

Christianities in the Trans-Atlantic World

CHRISTIAN ZIONISM AND ENGLISH NATIONAL IDENTITY, 1600–1850



ANDREW CROME



Christianities in the Trans-Atlantic World

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When I began writing this book in 2011, during President Barack Obama's first term, Christian Zionism seemed to be losing political influence. As I write this, in the aftermath of President Donald Trump's decision to move the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, it seems to be a potent force once more. Whatever the future holds for Christian Zionism as a political movement, my hope is that this book will provide readers with a helpful analysis of its historical background and discontents.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

On 3rd February 2003, the Space Shuttle *Columbia* disintegrated over the Western seaboard of the United States, scattering debris across a vast region stretching from California to Texas. The combination of a design flaw and an unfortunate set of circumstances on launch led to the shuttle over-heating on re-entry until the final, inevitable explosion. For some observers, however, this explanation did not get at the root cause of the disaster. The *Columbia* exploded, claimed Christian Zionist William Koenig, to demonstrate God's anger at the United States' recent treatment of Israel. According to Koenig, God blessed or cursed gentile nations for the way they treated the Jews and the Jewish state. As President George W. Bush's government had favoured policies that sought peace with Palestinian terrorists and the removal of Jews from land which was theirs by divine right, so God had shown his displeasure by striking American pride. The fact that early media reports mentioned debris found in Palestine, Texas, was a clear sign that the Lord was trying to get America's attention.

Koenig based his reasoning on the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12:3, where God told Abraham that he would be father of a great nation. This implied that those who blessed Abraham would be blessed, and those who cursed him would be cursed in turn. For Koenig this provided a straightforward way of understanding God's providential purposes in history. Individuals, and more particularly nations, could expect either

the blessings or curses promised to them depending on their treatment of Abraham's descendants. Not only the Columbia disaster, but events as diverse as 9/11, the 7/7 bombings in London, Hurricane Katrina, and the destruction of George H.W. Bush's holiday home, could all be attributed to the way in which the United States interacted with Israel.¹ Yet while Koenig's approach may raise eyebrows, it was by no means novel. Some applied the same providential lens to view events in London three hundred and fifty years earlier. Contemplating the causes of the civil wars of the previous decade, Edward Nicholas suggested in 1651 that they were divine punishment for the expulsion of the Jews from England in 1290.² As Oliver Cromwell planned his foreign policy, and how he would relate to the Jews, the Baptist leader Thomas Collier similarly warned that "God hath a special eye over [the Jews]... and will take vengeance [*sic*] to the full on all the nations that have afflicted them".³ If England cared about their future, he argued, then the nation should begin to consider the ways in which they might be able to bless the Jewish people.

Both Koenig and Collier expressed the same idea. The person who cared about their nation cared about what happened to the Jews. Although they were clearly writing in very different contexts, with very different political concerns, both writers focused their concerns about the future of their nation upon the Jewish people. The "destinies" of their homelands, be it Cromwellian England or George W. Bush's USA, were fundamentally linked to the way in which the ruling elites treated the Jews and their claims to Palestine. These are not isolated examples. Projects to restore the Jews to their ancient homeland, whether expressed as eschatological hopes, utopian schemes, or in practical political terms, have consistently served as means of national identity construction. This book examines these links, and the way in which they were used to construct national identity in England from 1600–1850. In doing so, it aims to highlight how eschatology has affected ideas of national identity, political policy, and interactions between Christians and Jews over three centuries. It suggests a model of national identity formation fuelled by prophecy, oriented

¹William Koenig, *Eye to Eye: Facing the Consequences of Dividing Israel* (Alexandria: About Him Publishing, 2004), pp. 118–120. On Koenig see Victoria Clark, *Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 251–255.

²Edward Nicholas, *An Apology for the Honorable Nation of the Jews, and all the Sons of Israel* (London, 1648), p. 5.

³Thomas Collier, *A Brief Answer to Some Objections...Against the Coming in and Inhabiting of the Jews* (London, 1656), sig. A2r.

towards the fulfilment of national mission. Yet this is not a straightforward story of national election. Neither Collier nor Koenig viewed their respective countries as *the* elect nation. Instead, they embraced a form of secondary election, in which they understood national identity primarily in relation to their nation's service to the Jewish people. This type of national identity employed a form of othering in which identity developed by comparison with an outside group. Where theories of national identity often presume that othering involves a negative view of such a group, in this case they viewed the "other" positively. In fact, the Jews when restored would be superior to the nation aiding them, and would return to their place as God's first nation. This phenomenon is therefore a form of "chosen" rather than "elect" nationhood, as the nation fulfils its designated eschatological role but does not replace Israel as God's sole elect nation. As such, this model complicates the way in which historians think about prophecy and national election.

1 CHOSEN NATIONHOOD AND PROVIDENTIAL THINKING

The concept of "elect" nationhood has played an important role in the way in which studies have examined the development of national identity. As historians have taken the importance of religion in intellectual life increasingly seriously, so awareness of the position of Old Testament Israel as a prototypical nation has come to the fore. Examining the way in which the Bible served to build ideas of nationhood, some historians have ventured beyond suggesting that Israel served as an example for national identity formation, to claim that particular nations believed themselves to have replaced Israel as "elect". This idea is rooted in the concept of supersessionism. As God rejected Israel for their refusal of Christ's messiahship, so the church represented the ultimate fulfilment of their mission. The church was therefore the "true Israel", inheriting, and in the process spiritualising, the promises of the Hebrew prophets.⁴ The idea of "elect

⁴For an analysis of the development of this idea, and its roots in Augustine, see Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). For a recent overview see Gerald R. McDermott, "Supersessionism: Getting the Big Story Wrong", in Gerald R. McDermott (ed.), *The New Christian Zionism: Fresh Perspectives on Israel and the Land* (Dowers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016), pp. 33–44. Supersessionism is sometimes described as "replacement theology". This is inaccurate—the church does not *replace* Israel, but *has always been* the true Israel by faith (cf. Rom. 9:6). The difference rests in the way the church is used (as a spiritual, rather than a national body) as

nationhood” took this a stage further, arguing that God worked through nations in the new dispensation in the same way that he worked through national Israel in the Hebrew Bible. This presumed that, as God had done with national Israel, he had chosen a particular nation, set them apart from others, and ordered them to be a light to the world: “a single people having a unique sense of their identity as a people set apart from all others by a peculiar destiny”.⁵ Adrian Hastings has found this tendency in historians stretching back as far as the work of the Venerable Bede.⁶

The importance of this idea has been repeatedly emphasised in studies of national identity, especially those that have focused on the centrality of religion in forging ideas of nationhood. Perry Miller’s famous thesis that New England settlers in the 1620s viewed themselves as an exemplar nation, repeating Israel’s exodus and becoming “a city on a hill”, has been at the centre of studies of the development of American national identity.⁷ The concept of election has also influenced examinations of Englishness. William Haller’s argument that John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* helped to forge an Elizabethan concept of England as a new Israel has had a significant impact on both early modern history and studies of national identity more generally, including Liah Greenfeld’s controversial work identifying early modern England as the birthplace of nationalism.⁸ Although dismissive of both Greenfeld’s thesis and the role of religion in forging national identity, Krishan Kumar has suggested that the English belief that they had a specially chosen role in spreading civilisation and

God’s prime instrument, and the access now available to gentiles. Supersessionists would therefore argue that their theology promotes continuity: the prophets and patriarchs are therefore as much a part of the church as the contemporary believer.

⁵William Haller, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1963), p. 53. For a full examination of this theme see Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen Peoples* (Oxford: OUP, 2003).

⁶Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997).

⁷Perry Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Boston: Belknap, 1956); Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978); Todd Gitlin and Liel Leibovitz, *The Chosen Peoples: America, Israel, and the Ordeals of Divine Election* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010), pp. 65–145. For a recent (nuanced) restatement see Philip Gorski, *American Covenant: A History of Civil Religion from the Puritans to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), pp. 37–59.

⁸Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), pp. 3–87; Haller, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*. Smith questions the centrality of Protestantism to the idea of English election, suggesting that it was present in Anglo-Saxon times (*Chosen Peoples*, p. 117).

Christianity helped to drive the British imperial project.⁹ For many historians, these ideas represented a *de facto* replacement of Israel by England or the United States. These nations saw themselves as “destined to continue the work of ancient Israel”¹⁰; as “having taken the place of God’s first elect people, the Jews”.¹¹ They were “repeating the history of biblical Israel, but with the possibility of getting it ‘right’”.¹² At its most extreme, this reading has suggested that in settings such as seventeenth-century New England scripture was “not history... Israel was the true name of the place where [the settlers] lived, and they were Israelites”.¹³ Anthony D. Smith therefore argued that national election necessitated a firm rejection of Jews as those who had abandoned their divine duty. Election was seen “as a reward for receiving the true faith rejected by the Jews, [and] they were therefore required to supplant the Jews as the chosen people”.¹⁴

As Israel was unique in the old dispensation, so God could have only one elect nation in the new. This has led to speculation on what might happen when two nations claiming to be “elect” come across one another. Clifford Longley has suggested that because “election” presumes a single chosen entity a clash is likely to occur.¹⁵ Acsah Guibbory has argued that this sort of clash emerged in seventeenth-century England, where Stuart kings viewed themselves as the chosen successors of Solomon. This led to both negative views of Jews as those who falsely claimed the biblical promises for themselves, and to further issues when Jews later attempted to gain readmission to England.¹⁶ Historians have identified a similar dynamic in early Quakerism. For example, Claire Jowett argued that Margaret Fell’s

⁹ Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), pp. 163–172.

¹⁰ Gitlin and Leibovitz, *Chosen Peoples*, p. 67.

¹¹ James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 44.

¹² Acsah Guibbory, *Christian Identity, Jews and Israel in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), p. 90.

¹³ Clifford Longley, *Chosen People: The Big Idea that Shapes England and America* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2000), p. 101.

¹⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), p. 214. The suggestion that election is “a reward” here represents a misunderstanding of the concept. Election depended on the initiative of God whose choice of people came prior to any action. Smith is correct to presume that election necessitated action (as he details at length in later work), but election should never be seen as a “reward”.

¹⁵ Longley, *Chosen People*, pp. 35–38.

¹⁶ Guibbory, *Christian Identity*, pp. 21–55; 159–185.

early support for Jewish readmission to England evaporated as she realised that Jews would continue to claim that they remained the true Israel, instead of acknowledging that Quakers now fulfilled that role.¹⁷ In a more contemporary setting, Bruce Cauthen suggests that conflicting visions of their own elect roles had a negative impact on official relations between France and the United States in the twenty-first century.¹⁸

These sorts of clashes would be inevitable if elect nation thinking necessitated a total rejection of all other nations as inferior rivals to the title of God's chosen people. Yet internationalism and cooperation have often been a part of conceptions of national chosenness. As Anthony D. Smith has argued, national election looks both inward and outward. Smith proposed two primary modes of national election: covenant and missional. The first appropriates the model of biblical covenant. The nation, or a representative group, enter into an agreement with God to be his special people. God guarantees this by promising power or land, but also by warning that those who enter the covenant must be collectively holy—if a covenant people fall into disobedience, they will be punished and lose their covenant blessings.¹⁹ Where the covenantal model primarily looks inwards and concentrates on the righteousness of the chosen people, the missional model looks outwards. This links national election to a particular God-given task: usually to represent God and to spread his message.²⁰ The covenant people therefore represent God by being holy and living up to his statutes, whereas the missional people represent God by fulfilling their national destiny. Unsurprisingly, this necessitates cooperation and interaction with other nations. As David Loades argued when examining concepts of Englishness and international Protestantism in the sixteenth century, it may be better to talk about England as “*an* elect nation” rather than “*the* elect nation” to the exclusion of all others.²¹ This is true for modern conceptions of national election as well. As they noted in their

¹⁷ Claire Jowitt, “‘Inward’ and ‘Outward’ Jews: Margaret Fell, Circumcision and Women’s Preaching”, in Tony Kushner and Nadia Valman (eds), *Philosemitism, Antisemitism and ‘the Jews’: Perspectives from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 155–176.

¹⁸ Bruce Cauthen, “Covenant and Continuity: Ethno-Symbolism and the Myth of Divine Election”, *Nations and Nationalism* 10:1/2 (2004), p. 30.

¹⁹ Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, pp. 50–64.

²⁰ Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, pp. 95–130.

²¹ David Loades, “The Origins of English Protestant Nationalism”, in Stewart Mews (ed.), *Religion and National Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982), p. 304.

analysis of national election in the United States and Israel, Todd Gitlin and Liel Liebovitz found (to their surprise) no clash in claims of “chosenness” when the two cultures interacted.²² This “entanglement” of national destinies, as Samuel Goldman suggests in his study of American Christian Zionism, serves to connect national “history and institutions to a biblical narrative in which they do not directly appear”.²³

These examples point to the fact that national election is more complex than a simple replacement of Israel with a successor nation. Indeed, interaction with other nations is essential if “elect nations” are to fulfil their role of being “a light to the gentiles” (Isa. 49:6) by rightly representing God. This book is concerned with that interaction in the context that Guibbory identified as particularly problematic: the relationship between a nation that believes itself chosen, and the Jews, as God’s original elect nation. In the English context, rather than finding a clash between two nations claiming God’s blessing, many Christians believed strongly that the Jews remained first in his plans. The Jews were the only truly elect nation. They alone had been set apart to fulfil the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament. Any gentile nation appropriating these claims for herself was therefore trespassing on Israel’s turf. Nonetheless, this did not mean that there was no role for England to play. Instead, England *was* chosen to fulfil a particular prophetic role—that of blessing and restoring the Jews to Palestine.

Throughout this book, I use the term “chosen” rather than “elect” nation when referring to England to differentiate these ideas. Only Israel could be elect, but England was “chosen” to have a distinct prophetic role in relation to her. Given that this “chosen” nationhood related to the Jews and their lead role in future events, it was also a species of what Richard Cogley has described as “Judeo-centrism”.²⁴ Although this term has been used loosely to describe any belief in a generalised future conversion of the

²² Gitlin and Liebovitz, *Chosen Peoples*, pp. 190–192.

²³ Samuel Goldman, *God’s Country: Christian Zionism in America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), pp. 8–9.

²⁴ Richard W. Cogley, “The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Restoration of Israel in the ‘Judeo-Centric’ Strand of Puritan Millennialism”, *Church History* 72:2 (2003), pp. 304–332. Cogley defines certain forms of apocalyptic thinking as Judeo-centric “because [they] located the start of the millennium in Jerusalem and because [they] assigned the role of inaugurating the kingdom to the converted posterity of Jacob” (p. 304). See also Richard W. Cogley, “‘The Most Vile and Barbarous Nation of All The World’: Giles Fletcher the Elder’s *Tartars Or, Ten Tribes* (ca. 1610)”, *Renaissance Quarterly* 58:3 (2005), pp. 785–791.

Jews,²⁵ in this book I follow Cogley in applying it specifically to the idea of Jewish restoration to Palestine in the future, and the idea that the restored Jews were destined for national pre-eminence on their return. This differentiates Judeo-centrists from those Christians who argued that there would be a general conversion of the Jewish people to Christianity before the end of the world, a widely held viewpoint, but one that usually denied any distinct Jewish identity after conversion, or promise of national return.²⁶ As Judeo-centrists placed Jewish restoration to Palestine at the centre of their eschatology, they were also de facto “restorationists”. This book therefore uses the two terms “Judeo-centric” and “restorationist” interchangeably. Despite its presence in the book’s title, I have used the descriptor “Christian Zionist” sparingly throughout. On one level, the term, which did not appear until the early twentieth century,²⁷ is anachronistic when used prior to Theodor Herzl’s creation of the First Zionist Congress in 1897. It also risks suggesting too direct a link between contemporary political eschatology and its historical antecedents. In particular, it can result in an unfortunate association of pre-nineteenth-century figures with the development of dispensational Christian Zionism, the most well-known and commonly studied form of the belief today.²⁸ However, there is also utility in applying it. Recent work by Robert

²⁵ Robert O. Smith uses the term to refer to a strengthening belief in a general conversion of the Jews, which sometimes included involvement at their conversion in the fall of Islam. At times, this leads him to label general conversionist works, such as John Bale’s *Image of Both Churches* and John Foxe’s 1578 sermon at the baptism of a Jew, as Judeo-centric. This risks ignoring the prevalence of the idea of conversion in medieval works, and of diluting what is unique in Judeo-centrism. See Smith, *More Desired Than Our Own Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), pp. 54–68.

²⁶ Cohen, *Living Letters*, pp. 391–394. See Chap. 2 for a discussion of this form of thought, and its subsequent development in England.

²⁷ Stephen Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel: The Story of American Christian Zionism* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), pp. 1–3.

²⁸ As Stephen Spector has pointed out, definitions of Christian Zionism can over-emphasise the recent influence of American fundamentalism (Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel*, pp. 2–3). For example, Carlo Aldrovandi defines it as “a modern millenarian movement stemming from American Conservative Evangelicalism” (Carlo Aldrovandi, *Apocalyptic Movements in Contemporary Politics: Christian and Jewish Zionism* [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014], p. 129). Given the controversial nature of studies of Zionism, definitions are often also politicised. For example Paul Wilkinson’s definition of a “true” Christian Zionist as one who must accept nine points including a pretribulation rapture, the restoration of the Jerusalem temple, and a seven-year tribulation period. (Paul Wilkinson, *For Zion’s Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby* [Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007], pp.13–14). This conflates Christian Zionism with Darbyite dispensationalism, which represents an important strand, but is far from its only manifestation.

O. Smith and scholars working on the “new Christian Zionism” has encouraged a historical extension of the term beyond dispensationalism.²⁹ Moving away from definitions caught up in contemporary politics, a minimal definition can help to highlight a sustained (albeit varied) Judeo-centric pattern across centuries. In this study, I define Christian Zionism as a theologically motivated belief that the Jewish people have, by divine grant, the right to possess and inhabit the land promised to them in the Hebrew Bible and that it is therefore the duty of Christians to support this claim. The term serves as a helpful (and less cumbersome) shorthand when tracing the development of Judeo-centric restorationism. It is suitably broad to include different types of theological justification, and a range of political responses (from public prayer to direct agitation).³⁰ When applied to particular historical figures, it should not suggest that they were (proto-)dispensationalists, or that they would necessarily have supported future developments in evangelicalism or its interactions with the post-1948 state of Israel.

Judeo-centric restorationism, while denying that England replaced Israel, nonetheless held the country up to strict standards of behaviour and a requirement to fulfil their mission towards the Jews. Chosenness was not an excuse for laxity or a guarantee of blessing on national endeavours. Instead, a chosen role meant that the nation needed to meet higher standards than others. It would therefore be wrong to suggest that belief in a special status led inevitably towards national arrogance. Instead, knowledge of England’s unique role often combined with a heightened awareness of its sins to generate anxiety about the nation’s future. Since Sacvan Bercovitch’s path-breaking 1978 study highlighted the importance of the jeremiad tradition, historians have been increasingly aware that election presumed special responsibilities.³¹ The jeremiad, as Andrew R. Murphy has recently stressed, featured a three-fold pattern: bemoaning a decline in

²⁹ Smith, *More Desired*; Gerald R. McDermott, “Introduction: What is the New Christian Zionism?”, in McDermott (ed.), *The New Christian Zionism*, p. 12.

³⁰ Stephen Sizer has helpfully split Christian Zionism into four distinct strands: covenantal premillennialism, messianic dispensationalism, apocalyptic dispensationalism, and political dispensationalism. While this taxonomy can be questioned (for example, over its exclusion of liberal Christian Zionists who supported Israel in the 1950s and 60s due to their concern for prophetic justice), it usefully highlights the variety of theological justifications for Christian Zionism. See Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Roadmap to Armageddon?* (Leicester: IVP, 2005), pp. 254–257.

³¹ Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*.

national standards from a past ideal, identifying a turning point when this took place, and calling for spiritual or practical action to reverse this. It therefore balanced elements of both despair and hope; mourning over the present while presenting the possibility of tangible change in the future.³² Bercovitch, who focused on the prophetic certainty of the future role promised to the nation in the jeremiad, downplayed the genuine unease that a fear of God's punishment could bring.³³ Yet as Murphy rightly highlighted, this concern was far from simply rhetorical—examples cited in later chapters show that the prospect of loss generated significant psychological stress.³⁴ As Mordecai had warned Esther, in a verse often used by Judeo-centrists when discussing national duty, “if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish” (Esther 4:14).³⁵ Being the “chosen” nation therefore often led as much to fear as to national conceit. The nation's relationship with Jews acted as a kind of providential barometer. England could expect to be blessed when she treated the Jews with mercy and kindness and worked towards fulfilling her prophetic role. Similarly, the nation could expect punishment for her past sins towards the Jews. This providential discourse was therefore inherently political. As Nicholas Guyatt has argued, providential readings work as arguments: “efforts to explain God's purposes in the world that were harnessed to political goals in the present”.³⁶ Judeo-centric notions of “chosenness” projected a particular vision of the nation, and called for action to realise it.

³² Andrew R. Murphy, *Prodigal Nation: Moral Decline and Divine Punishment from New England to 9/11* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), pp. 7–43.

³³ Bercovitch recognised that anxiety was a necessary part of the jeremiad, but argued that the aim of preachers was to “provide the sense of insecurity that would ensure [their vision's] outcome” (Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, p. 23). Preachers therefore sought to generate anxiety for rhetorical effect and to influence behaviour, rather than a genuine fear of loss of status or possible failure of New England's mission.

³⁴ Murphy, *Prodigal Nation*, pp. 34–37. For examples of this anxiety see, W.H. Oliver *Prophets and Millennialists: The Uses of Biblical Prophecy in England from the 1790s to the 1840s* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1978), pp. 44–63; 108–110.

³⁵ See, for example, *Jewish Intelligence* 7:6 (1841), p. 135. The comparison to Esther retains its power. See Sean Durbin, “Walking in the Mantle of Esther: ‘Political’ Action as ‘Religious’ Practice”, in Göran Gunner and Robert O. Smith (eds), *Comprehending Christian Zionism: Perspectives in Comparison* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), pp. 85–124.

³⁶ Nicholas Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States 1607–1876* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), p. 8.

As the case studies that follow suggest, there was no single restorationist political vision. Judeo-centrism was fluid, and both radicals and conservatives used it when promoting their conception of England. As a providential discourse, Judeo-centrism was therefore rhetorically powerful. It also offered a way through the confusing pathways of God's providence. When condemnations of providential thinking in England emerged after the restoration of the Stuarts in 1660, they focused on the way in which preachers read providential judgements into their enemies' misfortunes, while dismissing similar readings of their own trials.³⁷ Judeo-centric providentialism avoided such arbitrariness by focusing laser-like on God's concern for the Jewish people. However else God may, or may not, judge nations, their treatment of Jews offered a certain way of retaining his favour. For some preachers, this was almost akin to natural law. "*The nation that oppreseth Israel/Or will not serve her*", wrote Lewis Way in 1824, "*sinketh!*".³⁸ Judeo-centrism therefore offered a powerful rhetoric when combined with providential thought. Guyatt's three broad categories of providentialism are useful in understanding this. "Judicial" providentialism found nations judged for individual actions, without reference to an overarching grand plan. "Historical" providentialism saw God as preparing particular nations to improve the world, guiding their history accordingly. "Apocalyptic" providentialism argued that certain nations were chosen not only to fulfil God's general plan, but also that they were set apart to play a key role in fulfilling events described in the Book of Revelation.³⁹ Judeo-centrism's power lay in the fact that it could appeal to each in turn: national guilt, historical guidance, and the central apocalyptic role.

This conception of "chosenness" contained elements of both Smith's missional and covenantal models. The nation's mission required that it take every opportunity presented to it in order to fulfil prophecy towards the Jews. This took on different forms at different times, and could range from serving as an exemplar for Jews arriving in the nation (as in seventeenth-century arguments for Jewish readmission) to active political agitation for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine (as in the nineteenth century). The extent to which this type of chosenness adopted a missional or covenantal form therefore shifted in response to political and cultural cir-

³⁷ Michael P. Winship, *Seers of God: Puritan Providentialism in the Restoration and Early Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), pp. 29–52.

³⁸ Lewis Way, *Palingenesia: The World to Come* (London: Martin Bossanage, 1824), p. 139.

³⁹ Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States*, pp. 6–52.

cumstances. This should not be surprising: as Smith notes, the models overlap at times (the difference being “one of degree only”).⁴⁰ Yet these differences highlight the importance of recognising that this book does not argue for a static, transhistorical model of prophetic national identity formation. While it traces a central theme that was important in several eras, it is vital to recognise the dynamic and protean nature of that theme in relation to its specific manifestations.⁴¹ Neither does it claim that the form of Judeo-centric identity construction traced here was normative. Any transhistorical study tracing a single theme across the *longue durée* risks exaggerating the importance of its subject. Judeo-centrism was influential, but it was never uncontested. The then bishop of St. David’s William Laud dismissed it in 1622 as the theology of “Men in the Moone”,⁴² while critics in the mid-eighteenth century growled that it promoted Judaism more than Christianity.⁴³ In a famous instance in 1862, a physician told the Earl of Shaftesbury that supporting Jewish restoration was a sure sign of insanity.⁴⁴ The peer, one of the most ardent restorationists of the nineteenth century, took the remark in good humour, but it highlights the fact that Judeo-centrism could be controversial. This controversy, however, should not suggest that English proto-Zionism was merely a “myth” created by later historians to help justify the Balfour Declaration.⁴⁵ As later chapters show, its proponents could include some of the most important political, religious, and intellectual figures of their respective ages. Alongside Shaftesbury, Cromwell, Isaac Newton, Josiah Tucker, Joseph Priestly, and Charles Simeon were all Judeo-centrists. This book attempts to avoid both exaggerating the influence of Judeo-centrism, and minimising its importance.

⁴⁰ Smith, *Chosen Nation*, p. 95.

⁴¹ As Adam Sutcliffe and Jonathan Karp note in their examination of philosemitism, the transhistorical approach does not aim to identify an “eternal essence” of the subject, that can be traced unbroken throughout history, but instead looks towards “various lines of continuity and influence” (Adam Sutcliffe and Jonathan Karp, “Introduction: A Brief History of Philosemitism”, in Adam Sutcliffe and Jonathan Karp (eds), *Philosemitism in History* [Cambridge: CUP, 2011], p. 3).

⁴² William Laud, *A Sermon Preached before His Majesty, on Tuesday the Nineteenth of June, at Wansted* (London, 1621), p. 24.

⁴³ Samuel Eccles, *The Candid Determination of the Jews in Preferring a Thief and a Robber before our Saviour: A Sermon Preached June 10, 1753* (London, 1753), p. 14.

⁴⁴ Edwin Hodder, *The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury* (London: Cassell, 1886), Vol. III, p. 139.

⁴⁵ James Renton, *The Zionist Masquerade: The Birth of the Anglo-Zionist Alliance 1914–1918* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 85.

The transhistorical nature of this book also raises certain methodological difficulties when discussing national identity. The debate on whether historians should discuss national identity as emerging prior to the nineteenth century is long running and continues to be contentious. On the one hand, figures such as Ernst Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm, Benedict Anderson, and Krishan Kumar have argued that the prerequisites for the nation could not have existed prior to the French Revolution. For these “modernist” writers, the nation is defined primarily as a community marked by shared political participation and national consciousness engendered, in part, by the development of mass communication and transportation.⁴⁶ On the other side of the debate, those such as Liah Greenfeld, Adrian Hastings, and Anthony D. Smith have argued that nations (and, for Greenfeld, nationalism) can be traced back into the pre-modern era.⁴⁷ Given the period covered in this book, it is unsurprising that it rejects the modernist position. As Smith points out, to search for the distinctives of the nation in modernity and then work backwards is inherently circular—it presumes that the nation cannot exist prior to the nineteenth century because its necessary conditions were not there.⁴⁸ At the same time, the discussion of nationhood in this book does not presume that the conditions for modern nationalism existed in the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Nonetheless, a form of national identity based around shared sets of symbols, ideas, and a sense of national destiny did.⁴⁹ While the modernist position has often denied that pre-modern national identity existed outside of elites, or has seen religion as a factor that divided rather than unified the nation,⁵⁰ the “chosen” nation paradigm offered a form of religious national identity capable of engaging both elite and common audiences. Whether examining those who listened to sermons on Jewish restoration in the 1650s, rioters protesting the profanation of prophecy a hundred

⁴⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* Second Edition (Malden: Blackwell, 2006); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Second Edition (Cambridge, CUP, 2013), pp. 1–19.

⁴⁷ Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, pp. 1–23; Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood*, pp. 35–65; Anthony D. Smith, *The Antiquity of Nations* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004), pp. 33–61.

⁴⁸ For example, Hobsbawm: “The basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything connected with it is its modernity” (*Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 14).

⁴⁹ Anthony D. Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant, and Republic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), pp. 12–28.

⁵⁰ Kumar, *Making of English National Identity*, pp. 101–114.

years later, or the large numbers contributing to the London Jews' Society penny collections in the nineteenth century, this was a belief clearly not restricted to the upper strata of society. It demonstrates the way in which a religious conception of national identity could unify, as well as divide.

A final terminological problem relates to this book's choice of specifically English identity as its focus. Spanning the period of the Act of Union, this might seem counter-intuitive. Much historiographical work over the last twenty years has focused upon the wider British context of English history.⁵¹ Linda Colley's ground-breaking work on British national identity established the importance of Britishness to people in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. While they still identified as English, Scottish, and Welsh, being British became a key way of understanding themselves.⁵² This book does not aim to challenge the importance of a British identity in this period.⁵³ However, it asserts that when English Judeo-centrists wrote about Britain's prophetic role, they often used the term as a synonym for England. For example, a report in the LJS's *Jewish Intelligence* in January 1841 referred to the capture of Acre by the "British" in one paragraph, and the "English" in the next.⁵⁴ As Boyd Hilton has noted, this usage was common in the nineteenth century, and particularly prevalent in moments of national crisis.⁵⁵ Although Colley has disputed this interpretation (and there are certainly counter-examples),⁵⁶ there were good reasons for Judeo-centrists to firmly distinguish between England and Scotland after the Act of Union. Particularly with the rise of Anglican apocalypticism from the late 1790s, English fulfilment of prophecy was linked explicitly to the Church of England. The military power of the

⁵¹ Following J.G.A. Pocock, "British History—A Plea for a New Subject", *Journal of Modern History* 47:4 (1975), pp. 601–621.

⁵² Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837*, Revised Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁵³ Although this book argues that Judeo-centrists believed that England fulfilled prophecy, and that they developed a strong English identity, this does not deny that they also affirmed an over-arching Britishness in their daily lives. For most people, there was no contradiction in viewing themselves as simultaneously English and British. As Kumar notes when attacking such either/or constructions of identity, "nothing in what we know about ethnic or national identities should compel us to accept such models" (Kumar, *Making of English Identity*, p. 149).

⁵⁴ *Jewish Intelligence* 7:1 (January 1841), p. 34.

⁵⁵ Boyd Hilton, *A Mad, Bad, and Dangerous People? England, 1783–1846* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), p. 240.

⁵⁶ Colley, *Britons*, pp. xv–xvii.

British Navy might fulfil some prophecies, but the superiority of the distinctively English church was key to fulfilling the nation's righteous mission to the Jews. This explains why in the 1840s the establishment of a distinctively Anglican bishopric in Jerusalem was the cause of so much prophetic hope in England. The Presbyterian Church of Scotland might help in the final conversion of the Jews, but it was the presence in England of an established Episcopalian Church that sealed the nation's apocalyptic role. Indeed, as Nancy Stevenson has suggested, Church of Scotland missionary work with Jews focused less on the restoration to the Holy Land than that undertaken by English missionary societies, and often rested on very different eschatological bases.⁵⁷ While this is not to deny that some writers talked specifically of a British role, for the English Judeo-centrists examined in this book, prophecy had a distinctly English fulfilment.

2 PHILOSEMITISM, ALLOSEMITISM AND "OTHERING"

The "chosen nation" paradigm also raises difficult questions regarding interactions between Christians and Jews. A focus on the future of ethnic Israel linked to the glorification of the Jewish people might appear at first glance to be highly positive for Jews. Several historians have therefore argued that Judeo-centrism represented a form of philosemitism that actively prepared the ground for both Jewish Zionism and the 1917 Balfour Declaration pledging British support for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, this sort of historiography has often been distinctly whiggish, and at times overly congratulatory of English attitudes towards Jews, celebrating British toleration and openness.⁵⁹ It ignores the

⁵⁷ Nancy Stevenson, "The Jews as a Factor in Mission: Scottish and English Motive into Action 1795-c.1840", Position Paper 81, Currents in World Christianity Project (Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, 1997). A further issue is the role of the Church of Ireland—like the Church of England an established, Anglican church. As this book's final chapter will show, Irish Anglicans felt that they would also play a key part in the restoration of the Jews.

⁵⁸ Franz Kobler, *The Vision was There: A History of the British Movement for the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine* (London: Lincolns-Prager, 1956); Michael Pragai, *Faith and Fulfilment: Christians and the Return to the Promised Land* (London: Valentine Mitchell, 1985); Barbara Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (London: Phoenix Press, 2001).

