politically aware in the way that he framed his sermons. Sandys, whilst

⁵ Eric Joseph Carlson, 'The Boring of the Ear: Shaping the Pastoral Vision of Preaching In England, 1540-1640', in *Preachers and People in the Reformation and Early Modern Period*, ed. L. Taylor (Leiden, NLD, 2001), p. 250.

⁶ Arnold Hunt, *The Art of Hearing: English Preachers and their Audiences 1590-1640* (Cambridge, 2010); M. Morrissey, *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons, 1558-1642* (Oxford, 2011); A. Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p. 351.

religiously ‘radical’ in the context of the era, was also socially conservative, advocating the need for hierarchy and order.⁷ Thus for Sandys, sin and salvation were intrinsically linked to the politics of the day. His sermons saw the battle for the salvation of men’s souls played out in the religious conflicts of the Elizabethan era.

Edwin Sandys was a prominent (if less well known) member of the reformed Elizabethan Church. He became Bishop of Worcester in 1559 and went on to become Bishop of London (1570) and Archbishop of York (1577).⁸ He was chancellor of Cambridge in the reign of Edward VI but had been forced to flee the country in the reign of Mary. His Protestant credentials were so well established in Edward’s reign that he became embroiled in high politics, with the Duke of Northumberland requesting him to preach a sermon in favour of Lady Jane Grey’s accession to the throne.⁹ This act, alongside his commitment to reformed religion, resulted in his arrest and subsequent exile. His later ecclesiastical career was coloured by his exile experience, which he spent predominantly in Strasbourg and Zurich in the company of men such as Peter Martyr Vermigli and Henrich Bullinger. On his return to England in 1558 he accepted the office of Bishop of Worcester, albeit with a certain amount of reluctance.¹⁰ Sandys achieved prominence in the Elizabethan church and as a result of this

⁷ Peter Ivor Kaufman, ‘How Socially Conservative Were the Elizabethan Religious Radicals?’, *Albion*, 30, 1 (1998), pp. 29-48.

⁸ Patrick Collinson, ‘Sandys, Edwin (1519?–1588)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24649>, accessed 29 May 2013].

⁹ John Foxe, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* (1583 edition) Book 12 (HRI Online Publications, Sheffield, 2011), p. 2110, Available from: <http://www.johnfoxe.org> [accessed: 19.3.14]; Collinson, ‘Sandys, Edwin’, *ODNB*.

¹⁰ ‘Bishop Sandys to Peter Martyr (April 1560)’ in Hastings Robinson, ed., *The Zurich letters, comprising the correspondence of several English bishops and others with some of the Helvetian reformers, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 2nd edition, Vol.2, Parker Society vol. 50-1(Cambridge, 1846), p. 97.

he also faced various crises of conscience. His early years saw him in conflict over matters such as the retention of images and the wearing of vestments, but in the long term his career became shaped by the pragmatism needed to retain favour under Elizabeth.¹¹ Sandys had shown himself to be a committed Protestant reformer and he truly believed that preaching was essential to salvation, for it was through access to the scriptures that salvation was to be achieved. Sandys was keen to spread the word of reform and felt himself well qualified to give his opinion on many matters, even when this led him into troubled waters. He replied to Matthew Parker's instruction that he 'live and leave off talking', that all he desired was that his life should 'hinder not my preaching'.¹²

In 1585 a collection of his sermons was published; this contained twenty-two sermons and a preface written by Sandys defending the publication of them. Arnold Hunt's recent analysis of the sermon as an auditory experience has illustrated the problems that arise for the historian in using printed sermons, but also the dilemmas faced by the preachers themselves in setting down their words on the page.¹³ Some preachers were reluctant to see their words set down in print, for as Hunt noted it was 'an inherently "colder" medium, lacking the personal warmth of the spoken voice' and one which opened their words up to greater scrutiny and possible 'hostile criticism'.¹⁴ Sandys addressed the issues raised by printing his sermons in the preface 'To the Christian Reader' with a quotation from Ecclesiastes 12:12: 'For there is none of making many books, and much reading is a weariness of the flesh'.¹⁵ He continued that this had led many to withdraw from writing and 'withhold their pens from

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-5.

¹² John Bruce and Thomas Perowne (eds), *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, Parker Society, 42 (1853), p. 126.

¹³ Hunt, *Art of Hearing*, pp. 12, 119.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁵ John Ayre, *The Sermons of Edwin Sandys* (Parker Society, 1842: 2006), p. 1

paper'. Despite this, however, he defended the fact that he felt the need to publish his work, as 'words spoken are soon come soon gone, but written withal may make a deeper impression'.¹⁶ Thus by putting sermons down in print he hoped that they might have a deeper and longer-lasting impact. This formulaic 'reluctance to publish' would appear to have been a mere conceit, for as a self-publicist Sandys was not modest:

Of the book itself I will say but this, that for mine own part I am verily persuaded, there is no work written in this kind wherein men of principal estate, or particular calling, may be either more sufficiently informed to know, or more plainly directed to perform, their several duties: The superior how to govern, the inferior how to obey; the minister what to teach, the people what to learn; the parliament what to establish, the realm what to embrace; her majesty and council what to hear, court, city and country what to amend...¹⁷

This highlighted many of the key themes that Sandys saw as vital in sermon-centred piety, which would lead the way to salvation. Sandys preached many times and many of his sermons have this common theme; obedience to the church and state. He envisaged this relationship as not just a one-way process, but rather through harmony with and obedience to the Church and State salvation would be achieved. However, as Carlson has pointed out, to 'accomplish the heady goal of saving the people, preachers had to preach more often and more effectively, and audiences had truly to listen.'¹⁸

Sandys was clearly an educated and enthusiastic preacher, having both academic training and the experience of being able to engage in theological debate with some of the most influential

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁷ Ayre, *Sermons*, p. 3.

¹⁸ Carlson, 'The Boring of the Ear', p. 251.

Reformation thinkers and writers during his time on the continent.¹⁹ The composition of Sandys' audience is of course not recorded for us in these printed sermons, nor is their reaction. We do, however, know the locations in which the sermons were first delivered. Of the twenty-two sermons recorded in the volume, eight were recorded as preached at St Paul's; two of these were preached inside the cathedral itself with the other six delivered outdoors at the Cross, whilst there is an additional single sermon recorded as delivered at the Spittle.²⁰ Another four were recorded as preached before the Queen's majesty, reflecting the fact that Sandys was, for a time at least, on the list of favoured preachers approved to come before the Queen. Five were preached at York in various circumstances, with an additional sermon that is simply listed as 'preached at an assize' that is also likely to have been delivered at York. The remaining three sermons in the volume consist of two delivered whilst in exile at Strasbourg and a single sermon delivered before Parliament. All took a formulaic pattern in that they explained the context of the biblical passage that the sermon took as its starting point and then proceeded to break this down allowing for a more complex engagement with the differing ideas. Following this the sermons then went on to suggest how this could be applied, often giving examples of where either society (or sometime an individual) was failing to implement the ideals of the text and therefore risking their salvation. Thus Sandys appears to have followed the formulaic method of delivering a sermon, which was consistent with contemporary practice and typical of his era. The sermons will be considered in terms of the intended audience, beginning with a consideration of the sermons delivered to Parliament

¹⁹ William J. Torrance Kirby, Emidio Campi, Frank A. James, III (eds.), *A Companion to Peter Martyr Vermigli* (Leiden, 2009). Debates centred around the Eucharist and predestination as well as the place of vestments in reformed worship, the role of the church hierarchy and the influence of secular rules on theological interpretations.

²⁰ Ayre, *Sermons*. Sermons are numbered for ease of reference. Sermon at St Paul's are 1, 9, 17-22 whilst sermon 14 was delivered at the Spittle.

and the Queen and then moving on to sermons delivered to the populace at large in London and York.