⁵⁹ In Bar-Yosef's evocative phrase, these works link together historical figures "like a dot-to-dot drawing... [revealing] a neatly-sketched draft of the Balfour Declaration" (Eitan Bar-Yosef, "Christian Zionism and Victorian Culture", *Israel Studies* 8:2 [2003], p. 19).

fact that Jewish-Christian relations have historically tended to be deeply ambiguous; they have “always relied on a combination of attraction *and* aversion... conditional sympathy, alternating with unconditional disgust”.⁶⁰ As this book suggests in the following chapters, this is as true for Judeo-centric restorationism as it is for other forms of so-called philosemitism. Judeo-centrists were not disinterested champions of Jews and Judaism. Through much of the period examined in this book, Christians believed that Jewish restoration to Palestine would not take place until Jews converted to Christianity. Even when this changed in the nineteenth century, and the consensus shifted to a Jewish return to the Holy Land in unbelief, conversion remained the ultimate goal. For example, supporters of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews (popularly known as the “London Jews’ Society”; henceforth referred to as LJS) remained the most important cheerleaders for restorationist projects in the period. Historically, Christians linked conversion with assimilation to gentile norms. This has led some critics to argue that Judeo-centrists sought to erase, rather than to celebrate, Jews and their culture.⁶¹

The providential focus on the Jewish people could also border on fetishistic at times. If nations and individuals faced judgement for their treatment of Jews, then Christian attitudes towards them risked becoming purely utilitarian. If so, this would be part of a larger trend of using Jews for gentile benefit. For example, in their examination of official eighteenth-century projects for Jewish emancipation, Paolo L. Bernardini and Diego Lucci have argued that the desire to mobilise Jewry as a means to promote state interests was the driving force behind “emancipatory” schemes.⁶² Judeo-centric restorationism might appear to add religion to this state-based utilitarianism. As such, it risked mythologising Jews as near-magical

Tuchman was aware of this issue when writing her foundational history, as she warned against presupposing that there was an “inevitable” progression towards the Balfour Declaration (Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, p. xv).

⁶⁰ Irene Zweip, “Alien, Everyman, Jew: The Dialectics of Dutch ‘Philosemitism’ on the Eve of World War II”, in David Wertheim (ed.), *The Jew as Legitimation: Jewish-Gentile Relations Beyond Antisemitism and Philosemitism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 119.

⁶¹ Mark Krupnick, “The Rhetoric of Philosemitism”, in Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted (eds), *Rhetorical Invention and Religious Inquiry: New Perspectives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 362–364.

⁶² Paolo L. Bernardini and Diego Lucci, *The Jews, Instructions for Use: Four Eighteenth-Century Projects for the Emancipation of European Jews* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012).

totems, promoting their positive treatment for the sake of the nation's future rather than for any engagement with real Jewish concerns. As the English Jewish community grew over the period traced in this book, and Jews became more visible in English society, Judeo-centrists continued to construct images of the Jews that suited their eschatological and national imagination. This meant that Jewish concerns—whether naturalisation in 1753, or admission to parliament in the mid-nineteenth century—were judged by some Judeo-centrists as being against the Jews' own best interests. Judeo-centric national identity allowed Jews to feel no more comfortable in England than they needed to be in order to prepare for their return to Palestine. Assimilation was not an option.⁶³ It is not hard to see why the concept of a national identity based around the creation of an England free from Jews is unsettling. These issues could also play out at the personal level. Judeo-centrism's internal logic suggested that encounters between Jews and Christians might be marked as much by fear as by any genuine willingness to engage. The concept of Christians treating Jews well only because they feared divine revenge if they did not do so conjures up the spectre of medieval antisemitism and tales of Jewish magical powers. It also links to criticism of contemporary Christian Zionism, and Gershom Gorenberg's evocative charge that it makes Jews "merely actors in [Christian] dreams".⁶⁴

These claims rightly call attention to problematic areas of Judeo-centric thought. However, it would be too hasty to dismiss all restorationists as motivated by self-interest. While William and Hilary Rubinstein go too far in assuming that philosemites usually had *no* ulterior motives, their assertion that many restorationists genuinely cared for Jews needs to be taken seriously.⁶⁵ The following chapters include examples of genuine concern and friendship between Jews and gentiles, from impassioned defences of Judaism by Christian writers in the 1750s, to the LJS's affirmations of Jews as loyal crown subjects in the 1830s. From the seventeenth century onwards, restorationists were also conscious of England's past mistreatments of Jews. As W.H. Oliver has noted, an acute sense of shame developed among Christians aware of medieval atrocities committed in

⁶³ As Wertheim notes in his reflection on Jews and Christian legitimation, Christians "wanted to keep recognizable Jews, because it needed them" (Wertheim, "Introduction", p. 7).

⁶⁴ Quoted in Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel*, p. 112.

⁶⁵ William D. Rubinstein and Hilary L. Rubinstein, *Philosemitism: Admiration and Support in the English Speaking World for Jews* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. ix–xiii; 126–148.

England.⁶⁶ Knowledge of this history led to a further sense of providential angst that generated a complicated range of emotional reactions to Jews: sorrow, fear, regret, anger, and even awe.⁶⁷ This totemic attitude towards Jews was complicated, and represented one way in which Protestant providential thinking merged with folk belief from the sixteenth century onwards.⁶⁸

Beyond this, the desire to convert Jews should not necessarily imply that Christians were covertly seeking Jewish erasure. While conversionism was understandably offensive to Jews, it was often the driving force behind Christian action towards *all* groups. Particularly after the revivals of the eighteenth century, evangelicals' actions tended to be motivated by a desire to save souls, whether Jewish, gentile or "the heathen" overseas. As the Rubinsteins note, for evangelicals conversion was "the ultimate act of kindness towards Jews" as it saved them from hell.⁶⁹ It is anachronistic to hold restorationists to a postmodern standard of ecumenism and find that they fell short—when they believed that their own children would perish for all eternity without conversion, it is hardly surprising that they applied the same criteria to other cultural groups. Neither did conversion necessitate the eradication of Jewish culture. On the contrary, restorationists generally believed that Jews would remain distinct after conversion, and were destined to become superior to gentile Christians. Some argued that they would enjoy a rebuilt temple. Indeed, a number went so far as to argue that the nations would flock to Jerusalem and celebrate the Jewish holidays. As Sutcliffe and Karp have pointed out, for these restorationists Jewish conversion "would Judaize Christianity as least as much as it would Christianize Jews".⁷⁰

Finally, it is important to remember that utilitarianism was not entirely one sided. Placing too much focus on restorationists' ulterior motives risks

⁶⁶ Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists*, p. 50.

⁶⁷ Alexandra Walsham's recent emphasis on the emotional impact of providential thought opens up further avenues of research on prophetic attitudes to Jews that I hope to examine in future work. See Alexandra Walsham, "Deciphering Divine Wrath and Displaying Godly Sorrow: Providentialism and Emotion in Early Modern England", in Jennifer Spinks and Charles Zika (eds), *Disaster, Death and the Emotions in the Shadow of the Apocalypse, 1400–1700* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 21–43.

⁶⁸ As Walsham notes, providentialism was part of a "fruitful and enduring synthesis" of Protestant theology, folk belief and "proverbial wisdom" (Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England* [Oxford: OUP, 1999], p. 328).

⁶⁹ Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, p. 133.

⁷⁰ Sutcliffe and Karp, "Introduction", p. 12.

denying agency to individual Jews. As David J. Wertheim notes, Christian use of Jews and Judaism to legitimise their eschatology meant that Jews themselves might benefit by playing along with Christian conceptions.⁷¹ Menasseh ben Israel's visit to England and courting of Christian patronage in his books is perhaps the most famous example of this.⁷² The same kind of attitude was often evident in later centuries, for example, when some English Jews made use of social services offered by the LJS while ignoring the conversionist agenda they represented. Often fully aware of conversionists' ulterior motives and presuppositions, they did not feel threatened as they found their arguments deeply unconvincing.⁷³ This is not to deny that power relations between Jews and Christians remained unequal, or that many Jews found Christian attitudes offensive and ignorant. Neither is it to imply that Jews were unique in taking advantage of evangelical charity while rejecting religious overtures: many working class gentiles did the same.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, it is helpful to remember that English Jews were able to rework conversionist assumptions at times, and that

⁷¹ Wertheim, "Introduction", pp. 11–12.

⁷² See Sina Rauschenbach, "Christian Readings of Menasseh ben Israel: Translation and Retranslation in the Early Modern World", in David Wertheim (ed.), *The Jew as Legitimation: Jewish-Gentile Relations Beyond Antisemitism and Philosemitism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 63–81.

⁷³ Timothy Weber highlights some of the ways in which nineteenth-century American missionaries to Jews found their benevolence taken advantage of by their hearers. At the same time, he notes the subversive tactics other missionaries would use to convert Jewish children or attract audiences on false pretences. As has always been the case, the interaction between missionaries and those they aim to convert raised numerous ethical issues on both sides (Timothy Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism 1875–1982* [Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987], pp. 141–153).

⁷⁴ Carlo Aldrovandi suggests that the position I adopt here risks playing into the antisemitic stereotype of the "scheming Jew" (*Apocalyptic Movements in Contemporary Politics*, pp. 181–192). While this is a genuine danger, it is nonetheless important to highlight that individual Jews took advantage of the opportunities offered to them, while rejecting the motivations operative on those doing the offering. The same sort of approach is evident among working class Britons more generally in the nineteenth century. For example, Dominic Erdozain has suggested that one of the causes of secularisation in the country was church-run leisure activities (*The Problem of Pleasure: Sport, Recreation and the Crisis of Victorian Religion* [Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010]). Originally organised with a spiritual motive, their popularity with the working classes saw them gradually move away from the churches entirely. This should not suggest that those using such facilities were duplicitous or scheming, but rather that they were capable of making use of what opportunities came their way, while ignoring proselytising elements.

even those who converted were not necessarily coerced, but often exercising their agency.⁷⁵

None of this should disguise the fact that Judeo-centric restorationism, while envisaging a glorious future for Jews, engaged in a process of “othering” Jews, even after their proposed conversion to Christianity. Scholarship on the relationship between Jewish and English identity has often focused on this. Building on Colley’s influential work on Britishness in the eighteenth century, which emphasised the way in which identity was constructed against a French Catholic other, many examinations of English attitudes to Jews have focused on alterity. Work by historians such as Stephen Shapiro and Michael Ragussis has suggested ways in which Jews were the ultimate “other” for the English in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. There was therefore significant unease at the idea that Jews could ever become English.⁷⁶ There was no room in the belief for their incorporation into the mainstream of Christianity. Restorationism, for all of its pro-Jewish statements, maintained this logic, reflecting the “double-ness” Bryan Cheyette traces in English literary representations of Jews.⁷⁷ While antisemites saw Jews as continually inferior and restorationists saw them as continually superior, neither could imagine a scenario in which they interacted with Jews on their own terms. This is an archetypal example of what Zygmunt Bauman has called *allosemitism*: “the practice of setting Jews apart as people radically different from all the others” that is inherently ambivalent towards Jews and Judaism.⁷⁸ The complications in

⁷⁵ The question of agency in conversion is complex, raising questions of the accuracy of conversion narratives, the extent to which these were edited or changed, and the social pressures that led individuals to either accept or reject conversion. Nonetheless, it would be inaccurate to suggest that only those who rejected conversionist overtures were actively displaying agency. As Megan Clare Webber has recently noted, it is important to look for agency not just in resistance, but also in compliance with religious institutions, no matter how distasteful their methods may appear from a contemporary perspective. She warns, “by discounting agency that is ‘other’ to themselves, historians risk not only producing anachronistic histories, but doing a disservice to their subjects. Historians’ experiences and values may override those of historical actors”. (“Troubling Agency: Agency and Charity in Early Nineteenth-Century London”, *Historical Research* 91:251 (2018), p. 135).

⁷⁶ Michael Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation: Jews and Other Outlandish Englishmen in Georgian Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), pp. 32–34; Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 1–11.

⁷⁷ Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of ‘The Jew’ in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875–1945* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), pp. 1–12.

⁷⁸ Zygmunt Bauman, “Allosemitism: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern”, in Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus (eds), *Modernity, Culture and ‘The Jew’* (Cambridge: Polity,

the anti/philosemitic reading of restorationism sketched out above suggest that it is more helpful to categorise restorationism as a form of allosemitism. The neutral term recognises that it could be both positive and negative towards Jews and their interests, sometimes at the same time. Reducing restorationism to a binary of either anti- or philosemitism risks making an inappropriate moral judgement on a multifaceted and constantly evolving belief.

Thinking of restorationism as a form of allosemitism is also useful when considering national identity. For Bauman, fears of Jews did not spring simply from their “otherness”, but rather from their “ambivalence”. The Augustinian view of Jews as both carriers of sacred tradition and those guilty of deicide left them in a unique position: simultaneously better and worse than pagans. The medieval period magnified their ambiguity as they were both patronised and reviled by elites while being rejected by peasants as the tools of nobles. During the Enlightenment, their refusal to be absorbed into homogenous national cultures left them as “the eponymous weed” in the garden of modernity. They represented “the epitome of incongruity” in claiming to be a nation without national boundaries. As a result, they became effigies and dumping grounds for all anxieties about modernity, resulting in a desire to destroy or remove them completely.⁷⁹

Although this is persuasive, some elements of Bauman’s scheme remain difficult to reconcile with the historical intricacies of Christian attitudes towards Jews. As he states in his initial definition of the term, allosemitism presumes neither a negative nor a positive attitude towards Jews, being instead the precondition that generates them both. Nonetheless, its function as a device for ambiguity reduction guarantees that both negative *and* positive attitudes will be “intense and extreme” when they appear.⁸⁰ Bauman’s theory of allosemitism, however, only explains in detail why negative views of Jews develop. It requires further explication to explore the “intense and extreme” responses to Jews that imagined their survival rather than their destruction. These, like the negative responses, were built on a base of allosemitism, as they presumed the intrinsic otherness of Jews; but an otherness that assumed Jewish superi-

1998), p. 143. “Allosemitism” originated in the work of Polish novelist Artur Sandauer. Cheyette prefers the term “semitic discourse” (*Constructions*, p. 8). I believe Bauman’s term better communicates the position as an alternative to anti- and philosemitism, and therefore follow it in this book.

⁷⁹ Bauman, “Allosemitism”, pp. 150–154.

⁸⁰ Bauman, “Allosemitism”, p. 143.

ority. The case studies examined in this book illustrate the way in which this form of allo-Semitism acted to resolve ambiguity in national identity. Instead of deriding Jews for their failure to incorporate with the nation, restorationism dispelled fears about the national project by celebrating their continued separateness. Somewhat ironically, by their refusal to assimilate, Jews served as evidence that God worked primarily through distinct national groups. His faithfulness to the Jews and promise to restore them to Palestine testified to the fact that, even in the face of disobedience, He was able to preserve nations. By maintaining a connection to God's original nation, Judeo-centrists therefore dispelled anxieties about their current national state. Even when some restorationist writers envisioned Jewish naturalisation in Britain, they nonetheless imagined that the "naturalised" Jews would retain their Jewishness and soon leave for Palestine. Proponents of the view engaged in an act of rhetorical juggling in which they balanced the anxiety of losing their chosen role by looking to God's promises to the Jews. The fact that God had maintained the Jews as a separate nation, despite their disobedience, helped to provide reassurance that no matter how bad their nation's sin, he could preserve them in a similar fashion, in spite of external circumstances. Although this might seem to be another example of gentile nations appropriating the position of Israel in finding security in the Old Testament promises, this dynamic rested on relationship rather than replacement. The chosen nation ensured its security by its connection with Israel. Only this link guaranteed their survival.

This adds one final complication to restorationist belief. Although consistently emphasising the alterity of Jews, restorationist writers nonetheless allowed their national mission to Israel to include a point of Jewish/gentile interaction that would enable Israel to claim its destiny. This represented a providential encounter in which England operated as the spark that ignited true Jewish identity. It allowed for a momentary crossing of English and Jewish paths; an encounter between the self and the other as Israel resumed first place in God's providential plan. This moment of encounter saw the Jews reclaim their full superiority by incorporating into their identity certain attributes that could only be gained in or from England. Whether this was conversion, which would come through exposure to pure English Christianity, the integration of English values into the Jewish character, or (as for Richard Brothers in 1795) the realisation that the best of the English *were* in fact secret Jews, it justified the relationship restorationists found between the two groups. I label this phenomenon

the “point of encounter”. It served as an additional justification of chosen nationhood, emphasising the providential blessings God had bestowed upon England.

This concept draws from and develops Bar-Yosef’s discussion of the slippage of self and other in English views of the Holy Land. Bar-Yosef employs John Barrell’s concept of “orientalism of the self” to understand the complicated position of Palestine in English culture.⁸¹ Rather than operating in binary categories of self and other, this form of orientalism incorporated elements of the initially “other” into the self by making them familiar, while constructing a more distant, absolute “other” to contrast with the original group. For Bar-Yosef, English writers and travellers found Palestine to be a reflection of England, and imagined it as a buffer state against a more dangerous (and fully other) eastern threat.⁸² In this way, the “Holy Land mirrored England mirroring the Holy Land”.⁸³ The point of encounter recognises this dynamic in restorationist discourse. Judeo-centric writers allowed for elements of the self to bleed into the Jew-as-other, while imagining that the restored Hebrews would defeat their “fully othered” Catholic or Muslim enemies. Yet this process was not as consistent as Bar-Yosef argues. The recognition of the self in the other could only ever to be passing and momentary. The allosemantic impulse maintained the essential difference of Jew and gentile, while allowing England to contribute to “true” Jewish identity. As the figure below shows, even England’s blessings were in place for Israel’s benefit. While they allowed a fleeting moment when alterity appeared to vanish, the point of encounter immediately reimposed it. Allosemantic logic reinforced the idea of Jews as a superior other (Fig. 1.1).

⁸¹ John Barrell, *The Infection of Thomas de Quincy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 8–15.

⁸² Eitan Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture 1799–1917* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), pp. 8–10. As Krishan Kumar has pointed out, even extreme forms of othering allow for some recognition of potential likeness between self and other. A comparison with a group so alien to be beyond comprehension would make little sense (Kumar, *Making of English Identity*, pp. 61–62). Kumar calls for the use of Freudian categories that recognise identity construction through familiar groups, as well as through alterity.

⁸³ Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, p. 90.

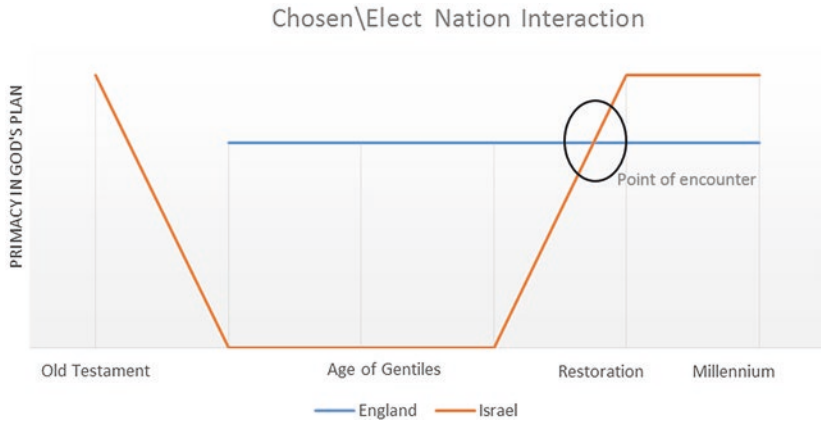


Fig. 1.1 Restorationist dynamic of England and Israel's interaction

3 OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK

With this in view, the book makes five broad points regarding the model of eschatological chosen nationhood outlined here. As with any summary, each of these requires further elaboration and detail in relation to particular historical circumstances (as subsequent chapters will show). Nonetheless, they offer a helpful orientation for the overarching argument.

1. God had chosen England, but only as a secondary nation to Israel. The nation's purpose and mission could only be understood in relation to Israel. There was therefore no clash of competing "chosen" peoples in this model, as its proponents believed that national Israel was both superior and the only nation that was truly "elect".
2. This model embodied both missionary and covenantal forms of chosen nationhood. The nation had a mission towards Israel, and faced punishment if it failed to fulfil it. This duty played out on the horizontal, world historical plane (necessitating political involvement) as well as on the vertical, eschatological plane (pointing towards the consummation of God's plans).
3. When there is awareness of sin, national response could operate to reverse judgement by reclaiming the chosen role. In this case, as a Jewish community developed in England, it also necessitated engagement with Jews and offered opportunities for the English to

demonstrate their repentance for past mistreatment in practical, political actions. Tracking the nation's fate through the treatment of Jews therefore offered a way through providential confusion.

4. Although this model guaranteed the nation a prominent eschatological role through prophecy, this did not reduce fear of the loss of this status to mere rhetoric. Anxiety over national election was common, and it could cause serious distress. Conversely, it could also act as a powerful impetus for reform and provide hope for the future. Again, this encouraged proponents to political engagement.
5. The Jews therefore acted as a legitimation of the nation by providing a tangible mission to fulfil, rooted in prophecy. As a chosen group who demonstrated God's continued faithfulness to their national survival, they also provided reassurance that God would reciprocate such faithfulness to people who followed his commands. The Jews' survival as a nation therefore offered proof of the certainty of God's promises, and his ability to restore nations from apostasy.

The following chapters expand upon these points across a range of historical contexts. The second chapter provides a general background to the development of Judeo-centric restorationism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It examines more well-known figures such as Thomas Brightman and Joseph Mede, as well as exploring the viewpoints of writers such as Henoah Clapham, who have been overlooked in previous studies of Judeo-centrism and proto-Zionism. The aim of this chapter is to provide historical background on the early development of restorationism.

The next chapters each follow a similar pattern, consisting of an outline of developments in restorationist thought and a more focused case study. The first part of each chapter provides an overview of the way in which Judeo-centrism developed from the period of the previous chapter's case study, up until the case study examined in that chapter. In Chap. 3, the focus turns to the Whitehall Conference of 1655, and the debates on Jewish readmission to England. These debates reveal anxieties about England's providential duty towards the Jews, and fears that recent political turmoil was God's judgement for their mistreatment. Readmission would expiate that guilt and ensure England continued to uphold her correct prophetic role.

As Chap. 4 suggests, Judeo-centrism did not vanish at the Restoration of Charles II. Indeed, it continued to develop over the later seventeenth

century and remained an important element in English eschatological thought into the eighteenth. This culminated in debates surrounding the so-called Jew Bill of 1753, a minor piece of legislation that caused a national sensation. In allowing Jews to become naturalised British citizens, critics charged that it attempted to undermine prophecies of Jewish separation. Yet it also found support from Judeo-centrists, who believed that the measure helped demonstrate England's prophetic role. Judeo-centrism was pliable—it could be employed to support a number of different political positions.

The fifth chapter moves to explore the role of Judeo-centrist restorationism in the prophetic debates surrounding the French Revolution. Concentrating on the prophecies and reception of Richard Brothers, self-proclaimed nephew of God, it argues that Judeo-centric restorationism had multiple uses in the service of national identity construction. Brothers, while claiming that many in England had a secret Jewish heritage, nonetheless argued for a restoration led by the British Navy. While “radical” prophets and Anglican scholars might agree that England had a special role to play in end times events and Jewish restoration, what this would look like differed sharply in their respective estimations.

The sixth chapter traces the emergence of Brothers's successor prophets such as Joanna Southcott and John Wroe, through the re-emergence of Anglican premillennialism in the early nineteenth century. Combined with the foundation of the LJS, this was a period rich in prophetic excitement. Restorationists became convinced that the political wind was blowing in their favour. Practical government support for Jewish restoration became not only a possibility, but in their eyes a necessity if the nation was to maintain her world-leading role. These issues came into sharp focus in the debate on the foundation of a joint Anglo-Prussian bishopric in Jerusalem in the early 1840s and the way in which Judeo-centrists came to see it as a key eschatological project.

The book ends its study with the fallout surrounding the bishopric in the later 1840s. While the role of Judeo-centrism in English national identity formation could be taken further (particularly into the Crimean War and up to the Balfour Declaration)⁸⁴ this would serve only to repeat its major points. The nature of restorationism's relationship with English

⁸⁴ See, Eric M. Reisenauer, “Armageddon at Sebastopol: The Crimean War in mid-Victorian Britain”, in Alisa Clapp-Itnyre (ed.), *‘Perplex in Faith’: Essays on Victorian Beliefs and Doubts* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), pp. 39–74.

identity did not see significant change in the period 1850–1917, although restorationists obviously responded to altered political circumstances. As excellent studies of this period already exist (particularly Donald Lewis’s work),⁸⁵ by ending in 1850 this book aims to avoid re-ploughing already well-trodden historiographical ground. It also aims to avoid the teleological appeal of the Balfour Declaration, which can appear as the inevitable conclusion of English restorationism in some studies.⁸⁶ Nonetheless, it aims to offer an engaging analysis of the links between restorationism and national identity across 250 years of English identity formation.

⁸⁵ Donald M. Lewis, *The Origins of Christian Zionism: Lord Shaftesbury and Evangelical Support for a Jewish Homeland* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010).

⁸⁶ Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, pp. 310–341.



“Shall They Return to Jerusalem Againe?": Jewish Restoration in Early Modern English Thought

Writing to Lucy Russell, Countess of Bedford in 1608, Coventry minister Thomas Draxe took as his subject the future of the Jewish people. Many, he argued, wrongly hated the Jews, unthinkingly branding them as Christ killers and despised by God. They failed to see that in good time God would convert his ancient people to Christ, as Paul had predicted in Romans 11, and that they would form a vibrant part of the church militant. Nonetheless, he warned Russell against believing in any form of earthly blessing for them at this conversion. Regarding the Holy Land: “They are likely never to recover it, for they have no such promise, neither have they any possibility of meanes [*sic*] to compass it. Secondly Christes comming unto them shall not be *visible but spirituall*, not from the Earthly *Sion*, which long sithence [*sic*] hath bene made desolate, but from his spirituall *Sion* of his Catholike Church”.¹ By 1615, however, Draxe’s opinions appeared to have shifted dramatically. Considering whether the “Jewes should bee restored into their countrey” he concluded, “It is very probable. First, all the Prophets seeme to speak of this returne. Secondly, they shall no longer bee in bondage. Thirdly, God having for so many ages forsaken his people shall the more notably shew them mercy”.²

¹Thomas Draxe, *The Vvorldes Resurrection, or The Generall Calling of the Iewes* (London, 1608), p. 89.

²Thomas Draxe, *An Alarum to the Last Judgement* (London, 1615), p. 81.

This chapter traces the way in which this belief in Jewish restoration developed over the start of the seventeenth century. Draxe's shifting thinking is representative of a change evident in many English writers in the period. Here the blanket denial of earthly restoration of the Jews to Palestine and the condemnation of such opinions as heretical (as in the Protestant confessions)³ began to shift towards an altogether more positive attitude towards the possibility of a restored Jewish nation. That this was occurring in a period in which writers, theologians, mapmakers, and voyagers were all attempting to forge a strong sense of English nationhood is no coincidence.⁴ A focus on the importance of Jewish conversion and restoration to Palestine provided an opportunity for authors to discuss the question of exactly how to define the nation. Indeed, it opened up spaces in the Bible in which these writers could claim to find England's special status revealed. This was more than simply reading England into the text as a "new Israel". Rather, it was the fashioning of a distinctive biblical nationhood, rooted in the leadership of a pan-European Protestantism.

I THE IDEA OF JEWISH RESTORATION

Although mainstream Christian thought denied the possibility of Jewish restoration to Palestine, there had always been some voices raised in its favour. As Justin Martyr (c. 100–160) wrote: "I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare".⁵ Robert E. Lerner has charted a variety of

³The idea of an earthly reign of the elect on earth had emerged forcefully in the anabaptists who took over the German city of Münster in 1534–1535. As a result, millennialism and the idea of a period of earthly blessing were condemned. These opinions were often branded "Jewish". The 1530 Augsburg Confession (Lutheran) had already attacked "Jewish opinions, that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall occupy the kingdom of the world". The 42 Articles of the Church of England (1553) stated that those who "renew the fable of heretics called Millenarii be repugnant to Holy Scripture and cast themselves head-long into Jewish dotage", while the Second Helvetic Confession (1566—Reformed) attacked "Jewish dreams that there will be a golden age on earth before the Day of Judgment".

⁴Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 65–194.

⁵Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Trans. James Donaldson and Alexander Roberts, in James Donaldson and Alexander Roberts (eds), *The Anti-Nicene Fathers Vol. I* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 239.

medieval figures, beginning with the twelfth-century abbot Joachim of Fiore (1145–1202), who predicted a full conversion of the Jews and their restoration to Palestine.⁶ Few of these, however, were working within mainstream traditions. Nicholas of Buldesdorf (d. 1446), for example, claimed to be the Jewish messiah and was subsequently burned for heresy.⁷

Similar messianic ideals abounded among those who loudly espoused a belief in Jewish restoration in sixteenth-century England. Roger Edwards, for example, wrote to astrologer John Dee and Thomas Cooper, Bishop of Lincoln, arguing that he and his followers would rebuild Jerusalem and convert the Jews. A manuscript, dated to 4th April 1580 and labelled “A Phantastical Booke” reveals that Edwards, imprisoned already for speaking seditiously on the delicate issue of Elizabeth’s successor, was very far from the mainstream in his messianic pretensions.⁸ Ralph Durden—incarcerated in 1586 when proclaiming that he believed in Jewish restoration to Palestine—offers a similar example.⁹ In addition to holding to the full restoration of the Jews, Durden was convinced that he was their promised messiah and would rule the nations with a rod of iron, and that he alone could interpret the seal judgements of Revelation.¹⁰ Francis Kett, executed for heresy in 1589, is another figure sometimes identified as a proto-Zionist.¹¹ Kett’s only published work, the 1585 *Glorious and Beautiful Garland of Man’s Glorification*, contains no hint of any particular interest in the Jews. Neither does it contain anything that gestures towards the real reason for Kett’s execution—his Arianism. Three separate lists of charges against Kett survive. All highlight his denial of the Trinity, affirmation of

⁶ Robert E. Lerner, *The Feast of Saint Abraham: Medieval Millenarians and the Jews* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

⁷ Lerner, *Feast of Saint Abraham*, pp. 73–116.

⁸ British Library Mss. 353, f.192–230. See also Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, pp. 142–145.

⁹ Although Cogley identifies Durden as the first Judeo-centrist, the Judeo-centric tradition traced here had a largely conservative soteriology (Richard W. Cogley, “Most vile”, p. 785). Figures examined later in this book, such as Richard Brothers, did harbour messianic ambitions, but they were building on a conservative seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century tradition.

¹⁰ Richard Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse* (Oxford: Sutton Courtenay, 1978), pp. 188–192.

¹¹ See, for example, Douglas Culver, *Albion and Ariel: British Puritanism and the Birth of Political Zionism* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), p. 75.

Christ's sinfulness, and the necessity of his suffering again, as well as a belief that Christ and the apostles were currently personally present in Jerusalem gathering a new church.¹²

While certainly not mainstream, the fact that Edwards, Durden, and Kett, were able to make use of the same prophetic tropes reveals links between apocalyptic expectation and Jews in the Elizabethan mind. All three figures, with their messianic pretensions, adapted popular legends concerning the fate of the lost tribes of Israel. According to the Hebrew Bible, the ancient Jewish kingdom split into the northern kingdom of Israel, and the southern kingdom of Judah in the tenth century BCE. In c. 722 BCE the Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom and expelled the ten tribes. Expectations that the tribes would return in the last days were common amongst both Jews and Christians.¹³ Legendary stories about the tribes had significant medieval provenance, and continued to be popular in early modern England.¹⁴ Attempts to locate them among known people groups would be important for the development of both eschatological and racial thinking in England, as they raised questions about how far the Jews could assimilate into alien cultures and lose their distinctive Jewishness.¹⁵ The tribes also remained the subject of popular prophetic speculation. Just how reliable contemporaries found the breathless claims of a 1607 pamphlet that two great armies made up of the lost tribes were marching towards Palestine to "come and recover the land of promise, towards the which the first army is already very near" is uncertain.¹⁶ What is clear, however, is that such eschatological speculation found a ready audience.¹⁷

¹²Robert O. Smith, *More Desired*, pp. 65–66. See also Dewey D. Wallace, Jr., "From Eschatology to Arian Heresy: The Case of Francis Kett (d.1589)", *Harvard Theological Review* 67 (1974), pp. 459–473. Kett's 1585 work is perhaps notable for its firm disavowals of Arianism and affirmations of Trinitarianism (see Kett, *The Glorious Garland of Man's Glorification* [London, 1585], sigs.B2r, P2r).

¹³Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Ten Tribes: A World History* (Oxford: OUP, 2009).

¹⁴See Tudor Parfitt, *The Lost Tribes of Israel* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2002), pp. 60–80.

¹⁵Kristina Bross, *Dry Bones and Indian Sermons: Praying Indians in Colonial America* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 28–51.

¹⁶[Anon.], *A Iewes prophesy, or, newes from Rome* (London, 1607), p. 6.

¹⁷See Smith, *More Desired*, pp. 47–68; Crawford Gribben, *The Puritan Millennium: Literature and Theology, 1550–1682*, Second Edition (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2008), pp. 1–20.

Despite a general denial of the importance of the Holy Land, most theologians saw Jewish conversion as an essential part of God’s eschatological plan. This theme was present from the early church onwards. “For on that day [of Judgement]” wrote Augustine, “even the Jews will certainly repent, even those Jews who are to receive ‘the spirit of grace and mercy’”.¹⁸ Calvin and Luther were among the few who did not believe that there would be a large-scale conversion of the Jews before (or at) Christ’s return, an opinion that other reformers, such as Zwingli and Bullinger, espoused. The same was true in England. Bishop, playwright and polemicist John Bale’s 1545 commentary on Revelation, *The Image of Both Churches*, noted “he that hath dispersed Israell, shall bringe him againe to his folde, as Heiremy [e.g. Jeremiah] recordeth”.¹⁹ The marginal notations of the 1560 Geneva Bible promised a great end-times Jewish conversion based upon Romans 11: “He sheweth that the time shal come that the whole nation of ye Jewes thogh [*sic*] not every one particularly, shalbe [*sic*] joined to the church of Christ”.²⁰ Addressing the Jews, the martyrologist John Foxe claimed similarly that God would “vouchsafe to reduce you againe into his owne familie, with his elect Saints, and make you partakers of his gladsome Gospell”.²¹ Yet this position was not Judeo-centrism. There was always, as Foxe noted, a “reduction” to the form of behaviour currently acceptable within God’s “familie”. A distinct Jewish identity would end as Jews merged into the gentile church. Conversion meant the abandonment of Jewish ceremonies, ethnicity, and claims to the Holy Land for potential converts. Jewish marks of cultural distinctiveness—their dietary laws, hopes for regaining Palestine, and sense of chosenness—were nothing but “olde motheaten shadowes”.²²

Although Foxe was speaking at the baptism of a Jewish convert, most people in early modern England were unlikely to have ever met a Jew.