Sermons before Parliament and the Queen

Sadly none of the published sermons are dated, but the second sermon in the volume takes a theme which gives this chapter its title; ‘Be this sin against the Lord far from me, that I should cease to pray for you: but I will show you the good and the right way’, which was preached before Parliament.²¹ The sermon advocates that it would be sinful for Parliament, the monarch, the clergy and the people to fail in their duties and then went on to outline what those duties were. Sandys gives a brief history of parliaments and states that princes should consult on three things: the state of religion – for if religion is not safe neither are men’s souls; the state of the prince – as the head must be well for the body to prosper; and lastly the state of the commonwealth in reference to the importance of good government.²² The concepts of obedience, hierarchy and social order, with everyone in their allotted role, are shown in this sermon to be central to Sandys’ view of reformed godly religion; to the securing of salvation and to the avoiding of sin. The Tudor obsession with obedience to Church and State has also been well documented and Sandys takes up key tropes of the body politic and the commonwealth, tying in the importance of religion as the third element.²³ This theme recurs in many of the other sermons; obedience is always central, but so is the concept that religious ministers are vital to the shaping of both the religious and political health of the nation. He elucidates further on the role of ministers in their duties to pray and to teach. Moreover he asserted that if ministers do not do their duty then they will be punished, for failure either to hear or deliver the true word of God was the ultimate sin.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²³ Richard L. Greaves, ‘Concepts of Political Obedience in Late Tudor England: Conflicting Perspectives’, *Journal of British Studies*, 22 (1982), pp. 23-34; Penry Williams, *The Later Tudors: England 1547-1603* (Oxford, 1995).

Sandys was clearly very politically aware in terms of structuring his sermons to suit his audience, for ministers are instructed to pray that monarchs should have wise and godly counsellors. This was a message to both ministers and monarch, echoing a familiar theme, but it was also a warning that good advice could only come from the godly. His enumeration of the duty of ministers to teach gave out a clear political message, but also reflected a genuine concern that was held by Sandys throughout his life. He advocated that good teaching was essential to the conversion of the nation and that it was the duty of all, especially bishops, to ensure that the right message was disseminated. Sandys put this belief into practice founding Hawkshead Grammar School, Cumbria, in 1585, which was his hometown and also an area he described as ‘raw in religion’ and ‘rude in education’.²⁴ Sandys also advocated that it was necessary to train the clergy and maintain their skills: as Archbishop he ensured that four synods were held every year to further the clergy’s learning.²⁵ Sandys believed that ministers must teach, but only in the right way and the right things, namely the gospel.

He also noted that unworthy ministers should be cast out. This was a policy he adhered to seeking out unworthy ministers in his diocese, for example in Worcester he had removed a number of priests whom he held to be corrupt for keeping whores, a practice which he deemed ‘notoriously scandalous’.²⁶ His sermon to Parliament then elicited the view that everyone should know their duties and role in life and should fulfil them. To maintain order Parliament was to provide good advice to the monarch, but religious order fell to the ministers of the church. Sandys was speaking here to men who already knew that hierarchy

²⁴ State Papers 15/29 f. 121, ‘Reasons moving the Archbishop of York to found a grammar school at Hawkshead’.

²⁵ Lansdowne Vol. 27, f. 20, Apr. 16, 1578.

²⁶ John Strype, *The Life and Acts of Matthew Parker*, vol. II (Oxford, 1821), p. 78.

and structure were important to maintaining a peaceful nation, but he also made the point that the religious direction of the nation should be guided by the godly minister. Very similar themes were to be seen in the sermons before the queen.²⁷

Kirby notes that public sermons were ‘vital instruments of popular moral and social guidance’; those at court also served an instructional purpose, but as McCullough’s work has shown the sermon at court was different from anywhere else in the land.²⁸ Those preaching before the Queen had a tricky task to fulfil, as did those appointing the men to preach. The preachers were to convey the message of godly reformation without offending the Queen, and with suitable brevity.²⁹ John Strype noted ‘she was a critical hearer and would sometime take offence at the preachers that came up before her’ so that Archbishop Parker had to amend the lists of preachers to ensure that only those who would strike the correct note in their sermons were invited.³⁰ Certainly preachers who said the wrong thing could blight their careers; for example in 1570 Edward Dering preached an infamous sermon before the Queen, berating her for failing to amend the abuses in the church and warning her against complacency.³¹

²⁷ Peter McCullough, *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* (Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History, 1998). Sandys also preached before the Queen on many occasions, the ‘Calendar of Sermons Preached at Court during the Reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, 1558–1625’ recorded that he preached on Saturday 25 February 1559 (at Whitehall), 11 March 1560 and Sunday 15th February 1562 (a Lenten sermon again at Whitehall). It is not clear if any of the published sermons were delivered on these occasions, but it is clear that Sandys was one of the preachers who had gained approval for this task.

²⁸ Torrance Kirby, ‘The Public Sermon: Paul’s Cross and the culture of persuasion in England, 1534–1570’, *Renaissance and Reformation*, 31.1 (2008), p. 6; McCullough, *Sermons at Court*, p. 11.

²⁹ McCullough, *Sermons at Court*, p.78.

³⁰ John Strype, *The Life and Acts of John Whitgift, D.D., the Third and Last Lord Archbishop of Canterbury in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, vol. III (Oxford, 1822) pp. 495-6.

³¹ Edward Dering, *A Sermon Preached Before the Queen’s Majesty* (London 1569/70)

Elizabeth was infuriated and revoked his licence to preach.³² Yet despite this, Sandys appointed Dering to be reader at St Paul's, suggesting that he was not entirely at odds with Dering's sentiments.³³ Sandys' approach to preaching before the Queen was for the most part diplomatic, although he did once begin a sermon before the Queen with the following: 'If I should particularly prosecute this distribution, and follow it at large, as every part shall minister occasion of speech, I should be too long for this place. But I mind brevity, because I know before whom I speak'.³⁴ This was clearly a pointed comment about Elizabeth's preference for short sermons that did not take up too much of her time. Sandys' sermons before the Queen are essentially conventional in their content, yet he does raise some of the key issues that concerned the religious hierarchy at the time.³⁵ He spoke of the need for uniformity, but in much more diplomatic terms than Dering had done. Sandys also addressed the issue of the rites and ceremonies of the reformed church, noting that there were dangers of appearing to be in league with antichrist by retaining superstition and elements of Catholic practice. Sandys in particular objected to the retention of Catholic imagery, crucifixes and altars, and had taken action in Worcester to eradicate such things from the cathedral and other local churches.³⁶ Given Elizabeth's desire to retain certain elements of traditional decoration within her own chapel this may have resonated in a negative way with the monarch. In

³² M. Christian, 'Elizabeth's preachers and the Government of Women: Defining and Correcting a Queen', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 24.3 (1993), pp. 561-576.

³³ Patrick Collinson, 'Dering, Edward (c.1540–1576)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7530>, accessed 1 May 2013]

³⁴ Ayre, *Sermons*, p. 144 [sermon eight] taking the theme 'Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near'.

³⁵ Christian, 'Elizabeth's preachers', p. 562. Margaret Christian has noted that sermons before the queen often took one of five themes: 1. Claims for the Church's / ministers' authority in religious matters; 2. Attacks on courtly behaviour; 3. Recommendations for military action; 4. Personal remarks on age, dress etc; 5. Or deliberately portrayed Elizabeth as a helpless victim who was dependent upon God.