¹⁸ Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (Harmsworth: Pelican, 1972), p. 960 (XX.30). See also Jeremy Cohen, “The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation: Romans 11:25–26 in Patristic and Medieval Exegesis”, *Harvard Theological Review* 98:3 (July 2005), pp. 247–281.

¹⁹ John Bale, *The Image of Both Churches* (London, 1570), I.142. See also I.96–99.

²⁰ *The Geneva Bible: A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), New Testament, p. 75r.

²¹ John Foxe, *A Sermon Preached at the Conversion of a Certaine Iew* (London, 1578), sigs. Lⁱⁱⁱⁱ[iii]r; M1r. See also Weemes, *The Christian Synagogue* (London, 1623), p. 141. On Foxe and the Jews see Smith, *More Desired*, pp. 64–67 and Sharon Achinstein, “John Foxe and the Jews”, *Renaissance Quarterly* 54:1 (2001), pp. 86–120.

²² Foxe, *Sermon*, sig. Biiiiv.

Officially, Edward I had expelled all Jews from England in 1290. Unofficially, it is clear that there were small Jewish communities in London by the late sixteenth century. Some relatively well-known Jews had engaged in English life, such as the rabbis used by Henry VIII in his “great matter”, or the infamous royal physician Roderigo Lopez, executed in 1594 for attempting to poison Elizabeth.²³ Additionally, there was a small but active community of Marranos (Iberian Jews professing Catholicism but secretly practicing Judaism) living in London. Contemporaries were quite capable of recognising individuals as Jewish, and even referring to them as such.²⁴ William Haughton’s location of Pisaro, the large-nosed, foul smelling moneylender in the Crutched Friars area of the city in his 1598 play *Englishmen for my Money*, for example, suggests an awareness of the areas in which Jews were likely to settle in the capital.²⁵ While this community suffered a general expulsion of Portuguese merchants in 1609, a new settlement of Sephardic traders was in London by the early 1630s.²⁶

This extremely limited Jewish presence in England meant that most knowledge of Jewish practices tended to be second-hand. There were many accounts of Jewish customs available to curious readers, as successful texts like John Weemes’s *Christian Synagogue* (1623) and Thomas Godwin’s *Moses and Aaron* (1625) show. As Eva Holmberg has recently suggested, the English had a sustained fascination with “imagining” the Jewish people through travel writing and proto-anthropology.²⁷ Although these works contained very detailed accounts, a common antisemitism persisted at times. The characters of Shylock and Barabbas, from Shakespeare’s *Merchant of Venice* and Marlowe’s *Jew of Malta* respectively, helped perpetrate existing stereotypes of the Jews as ugly, usurious, and sly. The idea that Jewish men menstruated, that Jews had a distinct smell about them (the *foetor Judaicus*), and even that Jews continued to murder

²³David S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England 1485–1850* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), pp. 15–106; See also Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 62–76.

²⁴Eliane Glaser, *Judaism without Jews: Philosemitism and Christian Polemic in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp. 7–29; Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 58–76.

²⁵Lloyd Edward Kermode, *Aliens and Englishness in Elizabethan Drama* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), pp. 120–133.

²⁶Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 15–18.

²⁷Eva Johanna Holmberg, *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 11–52.

Christian children on Good Friday, were remarkably resilient, although such ideas should be placed within a wider context of interest in “curiosities” of nature.²⁸ The average English man or woman would therefore have constructed their ideas about Jews from a variety of sources, ranging from folk tradition to sermons and the theatre. Only rarely could they base their opinions on direct contact.

The most important source for understanding Jews remained the Bible, a text that offered both positive and negative images: what Harold Fisch terms the Jews’ “dual image” as both deicides and potential redeemers.²⁹ In one sense, Jews legitimated Christian belief. Following the Augustinian tradition, their continued existence as a despised minority, combined with their preservation of the prophecies that testified to Jesus, provided a clear proof of the validity of the Christian faith.³⁰ Jews could also act as an “other” against which to define identity. Although Jews were not such a visible group of aliens as either the “strangers” from the continent who had sizeable communities in London, Norwich, and other towns, or such a potent threat as the crypto-Catholics often seen to be lurking behind every misfortune, they could nonetheless serve as an essential way for Christians to define their sense of identity. Although the Christian was, in one sense, defined as “not a Jew”, she could now also lay claim to the title of “the true Jew”. This was an idea that was present in the New Testament itself, visible in the condemnation of “those who say that they are Jews but are not” (Rev. 2:9). Being Jewish, as Paul had written in Romans 1, was about more than ethnic descent. After all, Christ had dismissed all appeals to ancestry, claiming that he could conjure children of Abraham from the desert stones should he so wish. Had the Jews not accepted that Christ’s blood would be “on us and our children” (Mt. 27:25)? As the Jews were thus guilty of deicide, so they could be both dismissed and reviled. Their “otherness” went to a level beyond that of foreigners, as it suggested that God had singled out the Jews for special punishment. They were, perhaps, the ultimate example of the “other” in early modern England.³¹

Yet at the same time, there was a sense of similarity with the Jews. The English Christian who was concerned about her faith would be fully aware

²⁸ Holmberg, *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination*, pp. 116–125. For the linking of these views to antisemitism see Katz, *Jews in the History of England*, pp. 107–140.

²⁹ Harold Fisch, *The Dual Image: The Figure of the Jew in English and American Literature* (London: World Jewish Library, 1971), pp. 11–15.

³⁰ Cohen, *Living Letters*.

³¹ See Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 167–193.

of the history of Israel and the Jewish people. As Calvin argued, the Christian believer experienced this through a sense of close identity with the key figures of the Old Testament.³² As the Christian church inherited the promise made to Abraham, so it was possible in early modern England to imagine a straight line running from the great Jewish patriarchs to contemporary believers. The New Testament also encouraged an identification with Jews. Although Paul had asked his readers to move beyond ethnicity in Romans 1, Romans 9–11 contained a celebrated affirmation of Jewish salvation. Not only would “all Israel” be saved, but gentiles needed to remember that they were a “wild olive” grafted into Israel’s vine. This image suggested, and at times was interpreted as showing, Jewish priority in faith.³³

The Christian community existed at another level to Benedict Anderson’s conception of the nation as an imagined community that was marked by “deep, horizontal companionship”.³⁴ The imagined community of the church *was* both horizontal and deep, but it also had a crucial temporal component; the idea that all believers throughout history, in both old and new dispensations, came together to form one body in Christ. There was a sense, in Barbara Lewalski’s words, of oneness with “the Israelites of old in regard to the essence of their spiritual life”.³⁵ Recent work has emphasised the importance of “sameness, not difference” between Jews and Christians in the universal kingdom of the

³² For example: John Calvin, *A Commentarie Upon the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romanes* (London, 1583), f. 156r.

³³ For details of this, see Beatrice Groves, *The Destruction of Jerusalem in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), pp. 43–54. Groves’ work suggests that the Protestant emphasis on Jews and Christians as sharing in a single covenant promoted the idea of Jewish precedence, as well as providing a useful legitimization of Protestantism’s antiquity against Catholic critics. It is important to note the differences between this and the Judeo-centric position. The single covenant idea continued to abrogate the land promises of the Old Testament. The promises that Jewish believers before Christ looked for were therefore spiritualised—an interpretation implicit in the discussion of Old Testament figures such as Moses enduring “disgrace for the sake of Christ” and “longing for a better country—a heavenly one” in Hebrews 11. The precedence that Groves discusses therefore meant that Jewish believers could boast of their antiquity, but not any physical or material superiority. Judeo-centrists argued that Jews deserved special recognition not only because of their temporal precedence, but also due to their future earthly, national superiority to gentiles.

³⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 7.

³⁵ Barbara Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 129.

church,³⁶ while Holmberg has explored the way in which Christian writers used descriptions of Jewish rites to help justify their own theological positions.³⁷ Of course, it is worth reiterating that for Jews, Christians were certainly *not* a part of their story; indeed, viewing Old Testament Jews as their forebears in the faith did little to stop the Christian antisemitism that often erupted in early modern Europe. Christian views of Jews were therefore still largely supersessionist, in that they viewed the church as the “true Israel”. The church and Israel were synonymous, but, aside from their conversion, the Jews had no distinctive eschatological role. Although this was not a direct replacement of Israel by the church, it relied on exegesis that presumed an essential continuity both between the elect in the Old and New Testaments, and between God’s plans for the Jews and for gentiles. When this link was challenged, the necessity of finding new ways of affirming Christian identity arose. One way in which new modes of identity construction developed was to emphasise the importance of a chosen nationhood. This could work in co-operation with the Jews and foresaw a special role for the nation with newly converted Jewish people. Yet it moved away from the emphasis on similarity that viewed Christians and Old Testament Jews as part of one long story.

2 BLESSING THE JEWS AND BLESSING THE NATION

Discussions of the future of the Jewish people touched on a number of different theological and political arenas in the early modern world. Obviously, this included biblical exegesis. Questions about the Jews always returned to the Bible and the hermeneutic applied to Jewish prophecies, and (in particular) Romans 11. Equally unsurprising is the fact that such speculation often linked to discussions of the apocalyptic. Paul’s reference to a time when “all Israel” would be saved, and “the fullness of the Gentiles” accepted into the faith, automatically led writers towards an eschatological frame of reference. Discussions of Jewish restoration therefore often involved complex discussion of the minutiae of biblical prophecy. Key texts included Ezekiel 37, where Judah and Israel were characterised as dry bones destined to reunite and once more take on flesh. Most important were the books of Daniel and, in the New Testament,

³⁶ Guibbory, *Christian Identity*, p. 112. See also Groves, *Destruction of Jerusalem*, pp. 1–54.

³⁷ Holmberg, *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination*, pp. 83–104.

Revelation. Commentaries on Daniel focused on the dream vision of Chap. 1, in which the prophet saw four succeeding world empires destroyed by a fifth empire (or monarchy) of divine origin. Later portions of the book included visions of beasts representing worldly powers, as well as numbers that fascinated in their capacity to offer clear dates: 1290 days following “the abomination that causes desolation to be set up” and a period of 1335 days that promised blessing for those who reached its end (Dan 12:11–12). Commentators often equated these numbers with similar figures in Revelation, particularly the 1260 days during which two witnesses prophesied and a mysterious woman (perhaps the church) fled into wilderness (Rev. 11:3, 12:6). This tallied with the “time, times, and half a time” during which God’s people suffered oppressions. Using the principle that a prophetic day represented a year, commentators viewed the two periods as synonymous.³⁸ Revelation itself was filled with composite beasts representing worldly powers, arranged around three sets of sevenfold judgements (seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials of wrath). The book concluded with Christ’s return to bind Satan for a thousand years, a period commonly known as the millennium. After the thousand years expired, Satan would rebel, before Christ’s final victory. This would lead to manifestation of the New Jerusalem following the final judgement. Among these events were hints at some future for the Jewish people. In Revelation 7, 144,000 were sealed from “all the tribes of Israel” (Rev. 7:1–8). These, the book suggested, were particularly close followers of Christ (Rev. 14:1–6).

While apocalyptic commentary encouraged writers to engage with literary representations of the Jewish people, this did not mean that they entirely avoided reference to contemporary Jews. The majority of commentators, while perhaps not personally familiar with Jews, at least had an awareness of the fact that there were flourishing communities living on the continent. Regardless of what contact a writer might have had with Jews in England, encounters outside of England were not uncommon.³⁹ In

³⁸ As a “time, times, and half a time” equals three-and-a-half years, or 42 months made up of 30 days each—thus 1260 days (years) in total.

³⁹ For some examples of early modern interfaith friendships in Germany see Daniel Jütte, “Interfaith Encounters Between Jews and Christians in the Early Modern Period and Beyond: Toward a Framework”, *American Historical Review* 118:2 (2013), pp. 378–400; Holmberg, *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination*, pp. 23–52, 143–145; Groves, *Destruction of Jerusalem*, pp. 219–231.

1613, the commercial agent John Harrison (fl. 1610–1638) recorded having spent three months staying with Jews when in Morocco on a diplomatic mission in the service of the recently deceased Prince Henry. The experience clearly made a positive impression upon him, as he fondly recalled that “I grewe familiarly acquainted with divers of your nation, and was presented at sundrie times (especially at your mariages, and solemn feasts) with divers of your dainties, which I tooke very kindly”.⁴⁰ Harrison enjoyed the Jewish “dainties” so much that he prepared his own in recompense, in the form of a collection of proofs for Jesus’ messianic claims. His work betrayed a particularly activist attitude towards Jewish evangelisation, going far beyond a general expression of prophetic hope for a miraculous conversion. For Harrison, his work therefore represented “duties, in steed of [Jewish] dainties”. That is, the duty of the Christian to labour for the conversion of the Jews.

This practical concern and belief that Christians should be active in seeking the Jews’ conversion is important and particularly visible among those writers who had spent time in Amsterdam. The duty that Harrison spoke of was based upon Romans 11 and the later reminder in Romans 15:27 that if the gentiles remained in the debt of Jews for their faith, it was their responsibility to materially bless the Jews. There were also practical humanitarian concerns. Dedicating his book to Maurice, Prince of Orange, Harrison wrote approvingly of the situation of the Jews in the Netherlands, where they “have their habitation in peace and safetie: not in that slaverie as in other nations, accounted of in the basest maner that may be, in the number of dogs rather than men”. After all, while the Jews were cursed for their part in Christ’s crucifixion, they remained “children of the promise, and *beloved for the fathers sake*... so highly in Gods account, even the beloved of the Lord”.⁴¹ The abrasive Hebraist Hugh Broughton (1549–1612) sounded a similar note when he wrote several letters to James I petitioning him to take practical actions for Jewish conversion. For Broughton, this entailed an ambitious series of translation projects to make the New Testament “speak by the phrases of *Law and Thalmud*”, along with Hebrew books demonstrating the fulfilment of prophecies by

⁴⁰ John Harrison, *The Messiah Alreadie Come, or Proofes of Christianitie* (Amsterdam, 1613), p. 62.

⁴¹ Harrison, *Messiah*, sigs. ¶2v-¶3r.

Christ, works showing the compatibility of the Epistle to the Hebrews with Jewish law, and translations of the book of Revelation.⁴²

While converting the Jews was an act of Christian “duty”, at the same time it offered opportunities for the fashioning of a godly national identity. This could be understood in general terms as the nation as a beacon of true faith, shining truth out across the world.⁴³ However, it could also have a more activist bent. For Harrison, perhaps unsurprisingly given that he was writing from the continent, this was located squarely within the context of pan-European Protestant internationalism. Remembering the closeness that he had seen between Maurice and Henry, Harrison recalled the shattered possibility that the two princes would have covenanted together for the advancement of Protestantism. Nonetheless, Maurice could still act as an example. If Maurice and the Dutch would be “the first beginners in your owne countrie” of the “glorious work of the conversion of the Jewish Nation, & finishing of that *mysterie of godlynes*” then glory awaited. Such a project would “not onely advance your honour in this world... but also in the world to come, you shal advance your selves in honour & glorie above the heavens”.⁴⁴ The blessing that would fall out at the adoption of this scheme was not simply the exultation of the monarch’s good name. It was “your selves”, not the singular figure of the prince, who would be exalted in attempts to convert the Jews. This would be a national project.

Whereas for Harrison the pre-eminence might rest upon the Dutch, Broughton placed his hopes in England. One of his ongoing frustrations revolved around attempts to engage officials in projects to help convert the Jews. These evolved in response to a Hebrew letter commending Broughton, sent to Archbishop of Canterbury John Whitgift in 1597, and forwarded to Broughton in Basel for translation. The letter’s author was the Constantinople rabbi Abraham Reuben. The rabbi praised the Queen (“mighty among the nations...the onely Queen of this world...the perfect among the perfect”) and the learning she had promoted in England,⁴⁵

⁴² Hugh Broughton, *A Most Humble Supplication unto the King* ([Middelburg], 1609). See also Katherine Firth, *The Apocalyptic Tradition in Reformation Britain 1530–1645* (Oxford: OUP, 1979), pp. 152–161.

⁴³ Claire McEachern, *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590–1612* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), pp. 184–187.

⁴⁴ Harrison, *Messiah*, sigs. ¶3v-¶3r.

⁴⁵ Hugh Broughton, “To the Right Honorable, the LL. of...privy Councell” in *The Works of the Great Albionean Divine, Renown’d in Many Nations... Hugh Broughton* (London, 1662), p. 971 (misl. 671).

before requesting a teacher who could instruct Jews in the New Testament in Hebrew.⁴⁶ That Elizabeth had little concern for this scheme is obvious from the increasingly frustrated tone of letters sent by Broughton to the Archbishop and Privy Council. Whitgift himself seems to have dismissed the letter as nothing more than pointless flattery. Yet for Broughton, the conversion of the Jews offered an opportunity for nation building. The country that helped convert the Jews “should find eternal blessing of God and honour among men”.⁴⁷ Urging parliament to use its influence on the queen and her ministers, Broughton implored them to grant the rabbi’s request and engage in “a new building from England of old Byzantium, to make it of Constantina or new Rome, a new Jerusalem”.⁴⁸ While these appeals went unheeded (and Broughton was accused of forging the original letter) he was offered new hope by James’s accession.⁴⁹ In one letter to James, requesting funding for translation work, the king was commended for his love for the gospel and kingdom “which advanced *Constantine* your Majesties auncestour, to rule the worlde”. The time had now come, wrote Broughton, when Jews “from *Bizantias, Rome* to *Albion*” desired written materials to advance their conversion (conveniently ignoring the supposed lack of Jews in Albion). By taking the lead, James would serve to “stirre up al the princes of Christendome” for further evangelisation. Broughton’s language made a number of claims on James’s national interests. By linking the king to Constantine, and highlighting that emperor’s supposed British ancestry, Broughton suggested James as a second Constantine; an emperor reaching out to Jews across the continent in the service of the gospel. This was likely to appeal to James’s desire to portray himself as a fosterer of peace within Christendom.⁵⁰ It would also bring to mind the historical claim that the English monarch ruled over an “empire in itself”, a key aspect of national identity construction from Henry VIII’s use of the argument to justify breaking from Rome in 1533. With James

⁴⁶For the original letter in Hebrew and Broughton’s dedication to the queen see Broughton, “An Epistle of an Ebrew willing to learn Christianity”, in *Works*, pp. 925–930.

⁴⁷Broughton, “To the Right Honorable, the Temporal Lords of...privy Councell”, in *Works*, p. 973 (misl. p. 673). Dated 15th June 1599.

⁴⁸Broughton, “To all the Gentlemen that are in place...in the Parliament of England”, in *Works*, p. 991 (misl. p.691).

⁴⁹See Broughton, “A Commendation of Rabbi Rubens Original”, in *Works*, p. 969.

⁵⁰James made regular use of the Constantine motif. See Maurice Lee, *Great Britain’s Solomon: James VI and I in His Three Kingdoms* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), pp. 177–195.

ruling over both England and Scotland, the claim for an internal “British Empire” was more applicable to his reign than to any of his predecessors’, although the king’s fervent hopes for full political union would be in vain.⁵¹ Yet for Broughton the European context mattered most. His letter symbolically reconstructed the three key areas of the Constantinian empire: Byzantium (Constantinople), Rome, and England. From all three, claimed Broughton, Jews were crying out for the gospel. As James’s imagined subjects, they begged for his imperial favour. By promoting Jewish evangelisation, it was therefore possible to imagine a reconstructed empire and the new pan-European *pax* that James desired.⁵² Despite the apparent disappointment of his appeals to the king, in later work Broughton continued to associate the possibility of the calling of the Jews with the monarch, although he also hoped for practical funding from the English merchants in Turkey.⁵³ The ten kings fighting the beast in Revelation 10 represented “ten kings that would clear the Revelation to Hebrews, Greeks, Latins, and all tongues might hasten the Jews calling: but I am afraid none, saving our own, will perform any promise that way”.⁵⁴ As it was for Harrison, helping the Jews linked into national interests.

While the images of the nation presented by Broughton and Harrison differed substantially from one another, both shared the belief that a focus on projects to aid the Jews would benefit the national body as a whole. Where they differed from Judeo-centrists, is that neither showed any belief in Jewish restoration to Palestine. For Broughton, the Jews’ obsession with a return to the Holy Land was responsible for their failure to find salvation. A similar focus on land as spiritually important in and of itself had also marked the Crusades, which in his mind represented the unleash-

⁵¹ See McEachern, *Poetics*, pp. 138–192; Schwyzer, *Literature, Nationalism and Memory*, pp. 151–175; Maley, *Nation, State and Empire*, pp. 7–44; Lee, *Great Britain’s Solomon*, pp. 93–128.

⁵² William Brown Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997). and Arthur H. Williamson, “Britain and the Beast: The Apocalypse, and the Seventeenth-Century Debate about the Creation of a British State”, in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (eds), *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture Vol. III: The Millenarian Turn: Millenarian Contexts of Science, Politics, and Everyday Anglo-American Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001), pp. 15–27.

⁵³ Hugh Broughton, *A Revelation of the Holy Apocalyps* (Middelburg, 1610), p. 12.

⁵⁴ Broughton, *Revelation*, p. 36.

ing of Satan at the end of the millennium.⁵⁵ Yet it was not a difficult step for the national interest enshrined in their writing to manifest itself more fully with projects to bless the Jewish people not only spiritually, but also materially. Henoah Clapham (fl. 1585–1614) was the key figure in this regard. A controversial minister, Clapham had periods as both a Brownist and a relatively respectable cleric in the Church of England. No record of him exists after 1614, by which point he had again fallen foul of Church authorities.⁵⁶ His work certainly demonstrated both a propensity for the controversial and a pleasure in the vitriolic that is reminiscent of Broughton (he opened one work by telling unfriendly readers “I leave thee to thunder and lightning”).⁵⁷

Composed in his Brownist stage, *The Sommons to Doomes Daie* (1596) was a commentary on the “Day of the Lord” described in 2 Peter 3:10–11. Clapham’s interpretation of the “Day” was not particularly novel—it referred to the final day of judgement and conflagration—but both the Jewish and nationalistic themes he touched upon were. England, in Clapham’s eyes, was under judgement for her poor treatment of true Christians, moral failures, and crushing of the poor. Appealing to brethren in the nation, he delivered a sideswipe at the current standard of rule in England. At the Lord’s judgement, he warned: “One crieth, *Oh King, Oh Queene, save me*: but they answere, *Accursed subjects, we are not able to save our selves*. They repleye, *Oh, your fearefull Lawes and tyrannie, have caused us to worship God after a humaine, carnall, & foolish manner*. Oh, oh (say Kings and Queenes againe) *we are therefore accursed and you condemned*.”⁵⁸ Coming from a preacher who believed that the Elizabeth’s laws were causing the English to worship in a “humaine, carnall, & foolish manner” the implication was clear. *Sommons* also saw Clapham touch, almost incidentally, on the future of the Jews. Noting that none knew the day or hour of God’s final judgement, he asked why Satan had not been afraid of encouraging Christ’s crucifixion, for fear of bringing about that judgement the sooner. This difficulty was answered by referring to the Devil’s knowledge of scripture: “Besides, *Isaiah*, had prophecied an universall calling of the

⁵⁵ Broughton, *Revelation*, p. 280.

⁵⁶ Alexandra Walsham, ‘Clapham, Henoah (fl. 1585–1614)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, January 2008 (Oxford: OUP, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5431>]. Accessed 28th November 2017.

⁵⁷ Henoah Clapham, *A Chronologicall Discourse touching, 1. The Church, 2. Christ, 3. Antichrist, 4. Gog & Magog &c.* (London, 1609), sig. B2r.

⁵⁸ Henoah Clapham, *Sommons to Doomes Daie* (Edinburgh, 1596), p. 59.

Jewes (which time as yet is unexpired) and from many other circumstances every where in the Prophets, the devils might easily know, that the time of Christ his incarnation could at noe hand be the time of the Lords last coming”.⁵⁹ The current departure from faith among Christians was therefore only a precursor to a great calling of gentiles that would precipitate the conversion of the Jews and lead to the establishment of their glorious church “figured out plainlie *Revel. 21*”.⁶⁰

There was no perceivable change in Clapham the following year, with his *Sinners Sleepe* spending time railing against Bishops (“Popish hearts in Protestant skins”) and his personal enemies.⁶¹ In appealing for reform in England, he held up the example of the Scottish church, sisters by “naturall union and Evangelicall covenant”.⁶² In the same year, his *Briefe of the Bible drawne first into English poesie and then illustrated by apte annotations* appeared. Clapham summarised key areas of scripture, provided a poetic rendering, and then a more detailed set of annotations on any areas that he felt required additional explanation. In his comments on Acts 1 this led him to adopt a reading that diverged significantly from the usual Protestant interpretation. In the text, the disciples asked Christ when he would restore the kingdom to Israel. Jesus’ answer was ambiguous, stating that “it is not for you to know the times and seasons set by my father” (Acts 1:6–7). The usual interpretation of the passage had been to see Christ as rebuking the disciples for the foolishness of their question. As Calvin had noted, “hee meant to drive out of his disciples minds that fond & false imagination, which they had conceived of the terrestrial kingdome”.⁶³

Clapham, however, used his commentary at this point to defend the disciples. Their question was worthy of praise, not blame, showing “so special care for their owne peoples good”. Indeed, the premise that Israel would inherit a physical kingdom was irrefutable:

Firstly, if they dreamed that *Israel* should have restored to them a Kingdome not onely spirituall, such a dreame cannot be infringed: nay, reade the Prophets attentively, and they insinuate a Kingdome not onely spirituall.

⁵⁹ Clapham, *Sommons*, pp. 30–31.

⁶⁰ Clapham, *Sommons*, p. 37.

⁶¹ Henoeh Clapham, *The Sinners Sleepe, Wherein Christ Willing Her to Arise, Receiveth But an Untoward Answer* (Edinburgh, 1596), pp. 77, 122–123.

⁶² Clapham, *Sinners Sleepe*, p. 58.

⁶³ John Calvin, *The Commentaries of M. Iohn Calvin upon the Actes of the Apostles* (London, 1585), p. 11.

Secondly, they saying *Wilt thou at this time Restore the Kingdome to, Israel,* what answer doth *Iesus* returne? doth [*sic*] he reprove them? No: what saith he? Thus he answers, *It is not for you to know the times or seasons, which the father hath put in his own power.* Hee is so farre from denying the Kingdome they dreamed of, as he doth plainly graunt it. He grants it by answering only to the *Tyme*, wherein they expected such *Restauration*: as though hee should say, *You are greedy of understanding, WHEN the Kingdome shall be restored: the Time thereof is in the Fathers hand, neither is it necessarie for you to know: looke you to your own present busines, &c.* This I take to be open & plain ynough: specially, if we remember that in the next place before, *Hee had taught them the things that concerned his kingdome*, immediatly wherevpon, they demaunde onely the *Tyme of Israels Restauration*, and onely hee answereth to the *Tyme*, as graunting their meaning of the Kingdome.⁶⁴

Clapham’s position on Jewish restoration, like many of his other beliefs, might appear to have shifted over time. In 1601, by which point he had returned to the Church of England, he was expressing his ideas in a much more careful fashion in sermons at Paul’s Cross. His only direct comment upon the Jews’ restoration was in the form of a denial of “the Jewish kingdomes restauration unto their mosaicall pollicie, this were to confound *Christ* and *Moses*, shadowe and substance”. This, however, only constituted the denial of a return to the Old Testament sacrifices. What seemed to be a denial of restoration, quickly gave way to a caveat: “I do not define whether ever the *Jewes* shall be gathered into some form of government”.⁶⁵ It is unsurprising that Clapham toned down his eschatological views at this point. His sermons now aimed to distance him as much as possible from his former positions. In particular, he attacked Judaisers. Where Papists thus appropriated Jewish ceremonial for their own purposes, Brownists and Anabaptists adopted an overly literal approach to the moral law, attacking any church or institution they felt remained too close to the idolatrous practices of Rome. An open profession of the restored Jewish kingdom would have been counterproductive in this context. Instead, he turned his focus to England to prove the antiquity of the established church through links to Joseph of Arimathea’s visit to Glastonbury. From describing the “tyranny” of monarchs in 1595, here he ordered obedience to Elizabeth and thanked God for England’s miraculous deliverance from the Armada.

⁶⁴ Henoeh Clapham, *A Briefe of the Bible Drawne First into English Poesy* (Edinburgh, 1596), pp. 182–183.

⁶⁵ Henoeh Clapham, *A Description of New Jerushalem Being the Substance of Two Sermons Delivered at Paules Crosse* (London, 1601), p. 14.

In one of his final works, Clapham moved close to the positions espoused by Harrison and Broughton. His 1609 *Chronological Discourse*, another stick with which to beat the Brownists, discussed the nature of the true and false churches. Clapham's former separatist brethren would not have been amused to discover that the Church of England had more right than any other to the title of "true church": "we (of any Iland) were in the first place for receiving the faith...about the year of our Lord 63".⁶⁶ England's John Wyclif was responsible for the binding of Satan for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1–6), a period that would expire in 2333.⁶⁷ Before this date, the church militant would enjoy unrivalled blessings, as the Roman Church continued to decline and true faith to spread. This period would also mark the Jews' conversion, and (significantly) the accomplishment of all remaining prophecies relating to them. Writing on the glorified church described in Revelation 21, Clapham noted, "I have long suspected, that it is a description of that part of the church militant, which should betide the *Gentiles*, upon the universall addition of the *Jewes*, or rather of all *Israel*." This would include not only the remaining tribes of Israel and Judah, but also the ten lost tribes "for as, we never read of the ten tribes united againe with *Judah* (howsoever it be plainly foretyped twyse over in *Ezek* 37...)". Revelation 21 was thus the picture of the glorified Jewish church, including "the *Israelites* portions in Canaan".⁶⁸

The idea that the church was currently within the millennial period was still, to some extent, novel. Generally, English Protestants employed the historicist method of interpreting the book of Revelation. This saw the various symbols within the book related to important events in the history of the faith, although rarely in straightforward chronological order. Following ancient precedent, historicist commentators interpreted a prophetic day as being equivalent to a year—the 1260 days, for example, became 1260 years.⁶⁹ Revelation was generally read as depicting the battle between Christ and Antichrist, a figure viewed almost universally as the papacy as an institution or as the Roman Catholic Church as a whole (rather than any one historical individual); although sometimes the Ottoman Empire was

⁶⁶ Clapham, *Chronological Discourse*, sig. 13r.

⁶⁷ A 1613 reader of the British Library copy made the marginal notation, with evident comfort, that there were "720 yeares before Satans looseyng".

⁶⁸ Clapham, *Chronological Discourse*, sig. N3v.

⁶⁹ Crawford Gribben, *Evangelical Millennialism in the Transatlantic World, 1500–2000* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 20–30.

included as an “eastern” Antichrist alongside it.⁷⁰ Within this exegetical context, it was common to locate the millennium in the past, usually beginning with the early church and running up to around 1000, when commentators argued that the papacy had grown particularly corrupt. An alternative was to date the period from the conversion of Constantine and end of Roman persecutions, with Satan’s release marked by an outbreak of renewed attacks on the true church through prosecutions of Jerome of Prague, Jan Hus, and the posthumous condemnation of Wyclif. The fact that the millennium was currently ongoing, meant that all signs pointed to a continued improvement in earthly conditions. For Clapham, this provided a space in which unfulfilled prophecies made to the Jews in the Old Testament, including the promise of restoration to the land, could find their accomplishment. But it also provided a practical impetus for renewed efforts at evangelisation. To promote such efforts, he emphasised the importance of studying Hebrew. Given that the language was now “much studied and profited in by Romanists”, he predicted a great turning “from *Babel* to the Ghospell” in Rome, which would result in an overflow of Hebrew scholarship to convert Jews in Catholic countries.⁷¹ Yet the conversion of the Roman Church (and subsequently of the Jews) would not merely constitute the coming of the followers of a long deluded ecclesiastical system to the true faith. Rather, it would bring them in line with the positions of the ancient Church of England, whose Christian purity was evident from 63 AD onwards, and whose noble son instituted the millennium.

For Harrison, Broughton, and Clapham, projects to convert the Jews all offered opportunities to affirm the status of the nation. This might be through the Anglo-Dutch (or simply Dutch) opportunity to take first place among nations through Jewish evangelisation, the opportunity for the monarchy to proclaim its ancient empire, or (as in Clapham) a chance to affirm the blessings of providence upon the Church of England. It is therefore possible to suggest three broad typologies for the way in which

⁷⁰ See Smith, *More Desired*, pp. 47–69; Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*, pp. 59–87; Andrew Crome, *The Restoration of the Jews: Early Modern Hermeneutics, Eschatology, and National Identity in the Works of Thomas Brightman* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), pp. 39–55; Paul Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon: English Apocalyptic Visions from the Reformation to the Eve of the Civil War*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), pp. 16–38; Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, pp. 69–87. The model for reading Revelation as describing the conflict between the true and false churches is found in the Edwardian bishop and Marian exile John Bale’s 1545 *Image of Both Churches*.

⁷¹ Clapham, *Chronological Discourse*, sig. M3v.

these evangelistic endeavours would bless the nation. Firstly, blessing could come via a holy monarch, as in Broughton's scheme. Defining a nation through its monarch was perhaps the most common way of conceiving of nationhood in sixteenth-century Europe.⁷² Here the monarch's commitment to holiness and godly policies sanctified his people. Like David or Solomon, the monarch served as a representation of the nation's true character, challenging their subjects to obey God's law and spread his message. The monarch's legitimate role as a sanctified ruler linked back to ideas of godly empire under Constantine, or contrasted against the ungodly empire of papal Rome. This "imperial" theme had been a common trend in eschatological works, especially Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, encouraging recognition of the importance of loyalty to the monarch and state.⁷³ Secondly, the nation could be blessed as a corporate unit, as a "holy people" in and of themselves. This perhaps came closest to traditional ideas of the "elect nation", in which the body of people who made up the nation demonstrated their chosen nature through their behaviour and attitude towards religion. This was not to claim any form of inherent national supremacy—in Harrison's work, the Dutch could become pre-eminent through their actions and an outward display of the inward qualities of chosenness. Neither was this works-based righteousness, but rather the fruit of personal election in Christ.

The third conception, the chosen church suggested by Clapham, was in many ways similar to the idea of the holy monarch. Indeed, at times the two were indivisible. Yet the image of the Church of England presented by Clapham, and by those writers who adopted a church-centred model of chosenness, was not strictly Erastian. What made the Church especially holy for Clapham was that it could trace its origins back to both a pre-Roman and pre-Constantinian Christendom. Its reformed hierarchy, prayer book, and worship were in continuity with the ancient church planted in England in 63 CE. Where the king might be Constantine reborn, the chosen church disavowed imperial links to model itself more

⁷²Smith, *Cultural Foundations*, pp. 76–78.

⁷³See Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon*, pp. 16–38; Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*, pp. 150–152. This is not to claim that Foxe developed the notion of an "elect nation" in his work (see William Haller, *Foxes' Book of Martyrs and the Elect Nation* [London: Jonathan Cape, 1963]) rather than he emphasised the role of the monarch as God's tool for reformation.

fully upon the most pure and ancient church preserved in England, the “primitivist” drive for purity identified by Theodore Bozeman.⁷⁴

As with any set of categories, these typologies were unstable. There was fluidity between ideas of chosen people, chosen king, and chosen church. Sometimes all three were present in a writer’s work on the nation. When Broughton grew tired of seeking the king’s endorsement of his Jewish evangelistic work, he turned towards the merchants of the Levant Company (with a similar lack of success). Yet perhaps the most glaring omission from these possible descriptions is the most obvious example of a “chosen” nation—the chosen people in the chosen land—the nation as the “new Israel”. This idea, that England actively modelled itself on Old Testament Israel, is a familiar one. This modelling is, to some extent, unsurprising. The stories of the victories and defeats of the ancient Jewish state and of their holy or sinful kings and relationships with their people provided readily accessible models for monarchs, clergy, and chronicle writers from Constantine’s conversion onward.⁷⁵ Yet the elect nation model is more than simply claiming a rhetorical resemblance between Israel and another nation. Instead, it involves seeing a transfer of the mantle of God’s chosen, redeeming nation from the Jews to the new nation. The prophecies of earthly glory for Israel therefore applied to God’s new elect nation. In 1377, for example, the chancellor’s address to the English parliament discussed God’s *pacem super Israel*: “because Israel is understood to be the heritage of God in England”.⁷⁶ Writing in 1559, Bishop John Aylmer reminded Englishmen that God would destroy the Scots as he did “the Palestines, the Jebusites, the Ammonites” before Israel. Defeat was not possible “for your fall is hys dishonour, if you lose the victory: he must lose the glory”. The marginal notation informed readers bluntly, “God is English”.⁷⁷ The notion that England was a new Israel has consistently been emphasised by writers on Elizabethan and Stuart national identity. William Haller famously located John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* as the root of the idea.⁷⁸ Following his lead, Liah Greenfeld argued that Foxe’s

⁷⁴Theodore D. Bozeman, *To Live Ancient Lives: The Primitivist Dimension in Puritanism* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), pp. 124–146.

⁷⁵Smith, *Myths and Memories*, pp. 125–147.

⁷⁶Quoted in Kumar, *Making of English National Identity*, p. 109.

⁷⁷John Aylmer, *An Harbarowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjectes* (Strasbourg, 1559), sig. P3r-v.

⁷⁸See Haller, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*.

work helped provide Elizabethans with a readily accessible discourse on national identity. This established an image of England as “God’s first-born” and new Israel, which helped give birth to modern nationalism.⁷⁹ More recently, Achsah Guibbory has argued that the identification of England as a new Israel was the major theme of the Stuart era.⁸⁰

It was certainly true that contemporaries used terms such as “Zion”, “Israel”, and “Jerusalem” to describe England at times. However, we should be cautious when claiming that these were expressions of England as a one-to-one replacement of Israel. The elect nation theme has sometimes been the victim of misunderstanding in secondary literature that has caricatured the approach as rendering all other nations reprobate.⁸¹ Yet it often borrowed freely from other national traditions. As Kumar pointed out when commenting on the 1377 speech, the form closely and consciously mirrored French sources.⁸² This should caution us before making too many assumptions about the use of the elect nation trope. Indeed, those who made use of the image of England as a second Israel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were often active in promoting a European pan-Protestantism rather than England’s uniqueness.⁸³ As David Loades wrote, it is better to talk of England as “*an* elect nation” rather than *the* elect nation.⁸⁴ Even Aylmer accepted this—his marginal comment simply meant that God would fight on England’s side when they battled false religion.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*, pp. 27–87.

⁸⁰ Guibbory, *Christian Identity*, pp. 21–56.

⁸¹ Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane/The Penguin Press, 1963), p. 226.

⁸² Kumar, *Making of English National Identity*, p. 109.

⁸³ Tony Claydon and Ian McBride, “The Trials of the Chosen Peoples: Recent Interpretations of Protestantism and National Identity in Britain and Ireland”, in Tony Claydon and Ian McBride (eds), *Protestantism and National Identity: Britain and Ireland, c.1650-c.1850* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp. 3–29.

⁸⁴ David Loades, “The Origins of English Protestant Nationalism”, in Stewart Mews (ed.), *Religion and National Identity*, pp. 297–307.

⁸⁵ For more detailed criticisms of Haller’s position see Mary Morriseey, “Elect Nations and Prophetic Preaching: Types and Examples in the Paul’s Cross Jeremiad”, in Lori Anne Ferrell and Peter McCullough (eds), *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History 1600–1750* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 43–58; Bauckham, *Tudor Apocalypse*, p. 13; Christianson, *Reformers*, p. 100; Groves, *Destruction of Jerusalem*, pp. 17–18; Firth, *Apocalyptic Tradition*, pp. 108–109; Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, pp. 263–264.

Yet a nagging question remains when we come to examine Clapham’s work. If, as he claimed, the Jewish church would be pre-eminent in the remainder of the millennium, what was the precise role of the Church of England? While the Jewish church in Canaan would not be a restoration of the “mosaicall polity”, would it adopt the Book of Common Prayer and episcopal hierarchy once so hated by Clapham? He was, somewhat unsurprisingly, silent on these issues. Answers came from those who followed him in discussing a restored Jewish kingdom and in placing England in an exalted role.

3 DIVIDING THE PROMISES: THOMAS BRIGHTMAN

Thomas Brightman (1562–1607) was the key figure in early modern thinking on Jewish restoration. A former fellow at Queens’ College, Cambridge, Brightman spent the last twenty years of his life ministering in the parish of Hawnes in Bedfordshire. While he occasionally fell afoul of his bishop for his antipathy towards wearing the surplice and the Book of Common Prayer (he was suspended briefly in 1604), his life was largely free from dramatic incident. His posthumously published works, however, were far from unremarkable. First appearing in Frankfurt in 1609, his Latin commentary on the book of Revelation, *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos*, was a dramatic reimagining of the English apocalyptic tradition. Other works included a commentary on the Song of Songs and an exposition of the prophecies of the final chapters of Daniel. Taken together, the commentaries reveal a God who was interested in both the future of the Jews on earth, and of individual nations.⁸⁶

Brightman made several changes to standard apocalyptic commentary in early modern England. The book of Revelation opens with letters to seven historical churches in Asia (Rev. 2–3). Where interpreters usually saw these as an historical preface to the prophecies of the book, Brightman argued that they represented seven distinct periods of church history. The three final churches (forsaken Sardis, blessed Philadelphia, and “lukewarm” Laodicea) represented contemporary churches. Sardis was the Lutheran church in Germany, who had sinned in accepting consubstantiation and were soon to suffer punishment. Philadelphia represented the most gloriously reformed churches of Europe—namely those in Scotland, Geneva, France, and the Swiss Confederation. Laodicea, the church that Christ

⁸⁶ For a full biography of Brightman see Crome, *The Restoration of the Jews*, pp. 16–24.

threatened to “spit out of my mouth” (Rev 3:16), was the contemporary Church of England. Taken by themselves these claims were unusual, but when added to Brightman’s other interpretations, they made for a collection of revolutionary revisions to the English apocalyptic tradition. The most well-known of these was Brightman’s reimagining of the millennium. His work recognised the difficulties found in the two most popular historicist methods for dating the period. The first, which dated the period from Christ’s death to the eleventh century, was difficult to tally with Revelation 20’s prediction that Satan would be unleashed for a “short season”, given that he had now supposedly been free for 550 years. Dating the millennium from Constantine’s conversion to the rise of the Reformation was also problematic, as this associated the time in which Satan would “deceive the nations” specifically with the period in which the true gospel was supposedly being preached. Instead, noting two distinct references to the “thousand years” in Revelation 20, Brightman took each mention to represent a separate period. There were therefore two millennia—one from Constantine’s time until Wyclif, with another running from Wyclif’s time until an unspecified point in the future.⁸⁷ In the first period, God’s church would suffer under the papacy; in the second, it would experience glorious revival. The key to this revival was not simply Brightman’s emphasis on pure doctrine and the importance of Presbyterian Church government. For Brightman, the church would experience its greatest glories when the Jews converted and returned to political dominion in Jerusalem:

What, shall they return to *Jerusalem* again? There is nothing more certaine, the Prophets do every where directly confirme it and beat upon it. Yet they shall not come thither to have their ceremoniall worship restored, but to make the goodnesse of God shine forth to all the world; when they shall see him give to that nation (which is now, and hath been for many Ages scattered throughout the whole world, and inhabiteth no where but by leave & intreaty) their own habitations where their Fathers dweleth wherein they shal worship Christ purely, and sincerely, according to his wil [*sic*] & Commandement alone.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ The literature on early modern apocalyptic thought will often pinpoint Brightman’s millennium as ending in 2300. This is not the case. As he states, “he onely knoweth it, that knoweth all things. We finde nothing, whereby we can determine any thing certainly, touching this matter” (Thomas Brightman, *The Revelation of St Ibon, Illustrated with Analysis and Scholions* [London, 1644], p. 824.)

⁸⁸ Brightman, *Revelation*, p. 544.

This would be more than simply a happy event for the gentile church. It would mark an essential change in the nature of God’s dealings with Jews and gentiles. Brightman argued that God punished the Jews for their sins when he ejected them from their land. Although the belief that the Jews would convert to Christ before his return was common, most commentators believed that Jews would incorporate into the universal church. There was, as Paul had written in Galatians, now no distinction between Jew and gentile in God’s salvation economy. Brightman, while maintaining a soteriological unity between Jew and gentile (and emphasising the importance of Jewish conversion to Christ), nonetheless argued that God had separate earthly plans for each. Even in the millennial period, they would remain radically different. Indeed, the millennium would be a period of Jewish dominion over the earth. Thus “the *Gentiles* which shall be saved, shall walk *in the light of the Church of the Jews*, and that the Kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour to this new *Jerusalem*”⁸⁹; “this glory of the *Jewes* shall remain as well intire, and undefiled; as it shall be secure, and free from the fear of the enemies”⁹⁰; “the Churches of the *Gentiles*, as it were, *the Moon and Sun* shal [*sic*] be ashamed, by reason of this greater light dazling them”.⁹¹ The gentiles were like Leah, “harder favoured...have crept first into his mariage [*sic*] bed”. The Jews “are *Rahel* [*sic*], of a more choyce and singular beauty, shall at length be given unto him, and brought into his bed”.⁹² The resurrection described in Daniel 12, usually interpreted as referring to the final resurrection at Christ’s judgement, actually described the full geo-political restoration of the Jewish nation. This, he argued, was the same as the second resurrection predicted in Revelation 20, usually understood as a literal resurrection at the end of time. In other words, Brightman’s work demonstrated the allosemitic concept of constant difference and separation between Jew and gentile. Where he went further than his predecessors was his argument that this difference would manifest politically. Jews would be superior to gentiles in the coming dispensation, ruling over them. Brightman offered some brief calculations as to when all of this would take place, suggesting a smaller conversion in 1650, when the first Jews would convert and march across the Euphrates, and a more general conversion in 1695/6.⁹³

⁸⁹ Brightman, *Revelation*, p. 847.

⁹⁰ Brightman, *Revelation*, p. 876.

⁹¹ Brightman, *Revelation*, p. 545.

⁹² Brightman, *Revelation*, p. 788.

⁹³ Brightman, *Revelation*, pp. 519–540.

These positions were clearly a step beyond the sort of claims made by Clapham, perhaps appearing to place Brightman alongside radicals such as Edwards and Durden in his viewpoints. Yet despite the novelty of his views, Brightman was far from radical. His hermeneutical positions, based around the literal sense of the text and the comparison of scripture with scripture (the *sine quae non* of Protestant biblical interpretation) were firmly within the tradition of puritan hermeneutics espoused by towering figures such as William Perkins. It was, Brightman argued, over allegorisation that had led the church to lose the truth of the Jews' restoration to Palestine. "Time will teach many things to be in the Prophets, which we commonly interpret as though they were past whose event is yet to come", he wrote, continuing "and especially (as it seemeth to me) in the calling of the Jewes which verily little considered of ours, hath darkened (I will not say, perverted) the proper and naturall meaning of the Prophets in many places".⁹⁴ Nowhere did Brightman betray any belief in himself as messiah, or suggest that he was receiving direct, prophetic communications from God. Such an image of Brightman would develop after his death, when he became a political prophet in the vein of Mother Shipton in a range of pamphlets. Yet such ideas were not present in his works.⁹⁵ Instead, he drew his beliefs primarily from the Bible, and they led him to a life of political quiescence.⁹⁶

Brightman was the first Judeo-centrist to offer a detailed scriptural exposition of the position. Yet his focus on the Jews was not the end of the controversial readings found in his commentaries. He was also interested in the role that his nation would play in apocalyptic events. England was the focus of several sections of Revelation. The seventh trumpet, in which "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" (Rev. 11:15), applied to the nation:

The first entrance therefore of this Trumpet should be famous by this increase of new Kingdomes, even as it came to passe in our Kingdom of *England*: Unto which *Christ sent our most gracious Elizabeth to be Queen, at the first blast of the seventh Trumpet, in the year 1558, and the [sic] againe*

⁹⁴ Thomas Brightman, *A Commentary on the Canticles or the Song of Salomon* (London, 1644), p. 1053.

⁹⁵ Andrew Crome, "Constructing the Political Prophet in 1640s England", *Seventeenth Century* 26:2 (2011), pp. 279–298.

⁹⁶ For a detailed examination of Brightman's hermeneutic see Crome, *Restoration of the Jews*, pp. 59–130.

gave her self, and her Kingdom to Christ by way of thankfulnesse, which she shewed by rotting [*sic*] out the *Romish superstitions* for the greater part of them.⁹⁷

The first vial judgement (Rev. 16:1) was poured out in 1560, when: “our *most gracious Queen Elizabeth bidden by a voice out of the Temple, to pour out a Vial upon the Earth...*[was] admonished by the counsels of the Godly about the end of the first yeer of her Raigne, [to] cast out many [corrupt] men from their Bishopricks most worthily”.⁹⁸ The third vial referred to 1581, when Jesuit Edmund Campion was found guilty of high treason and William Cecil published his *The Execution of Justice, in England, Not for Religion, but for Treason*.⁹⁹ In Revelation 14, when two angels emerged from the temple, one professing power over fire, Brightman argued that they represented Thomas Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell.¹⁰⁰ Elizabeth’s reign had created a time of peace: “this land hath been a Haven and a Harbour lying open to such as were exiled for Christs cause... Never had *England* so long and so quiet *Halcyon* days; which felicitie of ours, forrain countries are astonished at, our enemies gnash their teeth against it with envy”.¹⁰¹

While this might seem to be an idyllic picture, for Brightman all was not well in England. His passage on England’s “halcyon days” ended by listing the heinous sins that England’s church had committed. The English church was lukewarm Laodicea, risking expulsion from Christ’s presence. This has led a number of historians to claim that Brightman was prophesying an “inevitable” judgement upon his nation.¹⁰² Even here, however, the apparent condemnation of the English church concealed a blessing. As Robert Surridge has shown in his analysis of the dynamics of Laodicean

⁹⁷ Brightman, *Revelation*, p. 381.

⁹⁸ Brightman, *Revelation*, p. 524.

⁹⁹ As its title suggests, Cecil’s work argued that England was not executing Jesuits for their religious beliefs (which would have had uncomfortable resonances with Mary’s persecution of Protestants and the Inquisition), but for high treason against the queen.

¹⁰⁰ Brightman, *Revelation*, pp. 489–503.

¹⁰¹ Brightman, *Revelation*, pp. 126–127.

¹⁰² Elizabeth Gilman Richey, *The Politics of Revelation in the English Renaissance* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), p. 40; Rodney L. Petersen, *Preaching in the Last Days: The Theme of ‘Two Witnesses’ in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Oxford: OUP, 1993), pp. 206–207.

rhetoric, to be identified with Laodicea meant identification with a church at the moment of decision.¹⁰³ Christ may have threatened to spew the Laodiceans from his mouth, but he also promised that “those whom I love, I rebuke and discipline” (Rev. 3:19–20). For Brightman, the Church of England was sure to reform and cast off her sinful love of wealth and (ideally) her bishops. Laodicea thus remained a “*peerlesse Paragon*” in his eyes, promised a unique providential destiny.¹⁰⁴ The very idea of chosenness came with conditions attached. A nation chosen by God did not have free rein to act in any way in which it saw fit. It should keep to higher standards than the nation not chosen as part of its special identity. In Todd Gitlin and Liel Leibovitz’s words, chosenness could at times “feel like a sentence” as much as a blessing.¹⁰⁵

Brightman’s view of England suggests an answer to the question first posed in response to Clapham’s work. If the predictions made to Old Testament Israel actually referred to contemporary Jews, what happened to the gentile church that had claimed for a millennia and a half that those prophecies actually referred to *them*? Here, Brightman refocused identity on a new form of chosenness. Instead of tracing Christian identity back through the Old Testament church, he emphasised the key role that England would play as a nation specially chosen by God. National, not assumed Jewish, identity was now the way in which the English Christian was to root their sense of belonging. Brightman often placed passages that affirmed England’s unique sense of destiny directly after his discussion of the glory due to the Jewish church. For example, having noted that Christ’s Kingdom (in England) should be seen as “much the greater, because it should be eternal”, he turned to discuss the time when “[it] be increased infinitely [*sic*] by *the calling of the Jews*”. His discussion immediately switched back to the blessings enjoyed by England, and especially the role that Elizabeth played in this structure:

And is there not a most evident proof given us of this eternall Kingdome, in that so great conspiracies and attempts, of so many and mighty enemies

¹⁰³ Robert J. SurrIDGE, “‘An English Laodicea’: The Influence of Revelation 3:14–22 on Mid-Seventeenth-Century England”, in D. J. B. Trim and P. J. Baladerstone (eds), *Cross, Crown and Community: Religion, Government and Culture in Early Modern England, 1400–1800* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 143–176.

¹⁰⁴ Brightman, *Revelation*, p. 123.

¹⁰⁵ Gitlin and Leibovitz, *The Chosen Peoples*, p. 17.

against *England* alone, *our most gracious Queen*, have vanished away like smoke, and come to nothing? He whose Scepter they strive to overthrow, laugheth at their foolish and vain enterprise.¹⁰⁶

The concept of Jewish restoration consistently linked with the idea of England's special part in God's plan. Brightman's work picked up themes suggested in the works of Harrison, Broughton, and Clapham, and developed them into a more consistent and systematic scheme for national promotion. The nation as a whole would take the lead role in bringing about the events predicted in Revelation. Readers had much to anticipate. His description of Revelation 16 included the image of "*Western Christians...* [pouring] forth their anger upon *Constantinople*" alongside the restored and converted Jews.¹⁰⁷ The English, he noted, would have a key role in this destruction, on both Rome and the Turk.¹⁰⁸ For Brightman, adopting an interest in the Jews was therefore good for the nation.

This was not an isolationist project. While England would be predominant, it was not the sole beneficiary of God's grace. It simply had the lead role in his eschatological plan for the gentiles. As Tony Claydon and Ian McBride point out, early modern Protestantism tended to see itself as part of an international brotherhood of faith.¹⁰⁹ Yet viewing one's nation as *prima inter pares*, while not the same thing as claiming that it was the only good nation, was viewing it as special nonetheless. Where this conception of nationhood importantly differs from other constructions of the "elect" or "chosen" nationhood is in its use of Israel. In Brightman's work, the English nation could not be a "new Israel" as "old Israel" retained that mantle. National identity now came through a strong Protestant faith and role in the downfall of Rome rather than through Old Testament tropes. This pattern repeatedly appeared when writers returned to a "literal" interpretation of the prophecies of Israel's restoration. Where individual Christian identity was undermined by the removal of the Old Testament Jew as an antitype of the Christian, the English Christian was provided as an identity in its stead.

¹⁰⁶ Brightman, *Revelation*, pp. 381–382.

¹⁰⁷ Brightman, *Revelation*, p. 555.

¹⁰⁸ Brightman, *Revelation*, p. 766–767.

¹⁰⁹ Claydon and McBride, "The Trials of the Chosen Peoples", pp. 12–13.

4 A TRADITION DEVELOPS: 1610–1640

Brightman's works were not published in England until 1644. Despite this, they circulated in the British Isles from soon after their first continental appearance—for example, Trinity College Dublin acquired a copy of *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos* soon after its publication in 1609. References to Brightman's work in England appeared from 1611 onwards, while Giles Fletcher, who wrote a tract on the ten tribes in 1610 that remained unpublished until 1677, was familiar with his views.¹¹⁰ The Scottish commentator Patrick Forbes had read Brightman's commentaries by 1613, and while not particularly impressed by some parts, found his work on the Jews plausible at least: "whether they shall be brought to inhabite againe their owne Land, albeit I dare not determine... yet certainly, my heart inclineth to thinke so".¹¹¹ Thomas Wilson's popular *Christian Dictionarie*, first published in 1612, worked several of Brightman's points throughout its definitions. Wilson divided his dictionary into four sections: one for "general" definitions, and three for "difficult" books: Song of Songs, Hebrews, and Revelation. Mentioning Brightman by name, Wilson followed him in both his readings of the Jews and of England. He interpreted the general resurrection as referring to the restoration of the Jews; the angels of Revelation 14 were likewise identified with Cromwell and Cranmer, and the third vial poured out by Elizabeth and Cecil's actions against Jesuits in 1581.¹¹² Wilson went as far as accepting Brightman's dating system, placing the final defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1696.¹¹³ In 1615, Thomas Cooper was likewise writing of a physical restoration of the Jews: "And why not principally at *Jerusalem*, the old place of their worship.... Shall not the Lord be as *able* to plant in the Jew againe, as he was *able* in his roome to plant in the Gentile for a time?"¹¹⁴ The link between affirming a strong English identity, and arguing for a physical restoration of the Jews was clear, as Cooper emphasised God's unique blessings for

¹¹⁰ Samuel Lee "Epistle to the Reader", in Giles Fletcher, *Israel Redux, or, The Restauration of Israel* (London, 1677), sig. A2r.

¹¹¹ Patrick Forbes, *An Exquisite Commentarie Upon the Revelation of Saint John* (London, 1613), p. 168.

¹¹² Thomas Wilson, *A Christian Dictionarie* (London, 1612), pp. 16, 28–29, 46.

¹¹³ Wilson, *Christian Dictionarie*, p. 73. For more on Wilson see Andrew Crome, "Language and Millennialism in the Evolving Editions of Thomas Wilson's *Christian Dictionary* (1612–1678)", *Reformation and Renaissance Review* 13:3 (2011), pp. 311–337.

¹¹⁴ Thomas Cooper, *The Blessing of Japheth Proving the Gathering in of the Gentiles, and Finall Conversion of the Jewes* (London, 1615), p. 53.

England as the chosen nation at the head of international Protestantism. “Hath not God wonderfully preserved this little Iland, this Angle of the worlde?” he asked, “Hath it not bene [*sic*] the Sanctuarie of all the Christian world? Have not all the neighbor-nations taken hold of the skirt of an Englishman? Have they not joynd themselves to us, because the Lorde is with us?”¹¹⁵

The influential preacher Richard Bernard (1568–1642) demonstrated a similar use of the idea in his commentary on Revelation published in 1617. *A Key of Knowledge for the Opening of the Secret Mysteries of St Johns Mystycall Revelation* acknowledged Brightman in passing by commending his commentary, while bemoaning his decision to identify the Church of England with Laodicea (Bernard, more positively, favoured an identification with Philadelphia). When considering the question of Jewish restoration, like Brightman, Bernard considered the problem of unfulfilled Old Testament prophecy. As with both Clapham and Brightman before him, he viewed Revelation 21 as the apotheosis of all unfulfilled prophecies, illustrating the glory of a Jewish nation literally restored to Palestine. His rapturous praise of the prophecies that this nation would fulfil drew particular attention to the political realities that would exist in this new dispensation:

She shall eate the riches of the Gentiles, Esai 61.6, and sucke the milke of the Gentiles, and the breasts of Kings, Esai 60.16, who shal be her nursing fathers and the Queenes her nursing mothers, Esai 49.23, bringing her presents and gifts, Esai 60.6 and 45.14. They shall fall downe and make supplication, Esai 45.14: they shall worship with their faces to the earth, and lick the dust of her feete, Esa.49.23. Zach 14.16. Strangers shall be her servants... yea such as will not serve her shall be destroyed...¹¹⁶

This may simply be a list of unfulfilled prophecies, but the political implications were clear. Discourses of shifting power bubbled under the surface. Concepts of nationhood were also a major concern. Bernard’s work was constantly considering the fact that England was encoded in the Apocalypse, and the role she would play in the downfall of Rome. He therefore noted “the Lords honouring this little, but most noble Iland, above all other places in the Christian world, in the matter of Christianitie”

¹¹⁵ Cooper, *Blessing*, p. 34.

¹¹⁶ Richard Bernard, *A Key of Knowledge for the Opening of the Secret Mysteries of St Johns Mystycall Revelation* (London, 1617), pp. 339–340.

before listing six of the nation's great figures of faith: Constantine, Lucius, Wyclif, Henry VIII, Elizabeth, and James. Aside from Wyclif all of these were monarchs.¹¹⁷

The final way in which England demonstrated God's approval dramatically expanded the blessing to cover the entire corporate body of Englishmen: "lastly, *this our Nation* hath vexed, and yet doth vex, the Pope". The vexation of Rome by England would ultimately result in the papacy's downfall, "so as this nation may be the instance for al Christs people, to behold Gods mercie and favour to his Church, to conclude the overthrow of the Popedome".¹¹⁸ While there is no doubt that Bernard imagined the monarch at the forefront of this battle with Rome, his image of England fed into the growing sense of the nation as a community of political actors, each with a role to play in defining and defending the nation.¹¹⁹ Thus, "this most noble Iland shall not have the least hand in this glorious enterprise, when the time appointed shall come. For what kingdome in all Christendome, hath God made so renewed in the cause of religion, as this?" The papacy attacked England, he suggested, because God would use the nation to overthrow them.¹²⁰

These examples serve to show that Brightman's writing, and the ideas it inspired, were active in England from the 1610s onwards. Where commentators affirmed Jewish restoration, questions of national identity were often in train. In one notorious incident, the political realities of Jewish restoration came to the fore. In 1621 Sir Henry Finch (c. 1558–1625), eminent lawyer, MP, and Sergeant-at-Arms for James I, published *The Worlds Great Restauration, or, The Calling of the Jewes*. The work revealed its intended audience in its subtitle *A Present for Judah*, with the introductory epistle published in both English and Hebrew. It was a project that

¹¹⁷ Bernard, *Key*, p. 127.

¹¹⁸ Bernard, *Key*, pp. 127–129.

¹¹⁹ This has sometimes been linked with the emergence of nationalism in the eighteenth century (see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*). Recent scholarship has challenged this conception and argued for some sense of the nation as a political community, rather than pure identification of monarch and nation. This link has been found much earlier than often claimed. See for example Cathy Shrank, *Writing the Nation in Reformation England 1530–1580* (Oxford: OUP, 2004); McEacharn, *Poetics*; Stewart Mottram, *Empire and Nation in Early English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008). These studies move the date of the English political community and national consciousness to the early sixteenth century. For a rebuttal of this trend see Kumar, *Making of English National Identity*.

¹²⁰ Bernard, *Key*, sigs. C4^v-C4^r.

Broughton would have approved of: a treatise showing the Jews the way in which God would fulfil his promises to them.

Broughton would have been less happy with the lawyer's conclusions. Finch had no time for the claim that there would be unity between Jews and gentiles. The claim that the church was now the true Israel was wrong. “Where *Israel, Judah, Tsion, Jerusalem, &c.* are named in this argument”, wrote Finch, “the Holy Ghost meaneth not the spirituall Israel, or Church of God collected of the Gentiles, no nor of the Jewes and Gentiles both (for each of these have their promises severally and apart) but Israel properly descended out of *Jacobs loynes*”.¹²¹ Where Bernard's work hinted at the shifts that would occur in power structures at the restoration of the Jews, Finch spelt them out in detail. Gentiles “*shall bow downe to Jehovah in the holy mount at Jerusalem.* That is, such shall be the brightnes of the new Jerusalem, the Church of the Jewes wonne to Christ, that *the nations of those that are to be saved shall walke in her light; and the Kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour in unto her*”¹²²; “There shall be in them [the Jews] a sovereignty over other Nations: whom their arme and power shall master, and bring to yeeld obedience to Christ and his Gospell”¹²³; “the chiefe soveraigntie and stroke of keeping men within the lists of their subjection and obedience unto Christ, shall remaine among the Jewes”.¹²⁴ This included the kings of England, which did little to endear the work to James, who promptly had Finch and his publisher, the minister William Gouge, imprisoned and the book condemned by both convocation and the High Commission at Westminster. As Gouge's biographer concluded, “*King James* imagined that the *Serjeant* had in that book declared, that the *Jewes* should have a Regiment above all other kingdomes, thereupon was beyond all patience impatient”.¹²⁵ On 1st June 1621, William Laud, future archbishop of Canterbury, mocked Finch in a sermon preached in

¹²¹ [Finch, Henry], *The Calling of the Iewes: A Present to Iudah and the Children of Israel* (London, 1621), p. 6. Confusion over the title comes from the two surviving editions. The book was published both as *The Worlds Great Restauration or The Calling of the Jewes* (STC 10874.5) and as *The Calling of the Jewes. A Present to Judah and the Children of Israel* (STC 10874). Both texts were printed in 1621 by Edward Griffin for William Balden. The edition quoted here is *The Calling of the Jewes* (London, 1621).

¹²² [Finch], *Calling*, pp. 148–149.

¹²³ [Finch], *Calling*, p. 36.

¹²⁴ [Finch], *Calling*, p. 8.

¹²⁵ [Anon.], “A Narrative of the Life and Death of Dr Gouge”, in William Gouge, *A Learned and Very Useful Commentary on the Whole Epistle to the Hebrews* (London, 1655), p. 6.

front of the king: “So it is not now sufficient that the Jews shall be (in Gods good time) converted to the faith of Christ...but these converted Jews must meet out of all Nations: the ten Tribes, as well as the rest, and become a distinct, and a most flourishing Nation again in Jerusalem... Good God, what a fine people have we here? *Men in the Moone!*”¹²⁶

This sense of jesting belies the fact that James did take Finch’s work seriously. Partially this was due to the extravagance of John Traske, who had caused a minor sensation with the practice, shared by his disciples, of celebrating a Saturday Sabbath and keeping the Mosaic dietary laws. Prosecuted in 1618, and having lately recanted, his strange opinions nonetheless continued to haunt administrators. When they debated a bill to protect the sanctity of Sunday worship, parliament refused to sanction the use of the word “Sabbath”, for “many were inclined to Judaism and dream that the Jews shall have regiment and kings must lay down their crowns to their feet”.¹²⁷ This memory of Traske may have been just one reason for the negative reception of Finch, however. In Achsah Guibbory’s eyes, the real root of the controversy was over conflicting images of what Israel represented. James, she argues, was actively projecting the image of himself as a new Solomon, ruling over “Israel” and “Judah” in the form of England and Scotland. Finch, in denying that possibility, was guilty of removing a key marker of identity and of casting aspersions upon his nation’s claims to godliness.¹²⁸ There could not be two chosen nations.