³⁶ Diarmaid MacCulloch and Pat Hughes, 'A Bailiffs' List and Chronicle from Worcester', *The Antiquaries' Journal*, lxxv (1995), p. 249.

addition he preached against ‘the great swarms of bad walkers’, uneducated clergy, greedy diocesan visitors and ‘cunning court-like men’.³⁷ Sandys did then advise the Queen on the true road to salvation for both herself and her nation, but was ever mindful of the need for diplomacy and to pick his battles carefully. His tone was advisory, but not accusatory; emphasising religious unity and encouraging education. Salvation was via faith, there was no faith without hearing the word of God, and preaching and education was therefore the means to achieving this salvation. Thus it would be sinful not to acknowledge the necessity of preachers and teachers.³⁸ Thus the nature of sin was implicitly dealt with in the sermons to the court but always with a sense of caution given the audience, however once freed from the constraints of court preaching Sandys was free to warn of the dangers of sinful behaviour to explicitly.

Sermons to the people: The threats to godly religion

Sandys certainly saw himself as a public preacher whose talents should not be confined to small audiences. On his return to England in 1558-9 he was appointed to the Northern circuit of the Royal Visitation. Despite the fact that an official preacher, Edmund Scambler, had already been appointed, Sandys delivered many of the sermons himself. Sandys was listed as the preacher at Nottingham (St Mary’s), York (Chapter House), Hull, Durham (Chapter House), Newcastle (St. Nicholas), Carlisle (Chapter House), Kendal and Manchester (parish church).³⁹ The published volume of Sandys’ sermons contains five sermons that he gave before the people of York, again undated. Here Sandys detailed more clearly the precise nature of sin, although his advice regarding the path to salvation remained constant.

³⁷ ‘Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth’ [sermon six] in Ayre, *Sermons*, pp 112-25.

³⁸ Ayre, *Sermons*, p. 154-5.

³⁹ Christopher Kitching (ed), *The Royal Visitation of 1559: Act Book for the Northern Province* (Surtees Society: vol. 187, 1975), p. xxxiii.

Two of these sermons were delivered on the same occasion, at an accession day celebration.⁴⁰ These sermons come to us undated but are likely to have been delivered in 1578/9, as Sandys declared that England's deliverance at Elizabeth's hand occurred twenty years ago to the day, though the dating of these sermons has been under debate.⁴¹ During the 1570s Elizabeth's accession began to be regarded as a key event, and the memorialisation of the day and date was to enter the English calendar, some would argue as a replacement for traditional Catholic celebrations, as it was celebrated yearly with tilts and other festivities.⁴² The establishment of this day as a celebration was undoubtedly nationalistic, but it also played to Elizabeth's desire to be feted as sacred to her subjects. As with other important events of the era sermons were to play a role in the celebration. Joyous sentiments at Elizabeth's deliverance of England from the dark time of papistry are clear in these two sermons, but Sandys tells his audience that equally as important are the warnings not to fall back onto the wrong path.

The first of the sermons, on the Song of Solomon, took the verse 'Take us the little foxes which destroy the vines: for our vine hath flourished' as its theme.⁴³ This sermon had all the trapping of the traditional celebratory piece, as Sandys began by extolling that no nation of

⁴⁰ Sermons three and four in the published volume.

⁴¹ Ayre, *Sermons*, p. 56; Strype, *Annals of the Reformation* vol. 1, part 1, p. 222; Susan F. Storer, 'The life and times of Edwin Sandys, archbishop of York', MPhil Thesis, University of London 1973. Strype makes mention of the sermons in reference to the 1559 visitations and Storer's MA thesis also dates it as having been delivered as part of the visitation process largely based on Strype's conclusion. The content of the sermon would seem to indicate that either the sermon was revised prior to printing or that it had been originally delivered at a later date than 1558.

⁴² John E. Neale's *Essays in Elizabethan History* (London, 1958) back dustcover jacket; Roy C. Strong, 'The Popular Celebration of the Accession Day of Queen Elizabeth I', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 21, No. 1/2 (Jan. - Jun., 1958), pp. 86-103; Frances A. Yates, 'Elizabethan Chivalry: The Romance of the Accession Day Tilts', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 20, No. 1/2 (Jan. - Jun., 1957), pp. 4-25. Neale advocates that '[f]or close on to two centuries November 17th, Elizabeth I's Accession Day, was a popular festival in England and kept alive the legend of Good Queen Bess.'