Or could there? For Finch, writing a work aimed towards the Jews, had no reason to discuss his own country’s role in the restoration he saw as guaranteed by scripture. Where he failed to do so, Brightman, Cooper, Bernard, and Wilson had all written on the special role England would play in end-times events. These ideas developed further in influential millenarian Joseph Mede (1586–1638), who wrote in the 1630s and had his commentaries published by order of parliament in the 1640s. He admitted his admiration for Finch’s book, although the concept that gentiles would eventually serve the Jews left him uncomfortable.¹²⁹ Mede, sceptical about

¹²⁶ William Laud, *A Sermon Preached before his Majesty, on Tuesday the Nineteenth of June, at Wansted* (London, 1621), pp. 23–24.

¹²⁷ Quoted in Christopher Hill, *Society & Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1964), p. 202.

¹²⁸ Guibbory, *Christian Identity*, pp. 43–45. On the Solomon image see also Lee, *Great Britain’s Solomon*.

¹²⁹ “Rev Joseph Mead [*sic*] to Sir Martin Stuteville, April 17, 1621”, in Robert Folkestone Williams (ed.), *The Court and Times of James the First: Illustrated by Authentic and*

human means in Jewish conversion, suggested that like St. Paul, they would come to Christ through a miraculous vision.¹³⁰ The restored Jews would, nonetheless, play an important role in Antichrist’s downfall as the “great mountain” responsible for destroying the earthly monarchies who resisted the gospel (Daniel 2). At the same time, God’s providential blessing of England was clear through her deliverance from the Spanish Armada and Elizabeth’s responsibility for pouring out the third vial judgement in Revelation.¹³¹ As discussion of the idea of the restoration of the Jews, as a nation, to Palestine began to gain more traction, so did its use in tandem with tropes that emphasised England’s special role in God’s plan; their presence as a nation “chosen” to aid his ancient people. These concepts developed and intensified over the next forty years.

In closing this chapter, it is important to ask why ideas of Jewish restoration began to emerge in the late Elizabethan and early Stuart period. What was it that gave them particular vigour at this time? The most straightforward reason relates to biblical hermeneutics. Referring the prophecies of Jewish restoration to literal Jews represented the logical outworking of a “literal” reading of the Old Testament. The Reformation as a whole involved a radical reassessment of the nature of the church. These included the claim to be the true Israel and fulfilment of the blessings promised in the Hebrew Bible. Luther and Calvin thus transferred the title of Israel, and the fulfilment of the promises, from the Roman Church to the church of “true believers”. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, there had been eighty years for Protestants to develop their own exegetical traditions. These were inherently opposed to an overuse of allegory on the part of Catholics, and firmly committed on their own part to the literal sense of scripture. Protestants generally accepted allegory only if a verse appeared to defy clear creedal faith or contradict other “very perspicuous places of the Scripture”.¹³² The shift came when writers saw that a literal restoration of the Jews did not endanger any particular creedal affirmation or contradict other scripture. Brightman took up his pen in answer to Cardinal Bellarmine’s “literal” reading of Revelation. Bellarmine

Confidential Letters, Vol. II, pp. 249–251. On Mede see Jeffrey K. Jue, *Heaven upon Earth: Joseph Mede (1586–1638) and the Legacy of Millenarianism* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006) and Smith, *More Desired*, pp. 88–93.

¹³⁰ Joseph Mede, *The Works of the Pious and Profoundly-Learned Joseph Mede* (London, 1672), p. 761.

¹³¹ Joseph Mede, *The Key of Revelation* (London, 1643), Part II, p. 116.

¹³² William Perkins, *The Arte of Prophecyng* (London, 1607), pp. 45–46.

had argued that Antichrist would restore the Jews. In response, Brightman provided a more consistently literal reading of the Jewish promises in which the restored and converted Hebrew nation helped to vanquish the Catholic Church. This enabled those who followed Brightman to see that espousing a physical restoration of the Jews need not lead to the excesses associated with Kett and Durden; indeed, restored and converted Jews would be the ideal allies in the battle against the papacy.¹³³ A logical outworking of Protestant exegetical principles and the desire to find further weapons against Catholic apologists combined in the belief in Jewish restoration. This “consistent literalism” is a theme that I have traced elsewhere in relation to Brightman’s hermeneutics.¹³⁴ These changes took place in a wider context in which some commentators reinterpreted historical incidents such as the destruction of Jerusalem, as a warning against the dangers of Catholicism rather than a judgement on Judaism.¹³⁵

A second reason for the growth of this belief was the increasing awareness of England as a firmly delineated territorial unit. This had increased across the sixteenth century. Partly, this was through the physical expansion and retraction of state territory—whether the union with Wales in 1545 or the loss of Calais in 1558. This allowed a greater sense of England as an island nation with clearly defined limits and boundaries of “Englishness” throughout. As Clarie McEacharn has argued, the 1580s and 90s, the period in which Clapham preached and Brightman began to write, were the decades when a distinct sense of the English nation began to emerge through an imagined conjunction of the state, church, and land.¹³⁶ These conceptions benefitted from a range of projects designed to portray the nation visually through atlases and maps, creating a powerful sense of England as a particular and firmly delineated geographical entity.¹³⁷ This concept of nations mapped to firmly bounded physical territories resonated with the Old Testament promises to the Jews to establish

¹³³ Howard Hotson, “Anti-Semitism, Philo-Semitism, Apocalypticism and Millenarianism in Early Modern Europe: A Case Study and Some Methodological Reflections”, in Alister Chapman, John Coffey and Brad S. Gregory (eds), *Seeing Things Their Way: Intellectual History and the Return of Religion* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), pp. 105–115.

¹³⁴ See Crome, *Restoration of the Jews*, pp. 107–118.

¹³⁵ Groves, *Destruction of Jerusalem*, pp. 1–54.

¹³⁶ McEacharn, *Poetics*, pp. 14–15.

¹³⁷ Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, pp. 107–147.

them in a land with firm territorial boundaries. As Shapiro points out, by describing the Jews as a “nation” the editors of the Geneva Bible had envisaged them as a distinct ethnic grouping.¹³⁸ While the idea of a nation without a land in the period was unusual, it was consistent with the older use of the term to refer to a group of people sharing certain fraternal and genealogical bonds. However, when combined with a sense of the importance of territoriality in early modern England, a concept that placed particular nations within distinct territories, the idea of the Jews as a separate “nation” led towards a belief that they would also possess their own land. Similarly, the growing awareness of Hebraic customs and schemes of government allowed early modern English writers to imagine a reflection of their own conjunction of land, state, and church in the image of a restored Jewish nation. Combined with a heightened awareness of the messianic hopes of many continental Jews, restoration to Palestine seemed like an understandable wish for this landless nation.

Finally, the idea of a restored Jewish nation was important for the way in which it helped to build a sense of England’s chosen identity. While on the surface removing the model of Israel as a direct exemplar for England might appear counterproductive, it in fact provided new models of nationhood to aspire to. England could play the key role in bringing down the papacy and in restoring the Jews to Palestine. Rather than define itself as a reborn Israel, the nation would be free to demonstrate a new chosen identity alongside God’s ancient people. All people—still, primarily through the monarch, but the general populace as well—could be involved in this mission.¹³⁹ In providing a sense of national mission that helped to highlight both the faithfulness of God to his ancient people, and his willingness to raise up a new, gentile, chosen nation to work with them, the idea of Jewish restoration could help construct a powerful sense of national identity. This honoured the character of God and forged a unique role for England within European Protestantism. In this sense, the continued existence of the Jews as a separate nation served to legitimate England’s future. As God worked through the Jews, and ensured their survival and

¹³⁸ Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 173–180.

¹³⁹ The idea is described by Cathy Shrank as “conservative republicanism” in which the monarch is not deposed, but the nation as a whole granted sovereignty. See Shrank, *Writing the Nation*, pp. 143–181. Whereas Shrank traces this to the mid-1580s, others place the emergence of an active political community even earlier. Stuart Mottram, for example locates it in the early Henrician period (Mottram, *Empire and Nation*, pp. 105–116).

purification, so he could preserve England. If some, to paraphrase Aylmer, thought that “God was English”, an increasing number of writers in the seventeenth century remembered that he was Jewish first. As the next chapter shows, while this conception of nationhood aimed to unite and excite the nation, it also had the capacity to generate concern over how the nation interacted with Jews.



“Honor Them Whom God Honoreth”: The Whitehall Conference on Jewish Readmission, 1655

The 1640s and 50s might seem like a strange time to search for the development of a coherent national identity. If any period supports Krishan Kumar’s contention that Protestantism helped divide, rather than unite the early modern nation, then this era of the civil wars, religious disputes, and constant political infighting must surely be it.¹ What religious and political unity existed among parliamentarians in the early 1640s gradually gave way to a situation in which even the glue of anti-Catholicism began to lose its adhesive power. As Christopher Hill noted, “the horns of anti-christ” did not grow only on the pope’s head in the period. Critics began to identify prelates, parliaments, presbyterians and protectors in turn as the epitome of evil.² Yet despite the fractured religious and political situation, attempts to define a strong sense of national identity did not fade. Instead, they were reinvigorated, as war and political upheaval led to increased debate over what it meant to be English. While there were no

¹ Kumar, *Making*, pp. 121–130.

² See Christopher Hill, *Antichrist in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: OUP, 1971).

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universally accepted conclusions to these discussions, attempts to define the nation took on an even greater importance at a time of national confusion. Not only did such attempts reveal that older models of the nation based on the monarch or the idea of the people as a godly unit continued, but they also showed the way in which writers, politicians, and ordinary people could react to unprecedented political circumstances (particularly after Charles's execution). Without going as far as Hans Kohn, who famously saw the civil wars as representing the "first example of modern nationalism",³ it is nonetheless possible to identify ways in which national cohesion and identity was constructed in the period. Previously unthinkable freedom of the press, and the emergence of new religious ideas, helped to open up the space to discuss different concepts of nationhood. For those writers interested in the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, the 1640s and 50s enabled important questions about the practicalities of restoration, Jewish readmission to England, and tolerance of the Jewish religion to find a space in the marketplace of ideas. In highlighting these discussions, this chapter emphasises the way in which debates about Jewish restoration were part of this attempt to redefine national identity.

This was not a process conducted in a vacuum. Engagement with the French, Spanish, and Dutch formed part of the shifting understanding of Englishness in the period. Ideas, particularly eschatological concepts, also moved back and forth across the Atlantic with a wide range of New England works published in London and a number of important figures—such as Hugh Peter and Edward Winslow—returning from the plantations to take an active part in English political and religious life. As Jeffrey Jue has shown, many in New England began to look back towards the old world for the realisation of their apocalyptic hopes. Many others physically returned to England.⁴ They contributed to the wider variety of ideas about the nation current in the 1640s and 50s. Just as earlier writers had combined Judeo-centrism with discussions of the nation, their mid-seventeenth-century successors debated the themes in the new context of civil war and interregnum. This new situation led into the most important interaction between English and Jewish religious leaders in the sev-

³Hans Kohn, "The Genesis and Character of English Nationalism", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 1:1 (1940), p. 80.

⁴Jeffrey K. Jue, "Puritan Millenarianism in Old and New England", in John Coffey and Paul C.H. Lim (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), pp. 270–271.

enteenth century, the Whitehall Conference on Jewish readmission to England, held in 1655. To understand the background to the conference, and the varied reactions to it, it is important to examine the way in which English attitudes towards Jews in England’s future evolved over the 1640s.

1 THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS IN THE 1640s

The 1640s saw a massive growth in the discussion of millenarian ideas.⁵ There were several reasons for this, most notably the total collapse of censorship after the downfall of Archbishop Laud in late 1640. Throughout the 1630s, English presses had produced around six hundred items a year. In 1640, this rose to nine hundred, in 1641 to two thousand, and shot up further to four thousand items by 1642.⁶ This made it possible to print works by writers such as Brightman and Mede without difficulty, with the latter’s commentary appearing by order of parliament in 1643. Pamphlets poured from the presses, with many tackling explicitly eschatological themes. Combined with this was the rise in millenarian speculation that surrounded the upheavals in church and state. The “godly” or puritan party, who had felt under considerable pressure from the Laudian regime, were now not only free to condemn “Arminian” excesses, but to a large extent set terms for the future direction of church and state. This moment of promise led to hopes that a glorious and purified church and nation would soon be able to stand together.

The fact that these hopes were in vain probably galvanised millenarian speculation rather than dampened it. The disappointments, disunity, and psychological damage caused by the civil wars were easily characterised as a final stage in the apocalyptic battle between Christ and Antichrist. Conflation of royalists with popery and parliamentarians with the cause of Christ were common, while the taking of the Solemn League and Covenant appeared to set up an idealistic pan-Protestant alliance with Scotland. It was possible to imagine this alliance as the necessary cleansing of the

⁵ Major studies of the period as a whole include Christianson, *Reformers and Babylon*, Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*; Firth, *Apocalyptic Tradition*; Byron Ball, *A Great Expectation: Eschatological Thought in English Protestantism to 1660* (Leiden: Brill, 1975); Tai Liu, *Discord in Zion: The Puritan Divines and the Puritan Revolution, 1640–60* (The Hague: Matinus Nijhoff, 1973).

⁶ David Cressy, “Revolutionary England 1640–2”, *Past & Present*, 181 (2003), pp. 59–61.

nation and the long dreamed of European Protestant force against Antichrist.⁷ When these hopes floundered over arguments about church government at the Westminster Assembly, execution of Charles I, and war with Scotland, it was easy to readjust expectations to meet the new reality. England might now be the sole witness against the forces of Antichrist, with her many victories providing evidence of the providential role God had afforded to her. By 1650, Independent minister Nathaniel Homes (1599–1678) was rhetorically asking the Lord Mayor of London whether “any English man, having true English blood running in his veins” could “but prayse God” for the nation’s deliverance from the wicked designs of Scotland, who had been beaten “over and over”.⁸

As this suggests, those writing on biblical eschatology in the period often had to adjust their schemes to accommodate changing political realities, leaving some commentators appearing less than impressive in their foresight. It is hard not to feel some sympathy for the 1648 author who wrote that scriptural prophecy proclaimed that it “tis impossible... to settle England without a king” only months before Charles was executed.⁹ Yet errant dating was rarely a problem, as the number of royalist interpretations of Revelation written after 1649 show. While the influence of cognitive dissonance played a role in these recalculations, more often than not it was possible to explain incorrect dating by the fact that eschatological speculation was an inexact science. Earlier commentaries could be revised with new calculations, and old works reread and valued even when the years they identified for the downfall of the papacy or restoration of the Jews had passed.¹⁰ The rash of works that espoused 1656 as the date of Jewish restoration did not suddenly become obsolete after that date, but rather found their ideas recycled with new dates added to them, or had their errors overlooked by new readers. This is far from unusual in apocalyptic religious movements. Believers often ignore failed dates, while the

⁷See Crawford Gribben, “‘Passionate Desires and Confident Hopes’: Puritan Millenarianism and Anglo-Scottish Union, 1560–1644”, *Reformation and Renaissance Review*, 4:2 (2002), pp. 241–258.

⁸Nathaniel Homes, *A Sermon Preached Before the Right Honourable, Thomas Foote, Lord Maior* (London, 1650), pp. 17–22.

⁹William Sedgwick, *The Leaves of the Tree of Life for the Healing of the Nations* (London, 1648), p. 51.

¹⁰Bernard Capp, *The Fifth Monarchy Men* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), p. 193.

central apocalyptic belief remains intact.¹¹ The 1683 collection of Thomas Goodwin’s work of the 1640s and 50s thus praised his eschatological studies “tho prov’d to be mistaken in their calculations”.¹² It is also important to remember that writers were more interested in exegetical detail, than particular dating systems. The focus throughout this chapter will therefore be on the central concept of Jewish restoration rather than the numerological complexities of Daniel’s seventy weeks or 1260 days.

The constantly changing contexts of eschatology in the 1640s and 50s suggest the need for caution when examining Judeo-centric writings from the period. Opponents often used intense rhetoric, and discussions of eschatology touched on a range of political issues. Eliane Glaser’s study of the discussion of “Judaism without Jews” in early modern England has highlighted that writing that appears to be dealing with Jewish themes on the surface, can in fact be making specific theological or political points and have little interest in Jews themselves.¹³ This is an important caveat, but there is a danger of moving too far in the other direction. Whatever the immediate polemical interests of writers and the political background to their arguments, their focus on Jewish themes was usually more than just rhetoric. Indeed, it often reflected deeply held eschatological beliefs. While revisionist historiography is of immense value in highlighting the complex backgrounds to such texts, strongly held religious beliefs and motivations, as well as immediate political contingencies, shaped the arguments of individual writers. Royalists, parliamentarians, Baptists, Fifth Monarchists, and Anglicans all wrote on Jewish restoration to Palestine with their political or confessional politics often only related tangentially to their subject.

Judeo-centrists in the 1640s built on the writings of Brightman, Bernard, and Mede, to suggest both a literal restoration of the Jews to

¹¹ For a good examination of the complexities of failed prophecy see Diana G. Tumminia and William H. Swatos, Jr. (eds), *How Prophecy Lives* (Leiden: Brill, 2011) and Tumminia’s work on the Unarians in *When Prophecy Never Fails: Myth and Reality in a Flying Saucer Cult* (Oxford: OUP, 2005).

¹² Thomas Goodwin, *The Works of Thomas Goodwin, D.D. Sometime President of Magdalen Colledg in Oxford* (London, 1683), preface to the reader. Of course, dating errors could also be repudiated. A marginal notion by a reader in John Eachard’s *The Great Deliverance of the Whole House of Israel* (London, 1652), a work that predicted the end of the world in 1711, 45 years after the fearful date of 1666, sardonically records: “now we yt [*sic*] live 54 years after 1666 in 1720 know this to be a delusion” (British Library copy, p. 29).

¹³ Glaser, *Judaism Without Jews*, pp. 92–129.

Palestine and the division of God's promises between Jews and Gentiles. Brightman's suggestion that the Jews might return to the Holy Land in 1650 encouraged commentators to engage with the theme.¹⁴ The end of censorship also led to a flood of works on Judeo-centric eschatology, written by both England and New England divines. Robert Maton's *Israel's Redemption* (1642) therefore implored his work to "Goe little booke, goe walke the worlds round/And in all countrys thy great tydings sound/Show them the wonders of Gods mighty hand/When Jews come back unto the holy land".¹⁵ His "little booke" was not alone. The millenarian John Archer foresaw a time when "the cities of the [twelve] tribes shall be built againe, and inhabited by naturall Israelites, especially *Jerusalem*".¹⁶ The premillennial positions of both Archer and Maton might make them appear immediately on the radical edge of puritanism. Yet premillennialism was increasingly respectable over the 1640s and 50s through the influence of Mede and continental divine Johann Heinrich Alsted, despite the fact that some writers continued to find it distasteful.¹⁷ Nonetheless, a host of figures within the puritan establishment echoed Archer and Maton's sentiments. Thomas Goodwin (1600–1680) imagined the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, which was "to be overthrown by or for the Jews, to make way for them to get possession of their own land".¹⁸ Fellow Westminster divine Jeremiah Burroughs (1600–1646), preaching on the promise in Hosea that Jews would be called "the people of the living God", argued that it referred "to the very land of Canaan itself" where "God will have a very glorious church there, specially in Jerusalem before the end of the world come".¹⁹ Preaching before parliament in 1645, Henry Finch's publisher William Gouge (1575–1653) argued for "a calling of the *Jews* to come...and universall, conspicuous [*sic*] calling of a whole nation".²⁰ "They shall be brought home into their

¹⁴Thomas Brightman, *A Most Comfortable Exposition of the Last and Most Difficult Part of the Prophecie of Daniel* (Amsterdam, 1635), p. 84.

¹⁵Robert Maton, *Israels Redemption or the Propheticall History of Our Saviours Kingdome on Earth* (London, 1642), sig. A4.

¹⁶John Archer, *The Personall Reigne of Christ upon Earth* (London, 1642), p. 26.

¹⁷Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*, pp. 239–262. On Alsted see especially Howard Hotson, *Paradise Postponed: Johann Heinrich Alsted and the Birth of Calvinist Millenarianism* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000).

¹⁸Goodwin, *Works* vol. II., p. 57.

¹⁹Jeremiah Burroughs, *An Exposition of the Prophecie of Hosea* (London, 1643), p. 117.

²⁰William Gouge, *The Progresse of Divine Providence* (London, 1645), p. 31.

own land” argued another Westminster delegate, the Independent minister William Strong (d. 1654), “and they shall dwell there, they shall dwell in their own citie as in days of old”.²¹ John Fenwicke, meanwhile, could bemoan that while “some things have a literall sense onely” they were often “taken mystically...as most of the prophecies concerning the Jewes returne to their own country, and possessing it in outward prosperitie”.²² As Christopher Syms wrote, God’s word would be fulfilled in its least detail, “and they shall dwel [*sic*] in their own land”.²³

Such statements often mixed with a desire to locate the ten lost tribes. Some Judeo-centrists placed them amongst the Native Americans. This killed two birds with one stone—locating the tribes and answering the troubling question of the origins of America’s natives.²⁴ This idea was not unique to England. It originated in Iberian writers such as Joannes Fredericus Lumnus, Peter Martyr d’Angheira, and Gilbert Genebrard in the sixteenth century. Thomas Thorowgood published two books on the subject, with prefaces written by John Dury, while the missionary pamphlets published by the New England Company regularly affirmed the Jewish identity of the natives in their prefaces for English readers.²⁵ This was partially a marketing tool, designed to attract donations for missionary work, but also served as a way to give the English plantations in America a clear eschatological purpose.²⁶ Nonetheless, the idea itself was not popular in New England, although Judeo-centrism in general was well

²¹ William Strong, *XXXI Select Sermons, Preached on Special Occasions* (London, 1656), p. 296.

²² Finiens Canus Vove [John Fenwicke], *Zions Joy in Her King* (London, 1643), sigs. A2r-v.

²³ Christopher Syms, *The Swords Apology, and Necessity in the Act of Reformation* (London, 1644), p. 5.

²⁴ The Native Americans needed to be identified as part of the great dispersion at Babel to place them within biblical history. Suggestions for their origins included that they were the lost tribes, that they were Asians, that they were Tartars, and (albeit tongue in cheek) that they came from the moon. The best overview of these theories can be found in Zvi Ben-dor Benite, *The Ten Lost Tribes: A World History* (Oxford: OUP, 2009) and Lee Ernest Huddleston, *Origins of the American Indians: European Concepts, 1492–1729* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1967).

²⁵ For example, see particularly Dury’s preface in Edward Winslow, *The Glorious Progress of the Gospel Amongst the Indians in New England* (1649).

²⁶ For more on this see Andrew Crome, “Politics and Eschatology: Reassessing the Appeal of the ‘Jewish Indian’ Theory in England and New England in the 1650s”, *Journal of Religious History* 40:3 (2016), pp. 326–346.

received.²⁷ The New England minister Ephraim Huit (1604–1644), who apparently wrote his commentary on Daniel in the 1630s but was barred from publishing it at the time, described the Jews “rising...out of the bordering countries lying east and north from Judea [and] gathering together to plant themselves in Judea”.²⁸ Boston minister John Cotton (1585–1652) held that the Jews would “appeare unexpectedly, prepared to embrace Christ’s calling” and be “convey[ed] into their owne countrie”.²⁹ Peter Bulkeley (1583–1659) similarly held that the scriptures that predicted the end time conversion of the Jews also “speake as punctually concerning their inhabiting owne land, and their building and dwelling in their own cities”.³⁰ The concept of a national restoration of the Jews, while (like all theological ideas in the period) never finding universal acceptance, was nonetheless an important and popular eschatological trend. What is perhaps most interesting about this idea was the admission that such a restoration would require a fundamental re-imagination of the established world order. This was not simply a reference to the overthrow of old power structures, but an argument that Christians would have to reassess their position in God’s plan because of Jewish restoration. As in Henry Finch’s work, the gentile church would be subservient to the Jews.

Reactions to this took a variety of forms. Maton, for example, was straightforward in his condemnation of the way in which the gentile church had usurped the blessings of Israel. This had “been occasioned by the inconsiderancie of the ungrounded application of the words (Jew and Israelite) indifferently to the Jewes and Gentiles: and of the words (Israel, Sion, and Jerusalem) to the Church of the Gentiles, when as there is not one text in all the Scripture, wherein a Gentile is cal’d a Jew, or an Israelite;

²⁷ Cogley, “Judeo-Centric”. On the “Jewish Indian Theory” see: Richard W. Cogley, “Some Other Kinde of Being and Condition’: The Controversy in Mid-Seventeenth-Century England Over the Peopling of Ancient America”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 68:1 (2007), pp. 35–56 and “The Ancestry of the American Indians: Thomas Thorowgood’s *Jewes in America* (1650) and *Jews in America* (1660)”, *English Literary Renaissance* 35:2 (2005), pp. 304–330; Claire Jowitt, “Radical Identities? Native Americans, Jews and the English Commonwealth”, *Seventeenth Century* 10:1 (1995), pp. 101–119; Amy Sturgis, “Prophecies and Politics: Millenarians, Rabbis, and the Jewish Indian Theory”, *Seventeenth Century* 14 (1999), pp. 15–23. For a recent examination of the popularity of restorationism in colonial America, see Goldman, *God’s Own Country*, pp. 13–42.

²⁸ Ephraim Huit, *The Whole Prophecy of Daniel Explained* (London, 1644), p. 340.

²⁹ John Cotton, *Briefe Exposition of the Whole Booke of Canticles* (London, 1642), p. 196.

³⁰ Peter Bulkeley, *The Gospel Covenant or Covenant of Grace Opened* (London, 1646), p. 16.

or wherein the Church of the Gentiles is cal'd Israel, Sion or Jerusalem". The "true Israel" was therefore made up of ethnic Jews, rather than referring to the gentile church.³¹ This meant that, as Finch had argued twenty years previously, Jews would be superior to gentiles. "Though the *Gentiles* shall then be tributaries to the *Jewes*", noted Maton, "they shall be much more happy in this subjection, wherein they shall have Christ for their King, and the glorified Saints for their chiefe governours under him, then ever they were in their former liberty".³² Other writers agreed. For Fenwicke the Jews would be in "preheminance [*sic*] above all other nations in the world",³³ while Huit held that the Jews would be active in "exercising dominion over their former oppressoars [*sic*"]".³⁴ The Jewish nation in Palestine would "never die that death of state by vassalage and subjection to other nations".³⁵ For Burroughs, the Jews would enjoy "a more glorious marriage" to Christ "then ever yet there was between him and any people upon the face of the earth".³⁶ Archer argued that "the twelve tribes shall be chiefe". While he believed that both Jews and gentiles would enjoy blessings, it was beyond question that "the *Israelites* shall bee first raised to this glory, and at *Jerusalem*... and then by and from the *Israelites* shall glory descend to the *Gentiles*".³⁷ "The truth is", claimed Cotton, "God doth by covenant, account the whole nation [of the Jews], to be a Royall nation, and promiseth the Kindomes of the world to be their dominion, and that all enemies God will sweepe them off from the face of the earth".³⁸

The practical effect of this was to weaken the established link between Israel and the gentile church. As Alexander Petrie noted with alarm, "it is a great mistaking of the prophecies, if we shall still make an opposition twixt Jewes and gentiles: believing gentiles ar true Jewes (as we see, they ar called in the New Testament) and unbelieving Jewes ar gentiles".³⁹ Judeo-centrism implicitly challenged the picture of the soteriological unity

³¹ Robert Maton, *Israel's Redemption Redeemed. Or, The Jewes Generall and Miraculous Conversion to the Faith of the Gospel and Returne into Their Owne Land* (London, 1646), sig. A2v.

³² Maton, *Israel's Redemption Redeemed*, p. 312.

³³ [Fenwicke], *Zions Joy*, p. 80.

³⁴ Huit, *Whole Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 59.

³⁵ Huit, *Whole Prophecy of Daniel*, p. 351.

³⁶ Burroughs, *Hosea*, p. 681.

³⁷ Archer, *Personall Reigne*, pp. 22, 26.

³⁸ Cotton, "The Sixth Vial", in *The Powring Out of the Seven Vials* (London, 1642), p. 21.

³⁹ Alexander Petrie, *Chiliasto-mastix. Or, The Prophecies in the Old and New Testament Concerning the Kingdome of Our Savior Jesus Christ* (Rotterdam, 1644), pp. 9–10.

of a church running from the Old Testament patriarchs through the apostles to the saints of the present day. Restorationist writers were aware of this issue, and their division of God's promises for ethnic Israel from those for the gentile church never (with the possible exception of Maton) went as far as nineteenth-century dispensationalists.⁴⁰ There was significant nuance in their positions. Burroughs argued that "All beleeverers though of the Gentiles, are of the seed of *Abraham*, they are of Israel, and therefore have the same priviledges [*sic*] with Israel...Whatsoever you reade of Israel, of excellent titles and appellations about Israel, they belong now to all beleeverers".⁴¹ Gouge noted that "Israel, to whom this promise was made, is put for the Church of God".⁴² New England work was, given the plantation's strong reformed heritage, even more strident in its statements. As Bulkeley affirmed: "You are not aliens from the covenant, all the good which God hath promised to his Israel belongs to you".⁴³

It is worth pausing for a moment to consider these affirmations of the traditional position and the way in which these writers divided God's promises between Jews and gentiles. In simple terms, covenant theologians saw all men as placed under a covenant of works in Adam, with the elect under a covenant of grace with Christ at its head. The promise to Abraham that his seed would be blessed in the covenant God made with him (Gen. 17:1–14) referred to the covenant of grace. Abraham was clearly a fellow believer, and the covenant that God had made with him to "bless his seed" was fulfilled in Christ. Judeo-centric writers never denied this overarching covenant of grace. On a practical level, there was a soteriological union between the elect Jews of the Old Testament and the elect gentiles of the present age. The elect were the "true Israel". This was not a "replacement" of Israel, but the continuation of the one people of God in a new dispensation. Indeed, in some ways Judeo-centrism could appear as a powerful prop to covenant thinking, as it affirmed the utter inviolability of the land promises God had made to the Jewish people. This is why Bulkeley opened his magisterial account of New England covenant theology with twenty-two pages on the certainty of Jewish restoration to the holy land. The fact that the Jews continued as a distinct people was powerful evidence of the certainty of God's covenants.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ On the dispensational division between Jews and gentiles, see Chap. 6.

⁴¹ Burroughs, *Hosea*, p. 106.

⁴² Gouge, *Progressse of Divine Providence*, p. 5.

⁴³ Bulkeley, *Gospel Covenant*, p. 341.

⁴⁴ Bulkeley, *Gospel Covenant*, pp. 1–22, 43.

Nonetheless, it is clear that Judeo-centric ideas created logical problems. Most notably, these ideas undermined the claim of Jewish and gentile equality. Although salvation for both was through the covenant of grace, the Jews had additional promises that elevated them above their fellow believers—a supplementary land covenant and (according to some) the promise that they would outstrip gentiles in holiness of life and love of God. Although the covenant of grace incorporated all Christians, not all would be on the same level. The claim by Burroughs that “whatsoever” was written of Israel “belong now to all beleever[s]” was undermined by his assertion that the fellowship between God and the Jews would be closer “then ever yet there was between him and any people upon the face of the earth”.⁴⁵ While there would be no distinction between Jews and gentiles in heaven, on earth things would clearly be quite different.

In attempting to deal with this inequality, Judeo-centric writers turned once again to the importance of national identity. Many consciously argued for the political intervention of England to restore the Jews to Palestine. While this emphasised God’s blessings to England, it was not to claim that England was Israel reborn or a new Zion, as has been argued by historians from Kohn to Guibbory.⁴⁶ Instead, Judeo-centrists moved an elect identification away from their own state on to the soon to be restored Jewish nation. Their concept of nationhood focused on the imagined interaction of England with this restored Israel. If, as Holmberg has argued, a complex web of similarities and differences marked English “imaginings” of the Jewish people,⁴⁷ the same was the case when it came to understanding England’s national relationship to the Jewish nation. England’s mission was not merely to shine as a light to other nations, but to restore God’s chosen people and show herself pre-eminent amongst the gentile nations. Simultaneously, this alleviated the difficulty that Judeo-centrism created for covenant theologians. While the Jews had distinct blessings, so England also had special promises and would play the key role in God’s apocalyptic drama. While the covenant of grace remained firmly in place, individual believers were no longer encouraged to think of themselves as “true Israelites” or fully realised Jews—instead, they should conceive of themselves specifically as English Christians enjoying English blessings.

⁴⁵ Burroughs, *Hosea*, pp. 106, 681.

⁴⁶ Kohn, “Genesis”, pp. 79–87; Guibbory, *Christian Identity*, pp. 89–120.

⁴⁷ Holmberg, *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination*, pp. 1–6.

Burroughs, for example, repeatedly emphasised England's unique honour as a chosen nation after discussing promises of Jewish restoration. The upheavals of the 1640s were evidence that God had blessed England in a remarkable measure: "never had any nation, never had *England*, heretofore more remarkable workes of God".⁴⁸ God's call to his people was to fight against Antichrist; an appeal that may have been rhetorical in the past but had practical implications in 1644.⁴⁹ Through fighting and claiming this blessing, believers would be working alongside God, whose "great care is to manifest to us and to all the world that he loveth us".⁵⁰ After discussing the importance of Jewish restoration, Fenwicke noted, "the well-fare of all the Christian churches at this day, lies folded in this clew of this worke now the Lord Jesus is going in this island, and especially in *England*".⁵¹ Syms, after talking about the return of the Jews to their own land, argued that "this *British northern* nation bee the people chosen of *God* to accomplish the last wonders of the world".⁵² Peter Sterry (1613–1672), preacher to the Council of State, divided the coming of Christ into two—a first coming among a people from the north, and a second from the "Kings of the East", Jews who would march against the Ottoman Empire towards their own land. Considering the identity of these northern people, Sterry argued "that the LORD JESUS intends that honour to *this* nation, that it shall be said to it *first* of all the nations, concerning the heavenly bridegroom, that *he was born here*".⁵³ The involvement of England specifically "prepares the way for the Kings of the East".⁵⁴ Similar pronouncements came from New England writers such as Cotton and Bulkeley. The punishment on the Catholic Church claimed Cotton, would "goe on from our native countrey to all the Catholickes countries round about them".⁵⁵ It was this judgement that would dry up the wealth and support of Rome, and therefore open the way for the Jews to convert.⁵⁶ When Bulkeley came to discuss the restoration of the Jews to

⁴⁸ Burroughs, *Hosea*, p. 62.