⁴³ Ayre, *Sermons*, p. 55. Song of Solomon 2:15.

people ever had such good cause to gather and give God thanks than they did at this time, being ‘delivered … from the state of miserable servitude’. The deliverer was Elizabeth who was ‘the restorer of our religion and liberty’.⁴⁴ Whilst the sermon is more joyous in tone than many of the others he delivered, Sandys expanded quite significantly on how salvation could be rejected by sinful behaviour. A careful balance advocating a doctrine of predestination alongside a cautionary note, that even the godly could fall from grace if they strayed too far from the right path, was necessary to ensure that the population was well behaved. He uses the metaphor of a vineyard that can only flourish if it is cleansed of disease and fenced in for protection, just as the nation should be cleansed of old superstitions and fenced by the laws of discipline. Thus obedience and godly religion are again the overriding themes. Amongst the sins listed that would prevent an individual achieving salvation he enumerated contempt for the word, a lack of piety, pride, disobedience, lust, neglecting the poor, hungering for popery, and backsliding and seeking to alter the state of the country.⁴⁵ Sandys here equates personal faults in the individual, such as a lack of piety, with the wider issue of seeking to alter the state of the country. Here popery and treason are linked in a way that became increasingly common in Elizabethan rhetoric.

Whilst this sermon has a metaphor at its centre - that of the vineyard - it is much more explicit in terms of which precise sins could prevent salvation. This implies that the audience at York were engaging in at least some of these sins, most particularly hungering after popery and backsliding. The 1577 diocesan survey of Yorkshire had revealed large numbers of recusants, thus this sermon was clearly aimed at the sins of the local populace, including the

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

elite leadership of the county.⁴⁶ Sandys is also much clearer in this sermon about identifying the enemy as monks, friars and massing priests. Again this is reflective of the situation in Yorkshire where Catholic priests were harboured within the city and were even recorded as saying mass in York Castle.⁴⁷ He noted that the papists had two tactics - force and persuasion - and that they must be stopped by ministers, doctrine, godly conversion and discipline. Worldly actions were also to be taken in terms of administering punishments to the sinful and these were to be carried out via the magistrate, as befitted a society where the godly magistrate was in place.⁴⁸ The role of the magistrate in defending religion was a popular theme in early modern sermons advocated by other contemporary preachers.⁴⁹ Punishments befitting these ‘foxes’ were to include death, exile, confiscation and incarceration, ironically discussed in that order.⁵⁰ Zealous magistrates were endeavouring to take rebellious foxes and put them to death; it was the tender affection of a loving father that resulted in exile as a merciful alternative. The dutiful magistrate and minister were to root out evil and incarcerate the guilty. The only punishment Sandys felt the need to defend to his audience as ‘not the worst’, was the confiscation of property, highlighting just how ingrained the notion of private property as a sacred right really was. St German had advocated that private property was ‘instituted for the sake of convenience’ when public ownership was no ‘longer practical’ and that therefore ‘human law authority’ was claimed ‘over all matters involving private

⁴⁶ Peter Lake and Michael Questier, *The Trials of Margaret Clitherow: Persecution, Martyrdom and the Politics of Sanctity in Elizabethan England* (London, 2011), p. 19.

⁴⁷ Lake and Questier, *Margaret Clitherow*, p. 27.

⁴⁸ James Estes, ‘The Role of Godly Magistrates in the Church: Melanchthon as Luther’s Interpreter and Collaborator’, *Church History*, 67.3 (1998), pp. 463-483.

⁴⁹ Joseph Martin, *Religious Radicals in Tudor England* (London, 1989), p. 218.

⁵⁰ Ayre, *Sermons*, pp. 72-3.

property'.⁵¹ The interpretation of scripture to reveal God's plan is taken further here to link to suggest that the path to salvation lies with obedience.⁵²

The other key issue that concerned Sandys in the York sermons was that of usury. Sandys made this the theme of the sermon he preached on his first coming to York as Archbishop in 1577, and he took up the theme and expanded on it in the undated eleventh sermon in the volume, entitled 'Owe nothing to any man'.⁵³ The relationship between the religious and economic changes in Europe has been long debated, and there were widespread anxieties created by the extensive economic developments taking place throughout the continent, with Luther and Calvin both commenting on usury.⁵⁴ Calvin did not condemn money-lending for interest in the outright way that the medieval church had done, but still argued that the process should be driven by morality.⁵⁵ English theologians too were concerned with usury and the moral implications of money-lending. D.W. Jones has argued that 'the Reformation was the pivot point for the key moral doctrine of usury'.⁵⁶ The nuances of the sixteenth century tried to differentiate between usury as all money-lending for interest and lending to the poor for profit.⁵⁷ Sandys was a subscriber to the idea that all money-lending for interest was sinful. In the tenth sermon he declared that to the usurer 'his own soul is vile, nothing is precious but only money'.⁵⁸ Sandys put his words into practice and took the prosecution of the

⁵¹ Daniel Eppley, *Defending Royal Supremacy and Discerning God's Will in Tudor England* (Aldershot, 2007), pp. 69-70.

⁵² Fred J. Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought* (Toronto, 2004), p. 5.

⁵³ Ayre, *Sermons*, pp. 177, 198. 'That being delivered out of the hands of our enemies' [sermon ten].

⁵⁴ David.W. Jones, *Reforming the Morality of Usury: A Study of the Differences that Separated the Protestant Reformers* (Oxford, 2004); Richard Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (London, 1926).

⁵⁵ Guenther Haas, *The Concept of Equity in Calvin's Ethics* (Carlisle, 1997), pp. 117-121.

⁵⁶ Jones, *Reforming the Morality of Usury*, p. 4.

⁵⁷ Charles Geisst, *Beggar Thy Neighbor: A History of Usury and Debt* (Philadelphia, 2013).

⁵⁸ Ayre, *Sermons*, p. 182.

sin of usury very seriously, literally seeking out and punishing practitioners of the sin. Sandys was named the ‘hammer of usurers’ and, using the Court of Ecclesiastical High Commission, ‘[f]orty usurers in York were charged and forced to forfeit all interest, and the contumacious were sent to prison.’⁵⁹

The theme of owing nothing to any man takes precedence in the eleventh published sermon, with the Ten Commandments being cited. Adultery, murder, theft, false witness and coveting are all discussed with the overriding Commandment that you should love your neighbour as yourself.⁶⁰ Sandys equated sinfulness here with his recurring themes of duty and obedience.

Owing nothing and paying debt is taken to relate to more than pecuniary difficulties. The concept of debt and paying what is owed is used to illustrate hierarchies and to demonstrate that obedience was necessary. Thus magistrates are owed obedience, fear, honour, tribute and custom, whilst the magistrates themselves owe the people due exercise of law. Ministers owe their flocks guidance and they owe him honour. Husbands owe their wives benevolence and love. Sandys was adamant that all debts must be paid.

Sandys also believed that usury was indicative of a broader failure of charity and that the populace was putting at risk their salvation by not following true religion. The sinfulness of money-lending is connected in the tenth sermon to those that just pay lip service to religion, thus ‘As these serve money, so there are some *Domino non servientes sed suo ventri*’, servants to the belly and not the Lord.⁶¹ Sandys preached that those who ‘frame themselves to be of any religion, so that in this world he may live by it; when popery hath the upper hand, then a papist; when the gospel is in due estimation, a protestant; all things to all men, that

⁵⁹ I. P. Ellis, ‘The Archbishop and the Usurers’, *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 21 (1970), pp. 33-42.