⁴⁹ For more on the idea of England's duty to fight against Antichrist see Jordan S. Downs, "The Curse of Meroz and the English Civil War", *The Historical Journal* 57:2 (2014), pp. 343–368.

⁵⁰ Burroughs, *Hosea*, p. 310.

⁵¹ [Fenwicke], *Zions Joy*, p. 47.

⁵² Syms, *Swords Apology*, p. 10.

⁵³ Peter Sterry, *Englands Deliverance from the Northern Presbytery* (Leith, 1652), p. 35.

⁵⁴ Sterry, *Englands Deliverance*, p. 43.

⁵⁵ Cotton, *Powring*, "Fifth Vial", p. 7.

⁵⁶ Cotton, *Powring*, "Sixth Vial", p. 22.

Palestine, he similarly reminded England that “the light is now coming and the glory of the Lord is now arising on thee”. His work, based on sermons he delivered in New England, then turned directly to his listeners who should be both comforted and challenged by the fact that they were “a special people, an onely people, none like thee in all the earth”. The sermon then shifted immediately to discuss the literal rebuilding of Jerusalem.⁵⁷ This provides a snapshot of the use of the alternative tropes of chosenness in miniature. The Jews were to have their nation and role as a separate people. At the same time, the English had a unique identity. Above all, Bulkeley’s auditors in New England were reminded of their place as a people set apart for special mission.

These joint affirmations of England’s chosen role and the restoration of the Jews to Palestine were not limited to parliamentary writings. There were active royalist Judeo-centrists. Edmund Hall (1620–1687), for example, opened his 1651 condemnation of Cromwell, *Lingua Testium*, with a poem that recalled Maton’s work: “Their native king, our Lord, shall by his hand/Restore the twelve tribes to their native land”.⁵⁸ In *Lingua* and its companion piece *Manus Testium Movens*, Hall argued that the Jews’ restoration was inevitable and would occur simultaneously with a full restoring of true monarchy and magistracy in England. At this restoration, England would play the lead role in converting the Jews through reasoned discussion, while at the same time leading a military campaign against the Roman Antichrist whose idolatry was the major obstacle to their conversion.⁵⁹ Similarly, in 1656 the Welsh tailor-prophet Arise Evans (c. 1607—c. 1660) spent time attempting to convince the Dutch rabbi Menasseh ben Israel that Charles II was the Jews’ promised messiah. He would restore them to Palestine, where a future Archbishop of Canterbury would be their spiritual leader. Evans left frustrated when Menasseh preferred Cromwell, the king of Sweden, or the king of France as messianic candidates.⁶⁰ The anonymous writer of *The Key of Prophecy* similarly concluded that Charles II represented the “one like the son of man” in Revelation 14, and that the king would be responsible for the Jews’

⁵⁷ Bulkeley, *Gospel Covenant*, pp. 14–15.

⁵⁸ Edmund Hall, *Lingua Testium, Wherein Monarchy is Proved 1. To be Jure Divino 2. To be Successive in the Church* (London, 1651), sig. A3v.

⁵⁹ Edmund Hall, *Manus Testium Movens, or a Presbyteriall Glosse Upon Many of Those Obscure Prophetic Texts* (London, 1651), pp. 60–110; *Lingua Testium*, pp. 6–42.

⁶⁰ Arise Evans, *Light for the Jews, or, the Means to Convert Them* (London, 1664). The main body of the text was written in 1656, translated into Latin, and given to Menasseh.

restoration to their own land.⁶¹ These kinds of interpretations would develop further after the Restoration.

2 THE WHITEHALL CONFERENCE AND JEWISH READMISSION TO ENGLAND

A number of factors combined in interregnum England to keep discussions of Jews and Judaism in the public consciousness. Some commentators had updated Brightman's dating to suggest that Jewish restoration would begin in 1656.⁶² Others believed that as Noah's flood had occurred in 1656 BCE, apocalyptic events, including Jewish restoration, would take place 1656 years after Christ's birth.⁶³ While millennialism was never far from the surface of public discourse, other factors contributed to this continuing interest. The emergence of a range of groups who appeared to follow Jewish practices such as the Saturday Sabbath, combined with the calls of the Fifth Monarchy Men to reinstitute the Mosaic civil law in England, led to searching questions as to how far Jewish precedents should be followed in the state.⁶⁴ In New England, Cotton had drawn up a Mosaic law code in the 1630s, and saw its institution in 1646. The great New England "apostle to the Indians" John Eliot similarly instituted his towns of "praying Indians" along Old Testament lines, with natives appointing rulers of hundreds, fifties and tens as specified by the book of Exodus.⁶⁵ In England, the continued proliferation of sects raised questions as to whether the practice of Judaism could be tolerated. Roger Williams, who had fallen foul of New England authorities for his views, thus argued that it was "the will and command of *God* that (since the comming of his sonne the *Lord Jesus*) a *permission* of the most *Paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or Antichristian*

⁶¹ [Anon.], *ΚΑΕΙΣ ΠΡΟΦΗΤΕΙΑΣ* or, *The Key of Prophecy* (London, 1659), pp. 20–24.

⁶² Archer, *Personall Reign*, pp. 52–53.

⁶³ David S. Katz, "English Redemption and Jewish Readmission in 1656", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 34:1 (1983), pp. 73–76.

⁶⁴ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, pp. 130–172.

⁶⁵ Richard W. Cogley, *John Eliot's Mission to the Indians Before King Philip's War* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 90–104; Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans: The 'Praying Indians' of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot", *William and Mary Quarterly* 31:1 (1974), pp. 27–54.

consciencies and *worships* be granted to all men”.⁶⁶ The Whitehall debates on toleration in 1648 and continued discussion of its limits helped keep an awareness of Jewish themes in the public consciousness.⁶⁷

Prayer also kept a desire for Jewish conversion and restoration alive. The 1644 *Directory for the Publick Worship of God* included instructions to ministers to pray for the fall of Antichrist, destruction of the Ottoman Empire, and calling of the Jews. The Long Catechism produced by the Westminster Assembly also expounded the second petition of the Lord’s Prayer to incorporate Jewish conversion.⁶⁸ In 1654, the prophet Anna Trapnel’s church in All Hallows opened meetings by praying, “that *Jew* and *Gentile*—fullness might be brought in, and the kingdome restored to this old *Israel*”.⁶⁹ This continued awareness of Jewish themes contributed to formal discussions of Jewish readmission. The Whitehall Conference met in 1655 to discuss the potential readmission and settling of a Jewish community in England after an official absence of 365 years. As the details of the Conference’s organisation have been discussed extensively elsewhere, the key facts will only be briefly rehearsed here.⁷⁰

The central figure at Whitehall was Amsterdam rabbi Menasseh ben Israel (1604–1657). Eager to visit England from 1650 onwards (when he had been granted a passport by the English government), the rabbi had been delayed by local circumstances in Amsterdam and the outbreak of the Anglo-Dutch war. His *Spes Israelis*, translated into English by John Milton’s millenarian friend Moses Wall in 1652, openly called for Jewish

⁶⁶ Roger Williams, *The Bloody Tenet, of Persecution for the Cause of Conscience* (London, 1644), sig. A2v.

⁶⁷ On how far toleration could be extended, the answer was often limited in practice. John Coffey, while noting this, argues for the growth of a more tolerant attitude in England over the seventeenth century. See his *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558–1689* (Harlow: Longman, 2000). Alexandra Walsham provides a more complex picture, seeing persecution and toleration occurring in cycles, with acceptance of unorthodox opinions being linked to the concept of local neighbourliness. See *Charitable Hatred: Tolerance and Intolerance in England, 1500–1700* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006). See also Glaser, *Judaism*, pp. 92–112.

⁶⁸ Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*, pp. 254–255.

⁶⁹ Anna Trapnel, *Reason and Plea, or a Narrative of Her Journey into Cornwall* (London, 1654), pp. 14–15.

⁷⁰ For full discussions of the circumstances surrounding the conference see David S. Katz, *Philo-semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), pp. 190–231; Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 55–62; Crome, *Restoration of the Jews*, pp. 188–196; Lucien Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel’s Mission to Oliver Cromwell* (London: Macmillan, 1901).

readmission to England, cannily arguing that this entry would help fulfil prophecies of the full calling of the Jews. Partly, Menasseh's interest in readmission linked to a rabbinic tradition in which England was described as the "end(s) of the earth", whether from the Hebrew *ketseh ha-arets* or an over literal rendering of the French *Angleterre*.⁷¹ As several passages (most notably Dt. 28:64) predicted a scattering of the Jewish people "to the ends of the earth" before their restoration, Menasseh argued that the Jews must be "scattered" into England before this happy event.⁷² His hope for the fulfilment of prophecies of Jewish return derived, in part, from the supposed discovery of the lost tribes in South America by his co-religionist Antonio Montezinos.⁷³ Menasseh's correspondence with figures such as John Dury and Nathaniel Homes also allowed him to be optimistic about English reactions to the Jews.⁷⁴ Yet his hopes for readmission were not merely an exercise in eschatology. The Sephardi merchants who supported his mission were particularly keen to overcome the damaging impact of the 1651 Navigation Act, which (by design) had attacked the Dutch economy by preventing imports coming into England via Amsterdam. By gaining readmission, and thus the possibility of having a stable trading base in England, the merchants hoped to overcome this hurdle. Menasseh himself had practical hopes that England could serve as a refuge for Jews dispersed by persecution in Spain and Portugal, and was always clear about his desire for Jewish admission to England to practise their religion.

Menasseh's son Samuel arrived in England in October 1654, along with Manuel Martinez Dormido (also known as David Abrabanel). Dormido had fled the inquisition in Portugal, become successful in Amsterdam, and recently lost his fortune when the Portuguese took Pernambuco in Brazil from the Dutch. The two men submitted two petitions to Cromwell. One called for help in regaining Dormido's money,

⁷¹ Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, p. 21.

⁷² Menasseh ben Israel, *To His Highness the Lord Protector* (London, 1655), sig. A3r; *Vindiciae Judaeorum* (London, 1656), p. 37.

⁷³ See "The Relation of Master Antonie Monterinos, Translated Out of the French Copie Sent by Manaseh ben Israel", in Thorowgood, *Jews in America* (London, 1650), pp. 129–139. The importance of Menasseh's role and inter-continental networks in introducing this theory in England has recently been highlighted in Brandon Marriott's work. See *Transnational Networks and Cross-Religious Exchange in the Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean and Atlantic Worlds* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 19–36.

⁷⁴ ben Israel, *Vindiciae*, p. 3, 37.

with the other requesting Jewish readmission to England. The Council of State ignored them both, although Cromwell personally wrote to the Portuguese king on Dormido’s behalf.⁷⁵ Whether Menasseh took this as a sign of the Lord Protector’s personal goodwill or not, he was finally able to visit England the following year. Staying in lodgings on the Strand, he printed a detailed petition to Cromwell requesting the official readmission of the Jews, the free practise of their faith, and a synagogue.⁷⁶ The Council of State appointed a committee to consider the petition, which Cromwell recommended to them on 13th November 1655. It concluded, bluntly, that the requests were “sinful in any Christian nation”.⁷⁷ This was not the end of the matter. In rejecting Menasseh’s proposals, the Council decided that they nonetheless merited further discussion. A group of theologians, merchants, and lawyers would meet together to discuss the issue (and what measures would be taken if the Jews *were* readmitted) at Whitehall on 4th December 1655. This conference dragged on indeterminably for three further meetings after that date, meeting again on the 12th, 14th, and 18th December. Cromwell closed the conference by admitting that it failed to reach any clear conclusion. Where he had hoped for clarity from the delegates and guidance on what action to take: “these agreed not but were of two or three opinions, it was left the more doubtfull to him and the Council”.⁷⁸ Some months later, Cromwell may or may not have given a positive response to a petition from the small Jewish community then in London for some form of guarantee of safety.⁷⁹ No legislation was passed, however.

The importance of the Whitehall Conference and the supposed “readmission” of 1656 may well be in its psychological value, rather than any actual decisions reached there. As Shapiro and Glaser have shown, the conference has acted as focal point for Anglo-Jewish history, serving as a symbol of English tolerance and (in Menasseh and Cromwell) evidence of Englishmen and Jews working together for the national good.⁸⁰ As both

⁷⁵ Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 193–195.

⁷⁶ ben Israel, *To his Highness*, sigs.A3v-A3ir. See also a reprint of the petition in *Publick Intelligencer* 12 (18th–24th December 1655).

⁷⁷ Quoted in Hermann Adler, “Homage to Menasseh ben Israel”, *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England* 1 (1893), p. 48.

⁷⁸ [Henry Jessey], *A Narrative of the Late Proceedings at White-Hall Concerning the Jews* (London, 1656), p. 10.

⁷⁹ On this possibility, see Glaser, *Judaism*, pp. 7–13.

⁸⁰ Mel Scult, *Millennial Expectations and Jewish Liberties* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), pp. 23–34.

authors point out, this is a false picture—the details of the conference and subsequent debates are much messier, and reveal that links with modern ideals of toleration are premature to say the least.⁸¹ Nonetheless, events at Whitehall and the debate it generated (well into 1656) show the high level of public interest in practical, political questions surrounding Jews in England. Why was there this widespread interest? Traditionally, two major reasons have stood out—philosemitic millennialism, which saw readmission as a sign of coming Jewish conversion, and mercantilism, which aimed to profit from Jewish trading skill. After all, Menasseh used both of these reasons (unsurprisingly, conversion was not mentioned). Messianic expectation suffused through the *Hope of Israel*, while the petition to Cromwell emphasised the profit for the nation where Jews were welcomed.⁸² Shapiro added a third reason to these motives—the possibility that readmission was about redefining the boundaries of Englishness after a period of instability and turmoil in the civil wars. The conference therefore allowed debate on who was (and was not) English.⁸³ Glaser, while broadly accepting Shapiro's conclusions, added a fourth explanation when she claimed that many of the debates surrounding readmission were not about Jews at all. Instead, they used the example of the Jews (and Jewish precedents) to discuss issues such as the validity of Common Law and separation of church and state.⁸⁴ These are not necessarily competing explanations, but instead reflect different areas of interest that converged in the debate.⁸⁵

The remainder of this chapter focuses particularly on national interest in the discussions at Whitehall. Shapiro is right to see the debate over

⁸¹ Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 189–193; Glaser, *Judaism*, pp. 92–112.

⁸² See ben Israel, *Hope*, pp. 32–36; *To His Highness*, p. 9. See Katz, *Philo-semitism* for a discussion of the role of philosemitism in readmission and Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission*, pp. xxx–xxxvi for claims of economic motives.

⁸³ Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 55–62.

⁸⁴ Glaser, *Judaism*, pp. 113–129.

⁸⁵ All of these positions have something to commend them. As the previous chapter showed, restorationism was an important current of English thought, and had clearly come to influence thinking on the Jews in the 1640s and 1650s. While they should be downplayed, the claims that there were economic motives to readmission (although cried down by merchants in the Conference itself) are not entirely baseless, as tracts in favour of readmission do talk in terms of financial benefit. Likewise, Glaser has done a great service to our understanding of events of 1655 by teasing out the allusions to contemporary legal debates in works ostensibly about the Jews. The caveat here must be that these works, for all that they say on these debates, were still about Jews and still genuinely interested in either admitting or barring them from admission into England.

readmission as an opportunity to define the precise boundaries of Englishness. Judeo-centrism offers a way to link his emphasis on national identity formation with Katz’s focus on philosemitism at the conference. Shapiro only examined the issue tangentially and briefly, mentioning it as part of a triad of options for dealing with the Jews in early modern England: readmission, restoration to Palestine, and use in colonisation.⁸⁶ He struggled to find any “rational” explanation for the interest in Palestine, wondering why “efforts to restore the Jews to their ancient homeland remained far more palatable to English writers than the idea of restoring the Jews to England itself”.⁸⁷ Shapiro perhaps found the notion so difficult because he failed to see how it contributed to a sense of English identity. Both readmission and expulsion clearly offered up opportunities for national identity formation. Through readmission, the nation could define itself by its openness, its tolerance, and its kindness to strangers. In other words, it could fulfil part of the elect role expected of Israel in the Old Testament by becoming a “light to the nations”. As “D.L.” argued, by coming into England the Jews would be able to enjoy “the plentiful means of obtaining grace and favour, which by the gospel preached are here to be, to the glory of our nation”.⁸⁸ On the other hand, expulsion offered the opportunity to maintain identity against a clearly defined “other”. As chief opponent of readmission William Prynne (1600–1669) acerbically noted, as far as England was concerned “God hath appointed [it] to the English alone for their portion (and therefore these Aliens may not invade or intrude themselves into it, without the nation’s general consent)”.⁸⁹ Restoration to Palestine, on the other hand, offered neither of these opportunities. It showed too much identification with Jewish beliefs to be another form of exclusion, while at the same time being some way from the openness of readmission. Yet many of those calling for readmission also called for restoration to the Holy Land. Shapiro was at a loss

⁸⁶This is a reference to James Harrington’s utopian suggestion that Jews colonise Ireland.

⁸⁷Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 177–179.

⁸⁸D.L., *Israels Condition and Cause Pleaded: Or, Some Arguments for the Jews Admission into England* (London, 1656), sig. A3^v.

⁸⁹William Prynne, *A Short Demurrer to the Jewes Long Discontinued Remitter into England* (London, 1656), p. 66. This is the most notorious piece of antisemitism produced in the course of the debate. Prynne was also identified as the author of the anonymous pamphlet *Case of the Jews Stated or Jews Synagogue Opened* (1656), which repeated these charges, by Joseph Copley (*The Case of the Jews in Altered* [1656], p. 1) where he tore into Prynne’s ignorance.

to explain this paradox, other than to suggest that some writers adopted a third option: setting up the Jews in an unpopulated country as a dependency of England. Given that this was a plan suggested by only two known writers (one of whom was writing a utopia), this hardly seems a live option.⁹⁰

A second problem, as Guibbory notes, appears when attempting to trace national identity in the debates on readmission. Her reading of the literature surrounding the conference finds it marked by an essential clash between two ideals of the elect nation. For English writers used to finding an analogue between the history of their nation and Old Testament Israel, the difficulty was clear.⁹¹ This prompted a vehement response, she argues, from those who opposed the Jews' claims to the title of Israel.⁹² So, argued Prynne, while the Jews were once God's chosen people, they were now "the saddest spectacles of divine justice, and humane misery"⁹³ under "God's just curse and vengeance...for their sins".⁹⁴ Similarly, Quakers were quick to condemn the Jews for their claims to be God's chosen people: "wee are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh",⁹⁵ "[those] who are *Israels* common-wealth, who are the remnant that keeps the command of God, and are of the seed of *Abraham*...are by the dark world called *Quakers*".⁹⁶ Indeed, the

⁹⁰The writers are Sir Thomas Shirley in 1607 and Harrington. Nabil Matar has suggested just this motivation—of setting up a colonial state for English economic interests—behind desires to restore the Jews to Palestine in the early modern period. See Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain 1558–1685* (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp. 167–183.

⁹¹On the links between Israel and England in popular preaching see, in particular, Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: OUP, 1999), pp. 281–325. See also: Patrick Collinson, "The English Nation and National Sentiment in the Prophetic Mode", in Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger (eds), *Religion and Culture in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp. 15–45; Michael McGiffert, "God's Controversy with Jacobean England", *American Historical Review* 88:5 (1983), pp. 1151–1174.

⁹²Guibbory, *Christian Identity*, pp. 186–219; See also her "Commonwealth, Chosenness and Toleration: Reconsidering the Jews' Readmission to England and the Idea of an Elect Nation", in Eliane Glaser (ed.), *Religious Tolerance in the Atlantic World: Early Modern and Contemporary Perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 171–192.

⁹³Prynne, *Short Demurrer*, p. 1.

⁹⁴William Prynne, *The Second Part of a Short Demurrer to the Jewes Long Discontinued Remitter into England*, (London, 1656), p. 133.

⁹⁵Margaret Fell, *For Manasseth ben Israel. The Call of the Jewes Out of Babylon* (London, 1656), p. 16.

⁹⁶George Fox, *A Visitation to the Jewes* (London, 1656), p. 20.

comparison was one that may have negatively influenced wider-perceptions of living Jews, as Guibbory claims.⁹⁷

On the surface, Whitehall suggests the clash of two peoples of “Israel”; two elect nations squaring up to one another. Yet for a number of writers this did not prove to be a problem. On the contrary, many were happy to affirm that Jews were superior to gentiles and remained the chosen people of God. At the same time, they did not abandon the high claims they made for England. Taking the opportunity afforded by discussions of readmission, they were able to forge a holy, English identity, which found England’s key role in its relationship with the Jewish people. This “chosen” identity combined providential thinking with proto-Zionism to forge a picture of England as a nation defined by its relationship with Jews.

This concern was apparent from early attempts to discuss Jewish readmission, even before Menasseh had written his *Hope*. The otherwise unknown Edward Nicholas penned his *Apology for the Honorable Nation of the Jews* in 1648, a work probably written in response to the failure of the Council of Officers to agree to a toleration clause that included Jews in the Agreement of the People approved on 15th January 1648/49.⁹⁸ While Robert O. Smith suggests that Menasseh wrote the pamphlet pseudonymously due to its lack of overt Christian references, there is no reason to think that the author was not English. The pamphlet both presumed that Jews would convert to Christianity, and blamed Jewish leaders for killing Christ. It seems unlikely that Menasseh, who was always open about his Jewish identity, would adopt an explicitly Christian persona as Nicholas does in the pamphlet.⁹⁹ Regardless of this, Nicholas espoused points common amongst Judeo-centrists at the time. His work highlights themes that became essential in the debate on Jewish readmission in the 1650s. These cover three broad themes—the identity of the Jews, the judgement on England for her sins, and the opportunity for England to act as a redeemer nation towards the Jews by directing her back to her own country. These categories offer a useful lens through which to examine debates on readmission.

⁹⁷ Guibbory, “Commonwealth, Chosenness and Toleration”, pp. 171–182.

⁹⁸ Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 180–182.

⁹⁹ See Smith, *More Desired*, pp. 104–107. Indeed, Menasseh’s Jewishness was an aspect of his marketability. See Sina Rauschenbach, “Christian Readings of Menasseh ben Israel: Translation and Retranslation in the Early Modern World”, in David Wertheim (ed.), *Jew as Legitimation*, pp. 63–81.

For Judeo-centrists, the Jews were a people who still enjoyed a special relationship with God. Nicholas noted that this “appears by the many and large expressions of his [God’s] favor to them, stiling them *his gems, his firstborn, a precious people above all peoples of the earth*”.¹⁰⁰ The Jews were thus “of the highest and most honourable descent of any nobility in any country in the world, being ennobled by God himself...and this, I believe to be true nobility, having God to ratify it”.¹⁰¹ Where some charged that God rejected the Jews for crucifying Christ, Nicholas instead placed the guilt only on their first-century leaders. While this caused him some difficulty when he tried to explain why their exile continued into the present, he nonetheless argued forcefully that the Jews remained the true people of God.¹⁰² This was obviously a challenge to standard Protestant supersessionist theology. Nicholas was alive to the implications of the shift he proposed. The promise God made to Abraham—to bless those who blessed him and curse those who cursed him—was still in force.¹⁰³ Judeo-centrists therefore frequently expressed the idea that the Jews remained God’s people even after Christ’s death and resurrection. Writing in an appendix to Menasseh’s *Hope of Israel* in 1651, Moses Wall repeatedly affirmed the special and quite separate nature of God’s promises for Jews and gentiles. The Jews’ covenant “is not nulled or broken, but only suspended”.¹⁰⁴ This attracted the ire of Edward Spencer, who had himself written and published a letter to Menasseh. He worried that Wall granted the Jews not only a dignity that they did not deserve, but also set them apart from Christians even when converted: “they must not exalt themselves as a nation, for they must be ingrafted upon that branch, or vine, Christ Jesus”.¹⁰⁵ Maton had emphasised a similar separation, and it proved as worrying for Spencer as it had done for Alexander Petrie. The Fifth Monarchist John Tillinghast, writing in 1653, broached the same subject. Revelation 16 described the Jews as “kings”, he claimed, “for that *great*

¹⁰⁰ Edward Nicholas, *An Apology for the Honorable Nation of the Jews, and all the Sons of Israel* (London, 1648), p. 4.

¹⁰¹ Nicholas, *Apology*, pp. 12–13.

¹⁰² Nicholas, *Apology*, p. 6. He states firstly that he doesn’t know what God intended in scattering the Jews (p. 6); later, he suggests a lack of thankfulness for “peculiar blessings” might be the cause (p. 13).

¹⁰³ Nicholas, *Apology*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ Moses Wall, “Considerations Upon the Point of the Conversion of the Jews”, in Menasseh Ben-Israel, *The Hope of Israel* (London, 1651), p. 49.

¹⁰⁵ Spencer quoted in Wall, “Considerations”, p. 57.

honour and dignity God will put upon his people (setting them uppermost in the kingdom).¹⁰⁶ Just how far the Jews would be “uppermost” was clear when Tillinghast discussed the relationship of non-Jews to the restored Jewish kingdom. “The Gentiles shall be in a manner *servants* to the Jews”, he wrote, “yet shall their hearts be so *spiritual*, that considering it to be their *fathers work* & will, they shall be so far from being offended... [that] they shall exceedingly delight in the thing”.¹⁰⁷ Homes agreed. On their conversion, those nations who had opposed the coming of Jewish power “shall now be given into the hands of the converted Jews”. Converted gentiles would also enjoy some power, he noted, although he defined them only by their relationship to the Jews: “the holy Gentiles adhering to them [the Jews]”.¹⁰⁸ This kingdom would be everlasting, for God “gave them the seal of the *seven kindomes of the whole country of Canaan*, and that for an *everlasting* possession...[they will be] most glorious restored to the possession of it; the seed of Abraham, the believing [*sic*] *Jews* and *Gentiles* ruling there, and over the whole earth, as long as ever there shall be any habitation on earth”.¹⁰⁹

These claims of the inherent nobility of the Jews resounded through works arguing for readmission. “They are a *people* above all the *peoples* and *nations* in the world”, wrote Roger Williams, “under most gracious and express promises”.¹¹⁰ “God still owns them as his people and hath a special eye over them”, argued Baptist leader Thomas Collier in 1655, looking forward to a time when God would “make them the head of the nations”.¹¹¹ In a direct appeal to the Jews, he was even clearer about their future glory: “[You] shall be honoured of God when the nations shall fall before you,

¹⁰⁶ John Tillinghast, *Generation-Work* (London, 1655), p. 39.

¹⁰⁷ Tillinghast, *Generation-Work*, p. 51.

¹⁰⁸ Nathaniel Homes, *Apokalypsis Anastaseos. The Resurrection Revealed, or the Dawnings of the Day-Star About to Rise* (London, 1653), p. 72. Interestingly, Homes was paid £50 by Parliament for printing this work. See Jason Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphlets* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 176.

¹⁰⁹ Homes, *Apokalypsis*, p. 141.

¹¹⁰ Roger Williams, “A Testimony to the Fourth Paper presented by Major Butler”, in *The Fourth Paper Presented by Major Butler to the Honourable Committee of Parliament, for the Propagating of the Gospel of Christ Jesus* (London, 1652), p. 16. Smith argues that Williams should not be seen as a Judeo-centrist, due to his calls for toleration rather than conversion (Smith, *More Desired*, p. 104). While this is an important point, Williams nonetheless predicted a glorious future for the Jews and their continued blessing under God.

¹¹¹ Thomas Collier, *A Brief Answer to Some of the Objections and Demurs Made Against the Coming In and Inhabiting of the Jews in this Common-Wealth* (London, 1656), pp. 16–17.

and confess you a people sought out and favoured".¹¹² At their conversion, argued "J.J. Philo-Judaeus", "God will accept them for a sweet smelling savor, and give such pleasant rest in their borders, so that they shall be afraid of the nations no longer; but God will be a wall of fire around them".¹¹³ As the same author stated even more bluntly, the Jews "are our superiors".¹¹⁴ Even their rejection of Christ could take on an almost heroic character. Philo-Judaeus therefore imagined the Jews as a corporate Christ-figure. They had renounced the honour they were due, and submitted themselves to humiliation and penal substitution to save gentiles: "It was for our sakes that they hated Christ, refused the gospel, and became enemies to the truth, that we might be brought to the knowledge of him who is able to save to the utmost...[God] hath laid them aside which were once his people, that we stupid and blind idolaters might be grafted into the true olive tree".¹¹⁵ These statements of the blessings enjoyed by Jews were not limited to works discussing readmission; they also found expression at the Whitehall Conference itself. Even when punished for their sins, noted some delegates, God "hath a special eye to them; observing all the unkind carriage of others towards them".¹¹⁶

The second idea that came to prominence in the debates was the threat of punishment that England faced. By privileging the Jews, Judeo-centrists were aware that God had a special concern with their treatment, even if they were in an unconverted state. Drawing on the example of Hosea, who was ordered to marry a "wife of Whoredom" (Hosea 1:2) who continued to be unfaithful, Burroughs compared the Jews' relationship to God to that of a prostitute and her pimp—God still protected the Jews despite difficulties in their current marital status.¹¹⁷ The implication was that even if God was not particularly pleased with his wayward spouse at present, he was much angrier with those who insulted her. Nicholas was clear as to where the fault lay. After listing the medieval massacres and current laws in force against the Jews, he noted that "in rejecting them, we highly incense the majesty of Jehovah, whereas we ought rather to honor

¹¹²Thomas Collier, *The Day-Dawning, and the Day-Star Arising in the Dispersed of Judah & Israel* (London, 1655), p. 2.

¹¹³J.J. Philo-Judaeus, *The Restoration of Dead Bones, or the Conversion of the Jewes* (London, 1655), pp. 23–24.

¹¹⁴Philo-Judaeus, *Restoration*, p. 96.

¹¹⁵Philo-Judaeus, *Restoration*, pp. 104–105.

¹¹⁶[Jessey], *Narrative*, p. 6.

¹¹⁷Burroughs, *Hosea*, p. 681.

them whom God honoreth”; “we have great and important cause to take heed, lest we of this kingdom of *England*, putting from us and abandoning these people of God, we separate not ourselves from Gods favor and protection”.¹¹⁸ The treatment of the Jews was a both a warning piece, and a possible explanation of the sufferings of the civil wars.

This was one of the central themes of the first formal appeal for readmission by Johanna Cartwright and her son Ebenezer Cartwright, two English Baptists living in Amsterdam. The petition, dated 5th January 1649, was sent to Thomas Fairfax and the Council of War, and asked that readmission be allowed so that “the wrath of God, will be much appeased towards you, for their innocent blood shed”.¹¹⁹ Williams argued along similar lines, attacking the “horrible *oppressions* and horrible slaughters [which] the Jews suffered from the Kings and peoples of this nation”. This placed the nation as a whole under judgement: “for removing of which guilt, and the pacifying of the *wrath* of the most *high* against this nation... it is humbly conceived to be a great and weighty duty which lies upon this State, to provide (on the Jewes account) some gracious expedients for such holy and Christian ends”.¹²⁰ Addressing himself to Cromwell, Collier solemnly noted that the Jews’ “affliction hath been especially the sin of princes and governours of the nations...and they it is must give an account for the wrong done to them &c. That so it may be your Highness and your Councils care, to deliver your selves from that guilt the world lyeth under, for their wrong unto them”.¹²¹ The Quaker William Tomlinson claimed that he supported Jewish readmission “out of love the nation of the Jewes; so also out of love to my owne country”. Failure to resettle the Jews would lead to dishonour for the gospel and punishment for the nation: “may [they] not returne and say, *They have prayed for us but they will not receive us*; and so the name of Christ be blasphemed”.¹²² Philo-Judaeus took time to warn that “it had been better for us, if our predecesors had not driven them out of *England*, doubtless the Lord will not leave punishing of us, untill we do leave remembering of their faults... by receiving of them again to inhabit amongst us”.¹²³ Again, these themes reverberated through discussions at Whitehall. If God had plagued Israel

¹¹⁸ Nicholas, *Apology*, pp. 5,8.

¹¹⁹ Johanna Cartwright and Ebenezer Cartwright, *The Petition of the Jewes* (London, 1648), p. 3.

¹²⁰ Williams, “Fourth Paper”, p. 19.

¹²¹ Collier, *A Brief Answer*, sig. A2^r.

¹²² William Tomlinson, *A Bosome Opened to the Jewes* (London, 1656), p. 1.