⁶⁰ Ayre, *Sermons*, p. 197.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

some may be gained or saved to himself" were sinful.⁶² Sandys' frustration with the failure of many, particularly gentlemen, to see that godly religion was true religion was evident throughout his ecclesiastical career.⁶³ The problem of catching Catholics in the North was greatly confounded by the pragmatic approach taken by many of the gentry families there.⁶⁴ Church papistry was one of the chief difficulties facing the authorities, especially the High Commission, as it sought to implement fines and other punishments. Given Sandys' experiences in the north it is perhaps unsurprising that he chose to highlight these sins in particular when preaching to the populace.

It was not just papists that Sandys viewed as a threat to stability and salvation. In a sermon given at St Paul's Cross in 1573 entitled 'And when he was entered into the ship, his disciples followed him', Sandys spoke out against the threat posed by those who were pushing for further and unnecessary reform. This came at the height of the Admonition crisis and at a point where the writings of Thomas Cartwright were popular in London.⁶⁵ Sandys noted in his sermon that there would be difficulties in achieving the kingdom of god; again he draws attention to the antichrist as the obvious source of falsehood that could distract from the true Church, but went on to state that if our fathers, elders, guides, and teachers 'be a rebellious generation, a generation that set not their hearts aright... then are they no precedent for us to follow'.⁶⁶ Moreover he talks directly here about sins and sinners, stating that the godly can be

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁶³ SP12 / 28 f.141. 'The Bishop of Worcester to the Council', April 1563; S. Bastow, 'Edwin Sandys, Archbishop of York 1577-88, "Stiff-Necked, Wilful And Obstinate"' *Northern History*, 50 (2013), pp. 239-256. There are multiple examples of Sandys clashing with local Catholic gentlemen.

⁶⁴ Sarah Bastow, *The Catholic Gentry of Yorkshire, 1536-1642: Resistance and Accommodation* (Lewiston, 2007).

⁶⁵ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 139, 152; Andrew F Scott Pearson, *Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism* (Cambridge, 1925), p. 58.

⁶⁶ Ayre, *Sermons*, p. 375-6.

corrected whereas the wicked will be confused.⁶⁷ He also makes the directly political point that a kingdom cannot stand if it is distracted and divided into factions and described those who were subscribing to these new radical ideas as ‘silly [i.e. simple] weak ones’. In addition, he emphasised that it was the duty of the hierarchy, both magistrate and minister not to ‘fall asleep’ for the inattention of the godly could open the way to the agents of popery.⁶⁸ Thus the threat to God’s church was most obvious from the papist and usurer, but the threat also came from those who placed the need for further reform above the need for order, hierarchy and godly magistracy.

Conclusion

For Sandys the path to salvation was clear. It was to be found via godly religion ,which was established through education; best followed in a path of obedience; and enforced by the godly magistrate and minister sanctioned by Church and state. The enemies of true religion and god were those that deviated from this right path. Whilst the godly could realise that they had sinned and thus could be saved by repenting (by seeing that grace was offered to them) those who were not godly, and thus did not see, would be damned and excluded from salvation. Whilst Sandys did elucidate on specific sins, most notably lust, pride and usury, he was clear that ultimately the path to salvation was one where hierarchy was respected and where conformity was not only necessary, but essential. He was able to tailor his message to his audience whether this be parliament, the queen or big civic congregations, yet there was always a common theme, namely that without good order, chaos and the antichrist would come to dominate. Thus Sandys was able to rationalise compromise on issues that others may have regarded as vital. For example, pushing for further reform at the expense of order,

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 376.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

discipline and obedience could endanger the unity of the church. Thus sin was connected with not just moral order but also the social and political order. Sandys may have begun his ecclesiastical career as a radical forced into exile for his beliefs, but he died a conformist advocating the importance of obedience and compromise, and above all unity: for that was the path to salvation.