¹²³ Philo-Judaeus, *Restoration*, p. 18.

after the death of Saul until satisfaction was made, might it not “offend the Lord, if we yield not to the Jews this courtesie which they desire; and it may be accounted some kinde of satisfaction to them”?¹²⁴ Recounting English atrocities against the Jews, the theologians present noted that “for such grosse injuries the Lord may be *very sore displeased with England*... if [readmission] be denyed them, it’s feared the Lord may shew his displeasure to be great against *England*”.¹²⁵

While this might seem a negative picture, these warnings against inaction also featured a promise that England had a unique role to play in the future of the Jews. These writers therefore aimed to provide ways in which the nation could reconstruct itself and build positive models for national identity based upon their relationship with the Jews. As Nicholas slyly suggested, if “we...follow the politicians rule, that aim onley at their own ends” the way in which the Jews were treated would “prove and will certainly be an advantage to us divers ways...the good or evil usage of God’s people is the greatest state interest in the world”.¹²⁶ If England wanted not only to abrogate judgement, but also to build up her own status as a nation, then she would be wise to be on the side of God’s people. In doing so, argued Nicholas, England would also be further defining herself against nations, such as France and Spain, who were renowned for their hatred of the Jews. He hoped that when peace came to England “our weapons... may be bent against the cruel oppressors of [God’s] people in forraign parts, and those merciless tyrants so rigorous towards the Jews”. His mus-ing on England’s role did not end there. The civil wars, he argued, were simply the prelude to the emergence of England’s true identity as the redeemer of the Jews. Taking the story from 1 Kings 5 in which Solomon ordered wood sawn in Lebanon, so as not to have the sound of sawing near the Holy of Holies, Nicholas argued by analogy that “our late tumults and bloodshed...may be the hewing and working in *Lebanon* which we have heard”.¹²⁷ In other words, they served as the preparation for God’s work with the Jews. His tract, which initially seemed so negative towards England, ended with a metaphorical appeal to the nation as an imagined community: “to the whole Kingdom of *England*, from the highest to the lowest”. He reminded English readers that they too showed signs of God’s

¹²⁴ [Jessey], *Narrative*, p. 4.

¹²⁵ [Jessey], *Narrative*, p. 7.

¹²⁶ Nicholas, *Apology*, p. 5.

¹²⁷ Nicholas, *Apology*, p. 12.

special chosen status: “God hath exceedingly blessed this kingdom above others...[as] the chief bulwark of the truth”.¹²⁸

Similar images appeared repeatedly throughout the literature on readmission. While for some writers England’s role was offering the Jews the opportunity to convert, for others it included the facilitation of their restoration to Palestine. The Cartwright petition, for example, included the hope that “this Nation of ENGLAND, with the inhabitants of the Netherlands, shall be the first and readiest to transport IZRAELLS sons & daughters in their ships to that Land promised to their forefathers”.¹²⁹ Not only would there be a reversal of England’s guilt, but, playing into hopes of an apocalyptic Anglo-Dutch confederation, the combined nations would be redeemers of the Jewish people.¹³⁰ Later writers removed any other nation from this picture and presented a uniquely English enterprise in blessing the Jews. According to Philo-Judaeus, the nation received “that honour before all nations in the world, so that through the assistance of our Lord, we may be instruments of *Israels* resurrection and restauration”. This opportunity was a moment of crisis for the nation, he argued, and England as a whole had to take the opening provided by God who “had put one opportunity more of doing good into our hands, if we will but lay hold of it”. Citing a favourite Judeo-centric verse, he noted that as Mordecai had warned Esther, if she did not speak for the Jews at this time, then deliverance would arise “from another place to the Jews, but thou and thy father’s house shall perish”.¹³¹ He further suggested that the Jews might be enticed by “our carnal things, and we to reap the benefit of their future spiritual and extraordinary gifts and graces”.¹³² What might appear on the surface an insulting and antisemitic appeal to the Jews’ supposed love of money was in fact a highly subversive suggestion, reflecting an idea taken directly from missionary discourse. As Laura M. Stevens has shown, the idea that Europeans would undertake a material exchange with natives, offering their spiritual blessings in return for the natives’ gold and jewels, was a common one in both continental and English works justifying proto-colonial

¹²⁸ Nicholas, *Apology*, pp. 14–15.

¹²⁹ Cartwright and Cartwright, *Petition*, p. 2.

¹³⁰ On the hope for an alliance built on ideas of both nations’ apocalyptic mission see Steven C.A. Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism: Ideologies and the Making of English Foreign Policy, 1650–1658* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), pp. 15–39.

¹³¹ Philo-Judaeus, *Restoration*, pp. 118–119.

¹³² Philo-Judaeus, *Restoration*, p. 92.

efforts in the New World.¹³³ By using this concept in his work, Philo-Judaeus located England in the place of the barbarous natives offering their resources, and the Jews in the place of the wise civilisers.

For many writers, England would offer unique opportunities for the Jews to convert. When exposed to pure English Protestantism, the Jews would abandon their stubbornness and turn to Christ. This, of course, played into anti-Catholic ideas—Jews horrified by the idolatry of papal Christianity would convert when they saw faithful, image-free worship in action. This also worked as the point of encounter between England and the Jews. As God began to restore the Jews to their superior role, the momentary crossing of English and Jewish destinies allowed the passing on of the true faith. Thus for Collier, while the Jewish community living in Amsterdam might remain obstinate, “God may cause the water of or in our *England* to wash away that leprosie which might not be done in other nations”.¹³⁴ With that “leprosie” cleansed, however, the Jews would probably not remain in England long. Here, Cromwell might expect a special role: “but God may make you not only as a nursing father to them here, but an instrument in his hand to help them in to their own countrey, for thither they shall return, by whom and by what means, time will manifest”.¹³⁵ As far as Tillinghast was concerned, the restoration of the Jews was the “generation work” God had prepared for completion in 1650s England. While all Christians needed to further God’s kingdom, Tillinghast claimed that each generation (and nation) had a particular mission from God. If they embraced their mission, then blessing would follow. If not, judgement was inevitable. This was obvious from the most recent example of a generation following God’s command for its special work: the success of parliamentary armies in the civil wars.¹³⁶ The new work that God had laid at England’s feet was that of Jewish conversion, an event likely in 1656. With that in mind, England not only had a duty to readmit the Jews, but to take the lead in their restoration to Palestine. Engaging in an extended exegesis of Isaiah, Tillinghast set out the attributes of the gentile nation that would play the lead role in the Jewish return. They “shall be a people *inhabiting* some isles...[possess] a longing

¹³³ Laura M. Stevens, *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans and Colonial Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 34–61.

¹³⁴ Collier, *Brief Answer*, p. 12.

¹³⁵ Collier, *Brief Answer*, sig. A2r.

¹³⁶ Tillinghast, *Generation Work*, pp. 5–20.

desire to see the day of *Israels redemption*... [be] very considerable and strong in shipping” and have “a state government” rather than a monarchy.¹³⁷ This nation would also take the lead role in destroying Rome, being the stone that grows into a great mountain in Daniel 2 before destroying a statue representing a succession of world empires, the favourite Fifth Monarchist text.¹³⁸ This stone would begin to form in the north of Europe, before slowly gathering speed and numbers as it approached Rome: “where the *stone* is first taken out of the mountains, and formed together by God, and begins to *roll* and smite; out of that quarter, may we conclude the tempest (though yet it be a great way off) which is to fall upon *Rome* shall most certainly come”.¹³⁹ Jewish leaders with strong messianic faith, meanwhile, would begin discussing restoration with interested gentile leaders. After the English-led alliance destroyed Rome, they would help restore the Jews through the force of their arms. After their departure, however, the Jews would face an unprecedented trial as they fought against hostile nations and their unconverted brethren. Two thirds of them would die, before prevailing through Christ and enjoying an earthly kingdom.¹⁴⁰ The allusions to Menasseh in the figure of the messianically minded Jewish leader were clear. The same ideas were repeated in other works, such as the anonymous *Banner of Truth Displayed*, which argued that England should “subdue and drive out those pagans and heathens that possesse their land, and [give] unto them actual possession thereof”.¹⁴¹

Although delegates did not discuss Tillinghast’s detailed apocalyptic scheme at Whitehall, there is no question that one of the key hopes expressed at the conference was that England could enjoy a special role through their focus upon the Jews. God had, after all, “exalted *England* in spiritual, and in temporal mercies and deliverances, as much as, (or *more then* [sic]) any other nation under heaven”. Not only was this the case, but “the good people generally have more believed the promises touching the calling of the Jews and the great riches and glory that shall follow to Jews, and us Gentiles, and have (and do still) more often and earnestly pray for it than any other nation that we have heard of”.¹⁴² While theologians at

¹³⁷ Tillinghast, *Generation Work*, Part II, pp. 53–54.

¹³⁸ Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, pp. 172–194.

¹³⁹ Tillinghast, *Generation Work*, Part II, pp. 52–53. See also pp. 63–67, 83–88.

¹⁴⁰ Tillinghast, *Generation Work*, Part II, pp. 58–64.

¹⁴¹ [Anon], *The Banner of Truth Displayed, Or a Testimony for Christ* (London, 1656), p. 42.

¹⁴² Jessey, *Whitehall*, p. 6.

Whitehall hoped that England would play a part in Jewish conversion, some speakers took the opportunity of arguing that readmission allowed the definition of England against continental “others”. Readmission would demonstrate the way in which England was unlike Catholic France and Spain, where open persecution took place.¹⁴³ Both a more millenarian theme and the possible benefits to England emerged in a private side meeting. The entrance of the Jews into England “might tend to the benefit of very many in our nation, even in outward things, beside their conversion; which time (it’s hoped) is now at hand, even at the door”.¹⁴⁴

The bulk of literature surrounding the Whitehall Conference therefore viewed Jewish readmission with one eye on the fractured image of Englishness that had splintered in the civil war. As Shapiro has argued, the conference could therefore act as a way to reaffirm and redefine Englishness after a difficult period: what was it that made one English, and were these characteristics antithetical to Judaism?¹⁴⁵ Yet the millenarian literature that surrounded Whitehall advanced beyond this oppositional question by striving to “write the nation” through pamphlets, commentaries, and sermons. This was not a clash of the elect nations, but rather a definition and defence of Englishness in distinction to Old Testament Israel, while at the same time in constant dialogue with contemporary Jews. Although recent wars divided the nation, wrote Tillinghast, the project of Jewish readmission to England and restoration to Palestine presented the opportunity to imagine the nation as a unified community: “there is no part or piece of generation-work, but every Christian man or woman may some way be helpful thereunto”.¹⁴⁶ D.L. engaged in a long panegyric as he imagined the role that a similarly unified England would play for the Jewish people: “I hear them say, blessed be God that hath delivered us from our enemies; and who hath found out a *place* of safety and refreshment to us. Oh how have we been trod on, scorned, abused, fleeced, and butchered in many other places, but yet at last God lent us a *shelter*, even *England*. *England* we say, *England* who holds up God’s glory and fights the Lord’s battels; *England* which is so famous for *piety*...O what a comfort and credit will this be to our nation”.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Jessey, *Whitehall*, p. 4.

¹⁴⁴ Jessey, *Whitehall*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁵ Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 55–62.

¹⁴⁶ Tillinghast, *Generation Work*, Part I, p. 49.

¹⁴⁷ D.L., *Israels Condition*, pp. 33–34.

Of course, coming from a Fifth Monarchist such as Tillinghast, these statements may appear merely as the vain hopes of a defeated party, who as Steven Pincus has noted, were reduced to political insignificance after the fall of the Barebones parliament in 1653.¹⁴⁸ However, such rhetoric operated as a way for radical writers to attempt to reconnect to the political and religious mainstream that now appeared to exclude them. Their language recalled Cromwell’s own previous statements on the issue. The future Lord Protector famously addressed his eschatological hopes for the Nominated Assembly in his opening speech of 4th July 1653. According to Cromwell, the new parliament might be a sign of the times in which “God is bringing the *Jews* home to their station from the Isles of the sea, surely when God sets up the glory of the gospel church, it shall be gathering people out of deep waters, out of the multitudes of waters”.¹⁴⁹ The reference to the “isles of the sea” implied English involvement—precisely the role that Menasseh’s mission seemed to offer to the nation. Cromwell’s continued favouring of Menasseh—including providing him lodgings on the Strand, entertaining him, and adding additional Judeo-centric divines to the Whitehall conference as it proceeded, all implied that the Lord Protector viewed Jewish readmission as of national importance. Cromwell’s closing statement to the conference on 18th December, that “he had no engagement to the Jews, but only what the Scripture holds forth”¹⁵⁰ was therefore deeply revealing. The conference itself also included a number of ministers who had previously written and preached on their belief in the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, including John Owen, Thomas Goodwin, Thomas Manton and Joseph Caryl. Goodwin, for example, had written that the Turks were “to be overthrown by or for the Jews, to make way for them to get possession of their own land”.¹⁵¹ As we have seen above, it was these divines who expressed the fear that England faced judgement if they did not accept Menasseh’s demands. Goodwin provides a further link to the highest levels of English government. His congregation included Henry Lawrence, Lord President of the Council of State,

¹⁴⁸ Pincus argues that the failure of Barebones resulted in the side-lining of radicals and the moving away from an offensive “apocalyptic” foreign policy by the Protectorate to a more positive and reactive anti-Spanish position. See Pincus, *Protestantism and Patriotism*, pp. 149–191.

¹⁴⁹ Oliver Cromwell, *The Lord General Cromwell’s Speech Delivered in the Council Chamber, Upon the 4 of July, 1653* (London, 1654) p. 25.

¹⁵⁰ [Jessey], *Narrative*, p. 9.

¹⁵¹ Goodwin, *Workes*, Vol. II, pp. 58–59.

and one of the key figures in organising the Whitehall Conference.¹⁵² Lawrence was one of five members of the Council who attended the conference, taking his place alongside Sir Gilbert Pickering, Sir Charles Wolsey, Francis Rous, and John Lisle. His sympathies were likely with the rabbi's demands. His eldest son Edward, in the company of the Judeo-centric Henry Oldenburg, certainly met with Menasseh on a number of occasions.¹⁵³ Lawrence's influence, combined with his links to Goodwin and other Judeo-centric ministers, is suggestive of the extent of restorationist thinking at the highest levels of government. By appealing to the importance of Jewish restoration, radical writers therefore tried to relocate their concerns within a wider political-religious discourse and return themselves to the political mainstream.

All of these writers, both radical and mainstream, sought to define the nation by its relationship and duty to the Jews, but not in such a sense that it replaced them as the elect nation. England's role in the projected apocalyptic war to restore the Jews was to lead other Protestant nations, not to make exclusive claims of blessing at the expense of others.¹⁵⁴ England might receive the greatest measure of spiritual and political blessing from God, but this did not mean that they enjoyed exclusive access to God's favour.¹⁵⁵ Thus, England might be "chosen" for a special purpose, but only ethnic Israel could enjoy election as "God's chosen people". The chosen nature of England therefore differed from the chosen nature of Israel in that the nation was judged, primarily, by its relationship with the Jews. When Tillinghast was setting up an image of England's chosen

¹⁵² Lawrence had also been an elder in Goodwin's congregation in Arnhem before returning to England in the mid-1640s. See Murray Tolmie, *The Triumph of the Saints: The Separate Churches of London 1616–1649* (Cambridge: CUP, 1977), pp. 105, 120.

¹⁵³ See Oldenburg's letter to Menasseh dated 25th July 1657 in Royal Society MS MM 1, fo.24, reprinted in Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall (eds), *The Correspondence of Henry Oldenburg* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), pp. 125–127. Oldenburg was also a Judeo-centrist. His letter concerns a book he has been given, which confirms his belief that "the magnificent and splendid prophecies of the glorious restoration of the Jews to their homeland are about to be fulfilled".

¹⁵⁴ A helpful discussion of the subtleties of elect nation rhetoric in early modern England can be found in Guyatt, *Providence*, pp. 11–52.

¹⁵⁵ The idea of a pan-European Protestant crusade was one that was regularly articulated in the earlier seventeenth century, and grew particularly fervent at the time of the start of the Thirty Years' War. This was seen as a fight against international papal influence, rather than having any specific geo-political aims of Jewish restoration. See Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*, pp. 106–112 and Arthur H. Williamson, 'Britain and the Beast', pp. 15–27.

nature, he therefore used the Philistines, not Israel, as the model for his nation.¹⁵⁶ The link between the English nation and the Jews was neither oppositional in these works, nor did it see England as a simple replacement for Israel. Instead, it looked to define a nation’s worth by their treatment of the Jewish people.

This helps to explain the providential understanding of England’s relationship with the Jews, which was able to resonate with key elements of English thinking on the subject. Returning to Guyatt’s typology of “Judicial”, “Historical”, and “Apocalyptic” providentialism, Judeo-centric thinking in 1655/6 appealed to each one in turn.¹⁵⁷ It was quite possible to adopt only a “judicial” providential position and find that God was punishing the nation for their previous sins, whether medieval massacres of Jews or the continued expulsion order. As God’s chosen people, the Jews enjoyed special privileges and protections. To be chosen as a gentile nation meant that England needed to show herself the best friend of the Jewish people. As Philo-Judaeus concluded: “I am perswaded, that man which harbors an Israelite in his house, a poor distressed outcast, shall find that God hath increased his riches both in body and soul”. Listing a number of biblical examples—from Pharaoh’s acceptance of Joseph’s family to the prostitute Rahab’s willingness to hide Jewish spies in Jericho—he argued that God treated the nation in response to their treatment of the Jews.¹⁵⁸ This was a point reiterated, in a blunt form, by D.L. in a passage worth quoting in full:

They who afford the *Jews*, I say the *Jews*, the freest habitation, *largest* privileges, impose the *least* burthens and taxes, the *fewest* vexations, who deal the *most justly* and favourably to them, who trust them *most*, and torment them *least*, those nations flourish *most*, abound in *wealth*, in *strength*, in largeness of *Empire* and dominion to this very day above others their neighbour princes about them; as though one may say, that what God promised to *Abraham* is really fulfilled to this very day: *I will bless them that bless thee, and I will curse them that curse thee...* ‘Tis not the meaning, nor doth any commentator upon that *text*, restrain the *blessing* or *cursing* to *Abrahams person* onely, but to all the nation of the *Jews*.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Tillinghast, *Generation-Work*, Vol. II, p. 54.

¹⁵⁷ Guyatt, *Providence*, pp. 6–52.

¹⁵⁸ Philo-Judaeus, *Restoration*, pp. 93–94.

¹⁵⁹ D.L., *Israels Condition*, pp. 37–38.

This providential focus upon the Jews could also attract those who held to a form of “historical” providentialism. Many writers linked England’s treatment of the Jews to the historical mission God had prepared for them. This idea resembles what Krishan Kumar has described as “missionary nationalism”. Yet for Kumar, this form of national identity did not appear before the eighteenth century, when England built its identity as the key member of an internal British empire of the Isles and an external “missionary” empire, spreading civilisation across the world.¹⁶⁰ The Judeo-centric approach to nationhood expressed around the Whitehall Conference found its missionary impulse defined by duty to God and his ancient people, rather than by its civilising role. This was a mission in which the whole nation could play a part. This built upon the conception of crusades against Rome imagined in the period prior to 1640. As the previous chapter noted, while this still allowed commentators to imagine the nation as a “horizontal and deep” community made up of individual political actors, these endeavours were always (and unsurprisingly) led by the monarch. The more recent Fifth Monarchist visions of international crusade, which saw the destruction of Rome by the godly as its core aim, could also be reimagined through a Judeo-centric lens. While (for Tillinghast in particular) this remained a part of England’s mission for the Jews, it was now supplemental to the nation’s duty towards God’s ancient people. The providential reading of Jewish readmission therefore also held appeal for those who adopted what Guyatt describes as “apocalyptic” providentialism, who could read readmission as England living up to the unique role predicted for them in prophecy. Judeo-centric providential thinking was successful precisely because of its ability to engage a number of groups. Writers who were more conservative could ignore the crusading aspect entirely, and still focus on England’s special role towards the Jews, helping to build a platform for shared political goals between moderate and more radical thinkers. Those who imagined England’s destiny in restoring the Jews in the mid-1650s thus conceived of every member of the nation having a role to play in the reality of restoration. Philo-Judaeus took the blessings that an individual would experience when “harbouring an Israelite in his house” and extrapolated outwards until that blessing applied to the nation as a whole. While many of the appeals aimed at Cromwell, they nonetheless included an increased awareness of the nation as a group of individuals outside of the ruling elite. God, thought

¹⁶⁰ Kumar, *Making*, pp. 35–38.

Tillinghast, would first make his desire to restore the Jews “amongst a middle sort of people...not amongst the poorest of all...nor the richest... but a middle sort of people, living in a plain, but an honourable and comely way”.¹⁶¹ Such a development is perhaps unsurprising. As Anthony Smith has argued, the idea of a national covenant already presumed that the nation could unify around a commitment to action before God. There was certainly the potential to imagine the nation outside of the more limited parameters of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century thought.¹⁶² By making the focus of this national mission the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, the writers examined here took a step towards the first actively political manifestations of Christian Zionism.

The image of the nation presented in these works was more than that of the covenanted nation as the “new Israel” gaining credibility by repeated Old Testament allusions. As discussed above, many did make ample use of these allusions to help define the nation in this period. In terms of national identity formation, to presume a type-antitype relationship between Israel and England is an oversimplification. Instead of seeing this relationship in terms of binary opposites, it is better to imagine the England–Israel relationship as a patchwork of images and interrelations open to the English writer or preacher on the subject of the nation. The precise use of Israel to define England therefore varied between writers who used the comparison for different reasons. Many, such as Prynne, viewed Israel in terms of abrogated blessings that they applied to England. With the Jews rejected, they defined Englishness by alterity. Yet for Judeo-centrists, who used the comparison in an entirely different manner, the blessings were not abrogated but continuous. England could define itself against Israel only in that it faced judgement based on its treatment of the scattered Jews. Reflecting the ambiguities of allo-Semitism, the Judeo-centrist perspective emphasised the otherness of the Jews just as much as the positions adopted by the opponents of readmission. In accepting that the promises to Israel remained in force, Judeo-centrists presumed that Jews could never become a functioning part of the English nation. Their stay in England was, after all, a temporary sojourn on their way to Palestine. As Shapiro has pointed out, it was an eschatological necessity that the Jews not be assimilated in any way, shape, or form—to do so would leave Christians uncertain as to the identity of the people on whom so much of God’s plans hinged. Taken

¹⁶¹ Tillinghast, *Generation-work*, Vol. I, p. 71.

¹⁶² Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations*, pp. 107–134.

together with the difficulty of identifying the ten tribes, this would have been a step too far into confusion.¹⁶³ Menasseh's writing had probably not helped on this count. Desperate to answer every possible objection to readmission, he had simultaneously argued that the Jews became a useful part of the nations they were welcomed into, and that they had no desire for lands, titles, or participation in national life, but remained a community entirely set apart.¹⁶⁴

Potentially more disturbing are the implications of these ideas for the Christian conception of the Jewish people. Here the Jews became virtual fetishes; a way of guaranteeing national success through an unthinking support for their supposed geo-political interests rather than actual engagement with the Jewish community. Sean Durbin has recently traced this trend in contemporary Christian Zionism, but it is far from a new phenomenon.¹⁶⁵ Philo-Judaeus's assertion that the man who took a Jew into his house would be blessed "body and soul" had the ring of folk belief about it, rather than actual concern for Jewish welfare. Yet the appeal of the "judicial" providentialism of Judeo-centrism was in precisely this area. The link between national sin and national punishment was an established part of the puritan psyche, and could explain providential defeats and setbacks as the result of general moral failures or a reluctance to institute reform.¹⁶⁶ This kind of providential thinking struggled against its generalised nature. When providence seemed to turn against England, even as the nation appeared to be following God's will, which sins were to be identified as those which had displeased God? More pertinently, were they the sins of the nation's leaders, the people as a whole, or both? This question was raised forcefully shortly before the Whitehall Conference, with Cromwell's Western Design: his failed attempt to take Hispaniola from the Spanish in summer 1655. The collapse of this plan left Cromwell deeply confused over the direction in which providence was pointing, as well as providing his opponents with an opportunity to identify the Lord Protector as the man responsible for bringing God's displeasure upon

¹⁶³ Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 167–193.

¹⁶⁴ ben Israel, *To His highness*, p. 9.

¹⁶⁵ Sean Durbin, "'I Will Bless Those Who Bless You': Christian Zionism, Fetishism and Unleashing the Blessings of God", *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 28:3 (2013), pp. 507–521.

¹⁶⁶ Walsham, *Providence*, pp. 281–325. See also Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), pp. 90–132.

England.¹⁶⁷ In this context, Judeo-centric providentialism offered an opportunity to identify England’s sin with previous administrations, stretching back to the thirteenth century. This explained both the horrors of the civil wars and recent foreign policy failures without any specific blame for Cromwell or the masses who made up the contemporary English nation. It was therefore possible to forget England’s recent military misadventures as the nation prepared to fulfil their true mission of restoring the Jews to Palestine, rather than attacking Spain in the Americas. Inherent weaknesses within providential thought and recent military setbacks therefore contributed to the success of Judeo-centric arguments in 1655/6.

When summarising events at Whitehall, the five-point scheme discussed in the introduction helps provide a useful overview. First, God chose England to restore Israel, but not as her replacement. Second, the duty that England had towards Jews was both missionary and covenantal—her fate was tethered to that of the Jews, and God required the nation to take the lead in their restoration (of which readmission was the first step). Third, this provided a providential explanation for England’s trials during the civil wars, and a way of understanding the confusing patterns of providence. As per the Abrahamic covenant, England faced punishment for the nation’s ongoing sins towards the Jewish people. Readmission therefore offered a tangible way of reversing this, and a readable vision of providence. Fourth, this readability combined with anxiety about England’s eschatological role. This, in turn, encouraged proponents to active political involvement in order to benefit the Jews. Finally, this whole scheme meant that engagement with Jews offered to legitimate the nation. The Jews’ survival as a separate group demonstrated the way in which God worked through nations, providing further confidence in God’s working through England. Although England was inferior to Israel, advocates at Whitehall nonetheless believed that their nation could offer benefits to the Jews. The moment at which God refocused on the Jewish people allowed for a point of encounter: in their brief residence in England, Jews would gain access to pure Christianity and convert to Protestantism. Elements of the self briefly projected into the other, before Jews resumed their alterity, moving from an inferior to a superior position. For Fifth Monarchists in

¹⁶⁷ Blair Worden, “Oliver Cromwell and the Sin of Achan”, in Derek Beales and Geoffrey Best (eds), *History, Society and the Churches: Essays in Honour of Owen Chadwick* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985), pp. 125–145; Downs, “Curse of Meroz”, pp. 346–368.

particular, their military power would aid the English in a crusade against the pope as they headed towards Palestine.

Although it is easy to criticise attitudes towards the Jews among early modern Judeo-centrists, particularly from a twenty-first-century perspective, the very real friendships between Englishmen and Amsterdam Jews seen in figures such as Baptist minister Henry Jessey, Dury, and Menasseh should not be forgotten.¹⁶⁸ Neither should we ignore the fact that the full acceptance of practising Jews into England without any attempt to convert them to Christ would have been unthinkable for early modern Christians. To approve of a religion that rejected Christ as the messiah was not the sign of kindness but of gross callousness—it was to consign Jews to an eternity in hell without any attempt to save their souls.¹⁶⁹ Nonetheless, while English Judeo-centrists might have fostered a theoretically more positive view of Jews and Judaism, they found it difficult to imagine a scenario in which it would be possible to be both a Jew and an Englishman. This difficulty would come to a head when Jews wished to make just such a claim over the next century. The way in which Judeo-centrists dealt with this challenge, and its impact upon ideas of restoration to Palestine, is a question that appeared repeatedly over the next hundred years, and will be the theme of the next chapter.

¹⁶⁸ Jessey and Dury, for example, undertook charitable collections to aid Jews then suffering in Jerusalem. On the friendship between figures see Andrew Crome, “Friendship and Enmity to God and Nation: The Complexities of Jewish-Gentile Relations in the Whitehall Conference of 1655”, in Albrecht Classen and Marilyn Sandidge (eds), *Friendship in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age* (Berlin: de Gruyter Press, 2011), pp. 749–777.

¹⁶⁹ Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*, pp. 1–6.



CHAPTER 4

“See with Your Own Eyes, and Believe Your Bibles”: The Jew Bill Controversy of 1753

When Charles II returned to the English throne in 1660, many assumed that the radical religious tumult of the interregnum and protectorate was about to fade into distant memory. Despite the initial promises made in the Declaration of Breda, hopes for a unified church polity that could incorporate both a Presbyterian and Episcopal approach soon dashed against the rocks of a Restoration parliament keen for revenge over the enemies of the previous twenty years. Parliament passed a series of ever more stringent measures against those who dissented from the Church of England: the Corporation Act (1661), Conventicles Act (1664), and Five Mile Act (1665) to name only the most well-known. The departure of several thousand clergymen from the established church in 1662 served to underline the change in religious fortunes. With even the most conservative forms of dissent on the back foot, “radical” millenarian beliefs appeared likely to decline. Already linked with the execution of Charles I and Cromwell’s protectorate, millennialism’s fate seemed sealed by Venner’s rebellion in January 1661. The fifty Fifth Monarchists who marched from their meetinghouse to St. Paul’s chanting “King

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Jesus and the heads upon the gate” seemed to have destroyed more than simply the armed parties that were initially sent against them. Although Venner aimed to inaugurate the millennium, his rebellion hardened their opponents and helped to associate millennialism, and the related hope for the restoration of the Jews, with violent rebellion in the popular mind.¹ While isolated believers might continue to hold millennial beliefs, the slide of the Church of England into a latitudinarian slumber simply pushed them further to the margins. By the mid-eighteenth century, as Enlightenment ideas took hold, millennialism was no longer associated with violence, but instead with a kind of eccentricity. Those who continued to believe in the physical restoration of the Jews and reign of Christ were viewed as foolish, but not as dangerous. As one of these eccentrics, who believed in an eternal Jewish polity based in Jerusalem, bemoaned early in the eighteenth century, “they will call thee it may be a hot-headed fellow, a bigot, a fanatic, a heretique” for displaying an interest in the prophecies.² Millennialism, and ideas of Jewish restoration, had had their day.

Or had they? The narrative spelled out above remains a popular view of the development of eschatology in the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³ Yet the fact that the figure bemoaning the obscurity of prophetic study was none other than Isaac Newton should at least give us pause before we write off millennial speculation as a relic of an earlier age. Newton’s negative assessment of the state of the study of the prophecies contrasts with the opinion of Richard Baxter, writing specifically against a belief in Jewish restoration to Palestine. The view he opposed was hardly marginal in 1691: “I find it in many books of men, and I hear of it in the prayers and sermons of many men, so good, and of so good repute, that divers of my friends dissuade me from so much as giving my reasons against it”.⁴ Not only was Judeo-centrism still around, but according to Baxter, it was flourishing. This chapter suggests that Baxter

¹ See Capp, *Fifth Monarchy Men*, pp. 195–227.

² Isaac Newton, Yahuda Ms. 1. “Appendix A” in Frank Edward Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), pp. 111–112.

³ For example, the claim that Judeo-centrism became a badge of nonconformity and was avoided by conservative commentators. See Smith, *More Desired*, pp. 123–124.

⁴ Richard Baxter, *The Glorious Kingdom of Christ Described and Clearly Vindicated* (London, 1691), p. 56.

was broadly correct. Throughout the later seventeenth and into the early eighteenth centuries the idea of Jewish restoration to Palestine remained a strong part of prophecy writing for those of all theological persuasions. Such works continued to find a role for England to play in the restoration, albeit one that moved away from the militaristic crusades that Fifth Monarchists imagined in the 1650s. The discussions in these debates coincided with an increased awareness of a growing, but still small, Jewish community based predominantly in London. It was when this community appeared to be making claims on Englishness in the 1753 Jewish Naturalization Act that questions of Jewish restoration, England’s role, and national identity suddenly came to the forefront of political debate. Inevitably, these overlapped with debates on Britain’s imperial role. Politics, scriptural interpretation, and prophecy combined in 1753 to produce one of the great eschatological controversies of the eighteenth century.

1 THE RESTORATION OF THE JEWS, 1660–1750

While Venner’s rising may have dampened the fires of millennial speculation in England, they had certainly not gone out. As Warren Johnston’s recent work has shown, millennial beliefs remained important for large numbers of Christians in the period. This included a continued concern for tracing the likelihood of Jewish restoration.⁵ English and Scottish writers remained deeply interested in collecting possible hints that the Jews might be preparing for a return to the Holy Land. John Dury continued to correspond with a range of rabbis and continental contacts gathering such information, and was one of the many Christian writers intrigued by the rumours of the coming of the Jewish messiah in 1665. Appearing in Gaza and announcing his intent to gather the Jews together and lead them to Palestine, Sabbatai Zevi was a figure who inspired messianic hope across

⁵Warren Johnston, *Revelation Restored: The Apocalypse in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2011), pp. 51–53 and “Eschatology and Radicalism after the Restoration”, in Andrew Crome (ed.), *Prophecy and Eschatology in the Transatlantic World, 1550–1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 187–212. See also Michael McKeon, “Sabbatai Sevi in England”, *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 2 (1977), pp. 131–169.

European Jewry.⁶ While his story was not well known in Christian circles before 1666, gentile writers noted the increased messianic expectation for a Jewish return to Palestine. Henry Oldenberg, secretary to the Royal Society, wrote to Spinoza in December 1665 asking for clarification of what was going on: “Here everyone spreads a rumor that the Jews having been dispersed for more than two thousand years are to return to their country. Few in this place believe it, but many wish for it”.⁷ The British Isles seemed to have some role to play in this coming restoration. According to one pamphlet, a ship had docked in Aberdeen harbour bound for Amsterdam bearing a crew of Hebrew speakers. Not only had the crew eschewed common sense in their choice of shipbuilding materials (silk sails and satin ropes were the order of the day), but they had also abandoned any attempt at subtlety. Emblazoned on the sails in large red characters was the proclamation that “These are the ten tribes of Israel”.⁸ The ship apparently needed to stop off in Aberdeen to keep Britons informed of their current progress.

A number of printed reports generated in the general Sabbatian excitement appeared in England. The Dutch scholar Peter Serrarius was the recipient of many of these, which though of somewhat uncertain origins, nonetheless provided tantalising glimpses of the way in which the ten tribes were apparently progressing towards the Holy Land. According to a letter he forwarded to Nathaniel Homes, Mecca was currently under siege, with Turkish forces finding that any attacks upon Jews resulted in their soldiers confusedly firing their weapons at one another.⁹ Another found the tribes in Morocco, besieging cities and slaughtering all non-

⁶The best general overview of Sabbatianism remains Gershom Scholem’s *Sabbatai Zevi: The Mystical Messiah 1626–1676* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973). Brandon Marriott’s *Transnational Networks and Cross-Religious Exchange* offers an excellent overview of the reception of Sabbatai in England and the Netherlands in particular. See also the essays in Matt Goldish and Richard H. Popkin (eds), *Millennialism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture Vol. 1: Jewish Messianism in the Early Modern World* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001).

⁷Quoted in Richard H. Popkin, “Christian Interest and Concerns about Sabbatai Zevi”, in Goldish and Popkin (eds), *Jewish Messianism*, p. 92.

⁸R.R., *A New Letter from Aberdeen in Scotland Sent to a Person of Quality* (London, 1665), pp. 2–3.

⁹See *The Last Letters to the London Merchants and Faithful Ministers Concerning the Further Proceedings of the Conversion and Restauration of the Jews* (London, 1665), pp. 2–3. Such accounts recall biblical stories of Israel’s enemies falling upon one another in confusion (e.g. Judges 7:19–23, 2 Chr. 20:22–23). An intriguing parallel is found in puritan New

Jews in the areas they took.¹⁰ A further letter from Aberdeen revealed that the Jews had taken Mecca and that the lost tribes had emerged from America, Arabia, and Morocco. Great armies waited within central Africa to repossess Palestine.¹¹ All of the letters told a similar tale—the Jews were fierce warriors, spoke Hebrew and carried only bows and swords. They never used guns. Indeed, the tribes were much as they had been when they went into exile in the eighth century BCE. They allowed writers to reflect qualities that they wished to see in their own nation. The tribes, noted R.R., “give liberty of conscience to all”, a pointed remark in the context of legislation passed against dissenters in England. In New England, meanwhile, news of the tribes’ appearance also caused a stir. Increase Mather preached a series of sermons on the conversion and restoration of the Jews, collected together as *The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation*. As John Davenport noted in his preface, the sermons were “preached in a time when constant reports from sundry places and hands gave out to the world, that the *Israelites* were upon their journey towards *Jerusalem* from sundry foreign parts in great multitudes...by a high and mighty hand of extraordinary providence, to the admiration and astonishment of all that heard it”.¹²

Sabbatai’s messianic pretensions were relatively short-lived. Challenged to take part in a high-stakes experiment designed to test his immortality by the Sultan’s council, he chose the safer route of abandoning his claims and converting to Islam. The confusion and mental anguish this caused to Jewish communities who had seen him as the promised messiah was intense, and the revelation of his change of heart led to confusion for Dury, Homes, and other millenarians.¹³ For some, such as William Sherwin, they served as further signs that the Jews were preparing to consider a return to their land.¹⁴ Writing in the aftermath of the excitement, ejected clergyman John Maynard refused to set any date for Jewish resto-

England, in which the English were “bewitched” by the natives to similarly attack one another.

¹⁰ *Last Letters*, p. 6.

¹¹ R.R., *A New Letter*, pp. 4–6.

¹² John Davenport in Increase Mather, *The Mystery of Israel’s Salvation, Explained and Applied: Or, a Discourse Concerning the General Conversion of the Israelitish Nation* (London, 1669), sig. A3v. For an analysis of Mather’s work see Smith, *More Desired*, pp. 124–132.

¹³ On the Jewish response see Scholem, *Sabbatai*, Chapters 7 and 8. For the Christian see Michael McKeon, “Sabbatai Sevi in England”, pp. 131–169; Popkin, “Christian Interest”.

¹⁴ Johnston, *Revelation Restored*, p. 58.

ration, but located both the restored Jews and Christ's millennial reign in Palestine.¹⁵ Nonetheless, Sabbatai's messianism provided an example of the folly of millenarianism for critics well into the eighteenth century. Looking back at Sabbatianism, writers tended to view it through the lens of protectorate-era millenarian speculation, blaming English millenarians for "infecting" the Jews with their brand of enthusiasm.¹⁶

Such criticism was not novel, and it combined with a new challenge to the literal interpretation of Old Testament promises that drove Judeo-centric belief in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Against the previously dominant historicist mode of exegesis, the "preterism" advocated by Henry Hammond (and by Grotius on the continent) claimed that all prophecies of Jewish restoration had already been accomplished. This was more than simply looking for a spiritual fulfilment of the promises made to Old Testament Israel. Rather, it was to argue that all prophecies previously seen to refer to the end of time were fulfilled in the return from the Babylonian exile, with the Apocalypse describing the downfall of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Those who used the book of Revelation to speculate about the future were therefore deceived, and hopes of Jewish restoration were inherently false.¹⁷ Partially in response to this, and with the desire of rescuing millenarian speculation from the taint of radicalism, a group of academic theologians on both sides of the Atlantic debated the precise future role of the Jews both privately and in their printed work. Such speculations again focused on the importance of the Jews for understanding England's position in prophecy.

This group consisted primarily of scholars who made up what Sarah Hutton termed the "Cambridge School" of millenarian speculation.¹⁸ This included Henry More (1614–1687), Isaac Newton (1642–1727), William Whiston (1667–1752), and Samuel Clarke (1675–1729). However, it would be a mistake to imagine that they shared a single view-

¹⁵ John Maynard, *A Judicious Answer to Six Queries Concerning the Jewes and their Conversion* (London, 1666), p. 11.

¹⁶ Popkin, "Christian Interest", pp. 95–100; McKeon, "Sabbatai", pp. 156–159.

¹⁷ Henry Hammond, *A Paraphrase and Annotations upon All the Books of the New Testament* (London, 1653).

¹⁸ Sarah Hutton, "More, Newton and the Language of Biblical Prophecy", in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (eds), *The Books of Nature and Scripture: Recent Essays on Natural Philosophy, Theology and Biblical Criticism in the Netherlands of Spinoza's Time and the British Isles of Newton's Time* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1994), p. 39.

point on either Jewish restoration, or on how to interpret Revelation.¹⁹ In fact, their writings often displayed major disagreements. Nonetheless, they shared one important trait. Their exposition was always scholarly, focused on the conservative position of millenarian beliefs in Christian history, and was careful to disassociate itself from the chaos of mid-century. This does not mean that their writings were dry and passionless. On the contrary, Newton imagined mystical journeys to inhabitable planets in the millennial kingdom,²⁰ while More quoted visions of mystical “rapture” in his imaginative dialogue defence of millennialism.²¹

More was at the centre of this grouping. Like Mede he held that the “millennium is not yet come”.²² As Johnston has shown, More’s writings were part of a trend of Royalist exegeses of Revelation.²³ These works attempted to shake off the radicalism usually associated with millennialism by focusing on the role that monarchs would play in acting as Christ’s sub-regents in the period. In the millennium, argued More, the king would rule over his holy nation as both monarch and prince, guaranteeing the role of national churches in the coming kingdom.²⁴ More took the promise of the first resurrection, that those raised from the dead would “live and reign” with Christ, as referring to a heavenly reign. Those raised into glorified bodies would rule with Christ in heaven, while those still living at the beginning of the millennium would continue “on earth, where Christ is also present but by *his* Spirit”.²⁵ In all of this, More was somewhat circumspect in his treatment of the Jews. There was certainly no doubt in his mind as to the inevitability of their conversion. “Ezekiel’s prophecy must have its completion in the *Jews* conversion to Christianity”,²⁶ “as unlikely

¹⁹This is a point made forcefully by Rob Iliffe. See “‘Making a Shew’: Apocalyptic Hermeneutics and the Sociology of Christian Idolatry in the Work of Isaac Newton and Henry More”, in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (eds), *Books of Nature and Scripture*, pp. 55–88.

²⁰See Newton, Yahuda Ms. 6, ff.19r, reproduced as “Appendix B” in Manuel, *Religion of Isaac Newton*, pp. 135–136.

²¹Franciscus Palaeopolitanus [=Henry More], *Divine Dialogues, Containing Sundry Disquisitions & Instructions Concerning the Attributes of God and His Providence in the World* (London, 1668), p. 445.

²²Henry More, *Apocalypsis Apocalypseo; Or the Revelation of St John the Divine Unveiled* (London, 1680), p. 206.

²³Johnston, *Revelation Restored*, pp. 132–143.

²⁴More, *Apocalypsis*, pp. 230–235.

²⁵More, *Apocalypsis*, p. 207.

²⁶More, *Divine Dialogues*, p. 269.

as it may seem to men, that these dry bones shall live again (as the Jews are represented in that vision of *Ezekiel*) yet the thing will certainly come to pass".²⁷ Yet he was at the very least doubtful of their restoration to the Holy Land. As his millennial rule had no national centre (Christ remained in heaven after the first resurrection) this was unsurprising. However, he did not rule out the possibility. Indeed, when examining Richard Baxter's preterist denial of the possibility of such a restoration, More could accuse the puritan elder of having not only a "*wooden* soul but a *stony* heart" for denying the possibility of such a calling and restoration through "his marvellous weak arguing against it". Recalling the catalogue of Old Testament scripture that predicted the restoration, as well as Romans 11, More concluded that Baxter was ignorant of the "*everlasting* covenant [made] with that people".²⁸

The veteran puritan Baxter (1615–1691) had come late to his studies of Revelation, and he approached them with his trademark cautiousness and moderate spirit.²⁹ In one of his final works, *The Glorious Kingdom of Christ*, Baxter attacked what he saw an entirely wrong-minded millennialism. Where some have argued that Judeo-centrism was in deep decline by the 1690s,³⁰ Baxter's book offers powerful evidence to the contrary: it was subtitled "against the bold assertions of a future calling and reign of the Jews". Dedicating his work to Increase Mather, Baxter freely admitted that the majority of Judeo-centrists were conservative, learned, and noted for their piety.³¹ Yet Baxter felt that there was a logical problem at the heart of their eschatology. In splitting God's promises between Jews and gentiles, they presumed an essential separation within the unified body of Christ. "It seems you take not the Jews for converted, till they become separated from the Catholick church and claim their old peculiarity", he wrote. To claim that they "should continue then in a Jewish line and peculiarity, distinct from the Catholick mixed church, is a *wickedness* and con-

²⁷ More, *Apocalypsis*, p. 196; see also Henry More, *An Illustration of Those Two Abstruse Books in Holy Scripture, The Book of Daniel and the Revelation of S. John* (London, 1685) pp. 152–156.

²⁸ Phillicrines Parrhesiastes [=Henry More], *Some Cursory Reflections, Impartially Made upon Mr Richard Baxter, His Way of Writing Notes Upon the Apocalypse* (London, 1685), pp. 10–11.

²⁹ William Lamont, *Richard Baxter and the Millennium: Protestant Imperialism and the English Revolution* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 27–75.

³⁰ See Cogley, "Fall of the Ottoman Empire".

³¹ Baxter, *Glorious Kingdom*, sig. A2r.

trary to the very nature of Christianity”.³² This was a common criticism of Judeo-centrism, going back to Alexander Petrie’s controversies with Robert Maton. Yet Baxter evidenced a development in the arguments marshalled against Judeo-centrism by older writers such as Henry Danvers, as he attacked the geo-political basis of the belief.³³ In many ways, Baxter’s work anticipated later critiques of Christian Zionism, noting the injustice and violence implicit in evicting the present inhabitants of Palestine and the lack of interest amongst English Jews in a return.³⁴ Overall, however, his criticism remained primarily theological. The end of the Babylonian exile fulfilled Old Testament promises of restoration. Even Romans 11 referred to the blessings Constantine showered upon Judea in his reign.³⁵

More was not the only target of Baxter’s attack on millennialism. Indeed, the Judeo-centric tradition had remained relatively stable in the years following the Sabbatian controversy. A string of writers urged the application of the literal sense of the prophecies in all their particulars. The rejection of a restored Jewish kingdom, argued Edward Bagshaw (1629–1671) in 1669, meant that “a very great and considerate portion of scripture prophecy will be utterly lost and made useless; nay seem to be written to no other purpose but to beget in true believers vain hopes”.³⁶ The Baptist-turned-conformist William Allen (d. 1686) devoted the majority of his *Of the State of the Church in Future Ages* (1684) to discussing the precise position of the Jews. Baxter’s friend (and target for criticism in *Glorious Kingdom*) Thomas Beverley (d. 1702), meanwhile, produced vast amounts of eschatological speculation.³⁷ In following Thomas Brightman and John Cotton in taking the Song of Songs as an allegorical history of the Jews, he produced an exegetical poem that aimed to maintain the Song’s style while simultaneously providing clear interpre-

³² Baxter, *Glorious Kingdom*, pp. 61,63.

³³ See his criticism in Henry Danvers, *Theopolis, or the City of God* (London, 1672), pp. 235–247.

³⁴ A point made forcefully by Nabil Matar, “The Idea of the Restoration of the Jews in Protestant Thought: Between the Reformation and 1660”, *Durham University Journal* 78 (1985), pp. 23–35.

³⁵ Baxter, *Glorious Kingdom*, pp. 9–46.

³⁶ Edward Bagshaw, *The Doctrine of the Kingdom and Personal Reign of Christ Asserted and Explained* (n.p., 1669), p. 6.

³⁷ On Beverley see Warren Johnston, “Thomas Beverley and the ‘Late Great Revolution’: English Apocalyptic Expectation in the Late Seventeenth Century”, in Ariel Hessayon and Nicholas Keene (eds), *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 158–175.

tation of the text. The conclusion of the Song described: “the Ten Tribes now return’d, long lost/ From all appearance, on the four winds tost/ Now stay’d and guided by the arms, they bear/ Whole nature up, we see them thus appear”.³⁸ Would the gentile nations have a role to play in this? Beverley thought that they would bring riches to the Jews, while also receiving spiritual blessings from their “elder sister”.³⁹ The 1673 edition of Vavasor Powell’s (1617–1670) *New and Useful Concordance to the Holy Bible* included a brief note by puritan luminary John Owen on the prophecies that “concern the calling of the Jews”. The Jews would “be gathered from all parts of the earth... and brought home into their own land”. They would be “carried by the Gentiles unto their place”.⁴⁰ Likewise, the author of the 1688 *Jews Jubilee* urged the Jews “in the name of God, to prepare to go home to your own land, and then and there you will have far more great and glorious discoveries made unto you of God in Christ”. A coalition of Protestant princes would organise their restoration.⁴¹

As with earlier Judeo-centrism, this meant that the greatest role that a gentile nation such as England could expect would be that of aiding the restoration of the Jews. That England would lead such a restoration in the 1670s and 80s looked politically unlikely.⁴² Hopes that Charles II would fulfil the messianic confidence of royalists like Arise Evans in the late 1650s revived in the political chaos surrounding the “Popish plot” and attempt to exclude the Catholic Duke of York from the succession in 1678–1683. Yet these proved relatively short-lived, and with the ascendancy of the Tories from 1681 and the involvement of Fifth Monarchists in the Rye House Plot of 1683, such hopes seemed to vanish.⁴³ The future non-jurying bishop George Hickeys therefore condemned millennialism

³⁸ Thomas Beverley, *An Exposition of the Divinely Prophetick Song of Songs Which Is Solomons* (London, 1687), p. 88.

³⁹ Beverley, *Exposition*, p. 62.

⁴⁰ John Owen in Vavasor Powell et al., *A New and Usefull Concordance to the Holy Bible* (London, 1673), sigs. Ll^r-Ar. Although the selection of prophecies has no authorial attribution, the collection as a whole is commended by Owen, and the prophecies attributed to him by Johnston (*Revelation Restored*, pp. 51–53).

⁴¹ *The Jews Jubilee, or the Conjunction and Resurrection of the Dry Bones of the Whole House of Israel* (London, 1688), p. 30.

⁴² Johnston, *Revelation Restored*, pp. 152–187.

⁴³ William E. Burns, “A Whig Apocalypse: Astrology, Millenarianism, and Politics in England During the Restoration Crisis, 1678–1683”, in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (eds), *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture Vol. III: The Millenarian Turn: Millenarian Contexts of Science, Politics, and Everyday Anglo-*

through recalling the excesses of Münster and Venner’s rebellion. He also attacked Judeo-centrism. The claim “that the *Jews* are yet the peculiar and adopted people of God, is to invalidate the Gospel [...] and make *Christ*, who came to adopt all Nations, of no effect or importance to the World”.⁴⁴ Millennialists, and thus Judeo-centrists, therefore tried to avoid direct political agitation. Providential thought in the period increasingly emphasised that God worked through natural causes, rather than direct supernatural interaction or human attempts to fulfil his plans.⁴⁵ Allen, after discussing the destruction of the Roman Church and Ottoman Empire by a Jewish/Reformed alliance, reminded his readers that these events depended on God’s hand rather than political action.⁴⁶ Yet he still saw the restoration of the Jews as the cause of religious reform in England. He concluded that the nations would “repair to the Jews” and their “glorious and prosperous state” to learn true religion. “Even the greatest *Kings* also who are not wont to make any alteration in their religion by things ordinary and common”, he added hopefully, “*will come to the brightness of their rising*, so magnificent will their appearance be”.⁴⁷ A more militant reading briefly re-emerged during the period of the Glorious Revolution. Baptist minister Hanserd Knollys argued that both Daniel’s 1260 days and the three and a half days of the witnesses’ prophesying (Rev. 11:3) would terminate in 1688—by coincidence three and a half years after the accession of James II.⁴⁸ William would lead a northern alliance against the papacy, while in the east, the Jews would destroy the Ottomans and “have the first

American Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001), pp. 29–41.

⁴⁴ George Hickee, *Peculium Dei: Or a Discourse About the Jews as the Peculiar People of God* (London, 1681), p. 11.

⁴⁵ Winship, *Seers of God*, pp. 29–52.

⁴⁶ William Allen, *Of the State of the Church in Future Ages* (London, 1684), p. 160; see pp. 116–167 for the full argument. The millennium did not, therefore, represent any sort of social levelling. As Allen later noted, the political economy of the millennium would be perfect, in that “Those in authority in Church and State will then have that is which their due from those that are under them; and those of inferior rank, that which is due to them from those above them” (p. 244). God may thus allow the Reformed churches to fall under the sway of Catholicism once more before acting decisively to save them (pp. 349–354). On this see Johnston, *Revelation Restored*, pp. 186–187.

⁴⁷ Allen, *State of the Church*, pp. 177–178.

⁴⁸ Hanserd Knollys, *An Exposition of the Whole Book of the Revelation* (London, 1688), pp. 120–159.

dominion".⁴⁹ Similar ideas appeared in Benjamin Keach's commentary on Revelation published in the following year, which argued that William would bring about the pope's downfall while the Jews returned to Palestine.⁵⁰

One way in which Englishmen could participate in both the coming Jewish restoration and safely agitate for political change was through prayer. Supplication for the conversion of the Jews was already a part of the standard Church of England liturgy, with prayers for "Jews, Turks and infidels" offered on Good Friday. The Savoy Declaration of 1658 established the call of the Jews and the fall of Antichrist as important elements of belief for the Independent churches, although there was something of a retreat from millenarian speculation in the Baptist confessions of 1677 and 1689.⁵¹ While England might not be in a political position to bring about restoration, the godly remnant within the nation could still take the lead role in begging the Almighty to fulfil prophecy. God's promises, argued Bagshaw, were a motive for prayer. He urged his readers to practise a "kind of *holy violence* to God, *giving him no rest*" until he had fulfilled them.⁵² Here he was echoing Increase Mather: "we should let the Lord have no rest in heaven, till *Jerusalem be made a praise in the Earth*". Taking a swipe at allegorical interpretations of prophecy, he noted that this would only take place: "When *Jerusalem* shall be inhabited again in her own place, even in *Jerusalem*".⁵³ For others, both individual and nation might face judgement if they forgot to pray for the Jews: "And if Almighty God hath shew'd such respect to them above other nations, and hath it still in his heart further to shew them in due time: Will it not become us herein to be followers of God, and will it not be well taken by him for us to have somewhat a more special respect for them, and make a more particular application to him for them, than for any other nation of the unbelieving world besides?"⁵⁴ This recalled the providential notion that the promises to "bless those who bless you" and "curse those who curse" were still in full force. Statements on the pre-eminence of the Jews were therefore commonplace: "If any should even dare to lift up their hand against

⁴⁹ Knollys, *Exposition*, p. 197.

⁵⁰ Benjamin Keach, *Antichrist Stormed; Or, Mystery Babylon, the Great Whore and Great City, Proved to be the Present Church of Rome* (London, 1689), pp. 192–208.

⁵¹ Gribben, *Puritan Millennium*, pp. 256–261.

⁵² Bagshaw, *Doctrine of the Kingdom*, pp. 25–26.

⁵³ Mather, *Mystery*, p. 180.

⁵⁴ Allen, *State of the Church*, p. 385.

you, it would prove as fatal unto them, as *Pharoah's* pursuing of your forefathers”;⁵⁵ “the *Israelitish* nation shall then be acknowledged and respected in the world above any other nation”;⁵⁶ the Jews were those “unto whom the *first* dominion, and chief soveragncy [*sic*] is frequently promised”.⁵⁷ This concept of a natural link between blessing Jews and personal or national well-being could fit in well with the rise of mechanistic philosophy.⁵⁸ Nonetheless, prayer was necessary to maintain both a healthy relationship with God and to speed the return of the Jews. “I can truly say”, noted the author of *Jews Jubilee* to his Jewish interlocutors, “that for several years past I have very seldom come before the Lord in prayer, either by night or by day, that I have omitted praying for you”.⁵⁹ Beverley imagined the Jews’ return to their land as a scarcely comprehended answer to prayer that had served to bring Jewish restoration ever closer. The Jews are “the Kings o’th *East*/For whome my prayers, as chariots are imprest;/With voice twice doubled, as their Charioteer/I call, Return, Return, with quick career”.⁶⁰ Of course, there were benefits of such intercession. As Allen reminded his readers, those who “mourned for them [the Jews], and pray’d for them, and shall outlive the day of their sorrow, they shall be called to rejoyce with them in their great consolation”.⁶¹ Still, Baxter gently mocked this kind of fervent prayer. Where, he wondered, were the fruits of all this intercession? “How many in *London*”, he asked, “have you converted in your lives?”⁶²

Alongside this popular interest in the restoration of the Jews, the “Cambridge School” of millennial speculation continued to develop Judeo-centric ideas. As a correspondent of More, Baxter, and Cotton Mather, Isaac Newton’s ideas were both influenced by these writers and show a significant development from them. While critical of commentators who indulged in prophetic date setting, Newton was positive towards

⁵⁵ *Jews Jubilee*, p. 40.

⁵⁶ Mather, *Mystery*, p. 58.

⁵⁷ Bagshaw, *Doctrine of the Kingdom*, p. 22.

⁵⁸ On the integration of mechanical philosophy and providentialism see Winship, *Seers of God*, pp. 42–50. Judeo-centric thought here presumed a natural cause and effect relationship between treatment of Jews and subsequent well-being. While this could be comprehended in a framework of special providences, at the same time, it could be re-imagined as an outworking of natural law to fit the new paradigm.

⁵⁹ *Jews Jubilee*, pp. 22–23.

⁶⁰ Beverley, *Divinely Prophetick Song*, p. 57.

⁶¹ Allen, *State of the Church*, p. 388.

⁶² Baxter, *Glorious Kingdom*, p. 67.

Mede and those who had preceded him. Arguing for a form of progressive revelation, he believed that as the prophecies came closer to completion their meanings would slowly open out.⁶³ The Jews remained at their centre. Newton's own Arianism and theology of the Church as an organisation modelled directly upon the synagogue (rather than civil state of Old Testament Israel) helped to lead him towards reading prophecy through a Jewish lens.⁶⁴ His extensive manuscript writings on eschatology, while evidencing continuing changes in his thought, also show that his interest was consistent. In his posthumously published *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse* (1733), he saw a restored Jewish state in Palestine as a key element of God's plan for the world. Likewise, in his manuscript work he found a strong Jewish state based in Palestine as the keystone of the future. The "restitution of all things" would include "the final return of the Jews captivity and their conquering the nations of the four monarchies and setting up a (peaceable) righteous and flourishing kingdom".⁶⁵ Two things are particularly notable about Newton's kingdom. The Jews' return would not come from their own desires, but instead "from some other kingdom friendly to them, and precede their return from captivity and give occasion to it".⁶⁶ There were hints that this would be England, but nowhere was Newton definite. Regardless, this is an interesting idea given his general focus on Jewish dominance in the millennium. It presumed that some benevolent power would possess Palestine and have to assume responsibility for bringing about this prophetic fulfilment.

The second notable point was the kingdom's longevity. The Jews' earthly polity would stretch beyond the day of judgement. "Nor is the end of it any where described", wrote Newton, "but on the contrary tis said that *they shall reign for ever and ever*". This initially sounded like a straightforward defence of the idea of the risen saints reigning with Christ on the new earth. Yet Newton immediately denied this: "[these] are not the Saints risen from the dead, but a race of mortal men...the prophet after-

⁶³ Isaac Newton, *Observations upon the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse of St. John* (London, 1733), pp. 251–253.

⁶⁴ Matt Goldish, "Newton's *Of the Church*: Its Contents and Implications", in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (eds), *Newton and Religion: Context, Nature and Influence* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), pp. 145–164.

⁶⁵ Isaac Newton, Yahuda Ms. 6, "Appendix B" in Manuel, *Religion of Isaac Newton*, p. 126.

⁶⁶ Newton, *Observations*, pp. 133–134.

wards <tells you are> [*sic*] describes to be the nation of the Jews returned from captivity... and to assure you that this is after the Day of Judgement he adds that they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed”.⁶⁷ This Jewish polity is “so far from ending with the millennium that the time of her captivity... is here represented but as a moment to eternity”.⁶⁸ After the captivity, the Jews “shall return & become a strong nation & reign over strong nations afar off”.⁶⁹ The Gog war predicted for the end of the millennium would display the military prowess and blessed nature of the Jews: “that the nations may from thenceforth know that the Jews went formerly into captivity for their sins but now since their return are become invincible by their holiness”.⁷⁰ Newton derived this interpretation from the division between the saints, raised with Christ and reigning in heaven, and the Jews reigning on earth—a radicalisation of More’s scheme. This was an even more extreme form of the separation that Baxter so feared. It was also, paradoxically, far less threatening than the Fifth Monarchist exegesis that it might appear to resemble. Although Newton ultimately rejected any date setting, when he did move to suggest possibilities for the restoration of the Jews they varied from 1896 at the earliest to 2436 at the latest.⁷¹

William Whiston, Newton’s disciple and successor as Lucasian Professor at Cambridge, moved the projected time for the coming of the millennium closer to the present, while also building on his mentor’s Judeo-centrism in some surprising ways. “The restoration of the Jews to their land”, he wrote, “is not a thing of doubt or uncertainty in the prophetick writings”.⁷² Whiston initially dated the downfall of Antichrist to 1716,⁷³ later revising this to 1766 after his initial calculation failed. This would be the cue for changes to all aspects of the world, as well as the

⁶⁷ Newton, Yahuda Ms. 6 in Manuel, pp. 127–128.

⁶⁸ Newton, Yahuda Ms. 6 in Manuel, p. 129.

⁶⁹ Newton, Yahuda Ms. 9, quoted in Stephen Snobelen, “‘The Mystery of the Restitution of All Things’: Isaac Newton on the Return of the Jews”, in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (eds), *Millenarianism and Messianism in Early Modern European Culture Vol. III: The Millenarian Turn: Millenarian Contexts of Science, Politics, and Everyday Anglo-American Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001), p. 101.

⁷⁰ Newton, Yahuda Ms. 6 in Manuel, p. 134.

⁷¹ Snobelen, “Mystery”, pp. 109–110.

⁷² William Whiston, *Sermons and Essays on Several Subjects* (London, 1709), p. 222.

⁷³ William Whiston, *An Essay on the Revelation of Saint John, So far as Concerns the Past and Present Times* (Cambridge, 1706), pp. 270–272.

conversion of the Jews and their dominion over Palestine (possibly for a reign of 365,000 years). Whiston expressed his belief that the millennium would also witness small-scale victories, such as the removal of gaming tables from Tunbridge Wells.⁷⁴ At the time he made this remark, Whiston was touring English resort towns with a model of the Jerusalem temple, after he lost his post in Cambridge for Arianism in 1710.⁷⁵ This interest in the temple and the nature of Jewish worship set Whiston's Judeo-centrism apart from his predecessors. Not only was the restoration to the land "not a thing of doubt", but the Jews could also expect "the rebuilding of their temple, with the restoration of their sacrifices".⁷⁶

This was an important development. Previously, Judeo-centrists had always been careful to emphasise that no restoration of the Jewish ceremonial order would accompany restoration. Christ fulfilled the ceremonial law: Pierre Allix reminded Whiston of this fact by advising him to go and read the Epistle to the Hebrews.⁷⁷ For Whiston, the Jews would be restored to their land in unbelief (following Newton) and rebuild the temple predicted in Ezekiel. As he believed that they were to possess the land for some time before they converted, it was natural to presume the restoration of Mosaic law, particularly as it appeared to be eternal.⁷⁸ The fact that the Jews would return in unbelief had clear implications for the practicalities of their restoration. It immediately discounted, for example, the idea of a miraculous return. While not directly addressing this question, Whiston nonetheless provided lists of Old Testament prophecies that seemed, for some readers at least, to suggest that England would be responsible. A reader of the British Library's copy of the *Essay on Revelation*

⁷⁴Noted in *The Full and Final Restoration of the Jews and Israelites, Evidently Set Forth to be Nigh at Hand: With Their Happy Settlement in Their Land* (London, 1753), p. 16. The calculation of the millennium as a period of 365,000 years was based on the idea that as a day was equal to a year in prophecy, so 1000 years equalled a thousand periods of 365 years. (Whiston, *Sermons and Essays*, pp. 230–234).

⁷⁵See David B. Ruderman, *Connecting the Covenants: Judaism and the Search for Christian Identity in Eighteenth-Century England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), pp. 61–76. For further examinations of the issues in the debate see Eamon Duffy, "Whiston's Affair": The Trials of a Primitive Christian 1709–1714", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 27:2 (1976), pp. 129–150; Goldish, "Newton's *Of the Church*: Its Contents and Implications".

⁷⁶Whiston, *Sermons and Essays*, p. 222.

⁷⁷Pierre Allix, *An Examination of Several Scripture Prophecies which the Reverend M.W. hath Appyled to the Times After the Coming of the Messiah* (London, 1707), p. 41.

⁷⁸Whiston, *Sermons and Essays*, pp. 221–227; *Essay*, pp. 73–82.

underlined the prophecies of the “ships of Tarshish” bringing the Jews from afar (Isa 60:9) and the promise that a restored Jerusalem would be a “sign for the Isles” (Isa 66:10–14, 19–20).⁷⁹

By the time that Newton and Whiston were writing, however, new theological challenges had appeared. The most pertinent of these were the emergence of deism and rationalism. With the foundational texts of scripture openly undermined by scepticism, and historical and philological scholarship, Judeo-centrism began to have a new appeal to orthodox divines. Seeking proof that Old Testament prophecies were more than inventions written after the event, the defenders of orthodoxy argued that their obvious fulfilment, most notably in predicting judgement upon the Jews if they rejected God, was proof of their divine origins.⁸⁰ “Prophecies fulfill’d”, noted Whiston, “seem the most proper of all arguments to evince the truth of revelation”.⁸¹ Whiston was engaged in a fearsome controversy over his writing on the Old Testament when he made this argument. Attempting to employ a “scientific” approach to biblical exegesis, he claimed that each prophecy could only have one referent and one fulfilment. This created a problem, as the New Testament itself appeared to suggest multiple fulfilments of Old Testament scriptures on different occasions. In answering this difficulty, Whiston seized upon the citation of variant readings of the Old Testament in Josephus and other Jewish sources. Combined with the quotations in the New Testament, these constituted fragments of “true” scripture.

This “scientific” exegesis employed by Whiston presumed a more thoroughgoing literalism. If a prophecy could only have one fulfilment, and that fulfilment was required to be clear, then it followed that prophecies of Jewish restoration must therefore refer to a future Jewish state, rather than to the church. This kind of reasoning was present in the earlier work of Brightman and his followers, but in the context of the Royal Society and emerging empiricism, it took a much more powerful form.⁸² David Ruderman’s description of this logic as “Lockean” is especially apt,

⁷⁹Whiston, *Essay*, pp. 331,333.

⁸⁰For more on this see Christopher Burdon, *The Apocalypse in England: Revelation Unravelling, 1700–1834* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 48–60; Nabil Matar, “The Controversy Over the Restoration of the Jews in English Protestant Thought, 1701–1753”, *Durham University Journal* 80:2 (1988), pp. 241–256.

⁸¹William Whiston, *The Literal Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies* (London, 1724), sig [A]v.

⁸²Crome, *Restoration of the Jews*, pp. 207–216.

given John Locke's interpretation of prophecy in his *Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans*.⁸³ His slightly free paraphrase of Romans 11:23 noted: "God is able to collect them again into one body, make them his people, and set them in a flourishing condition in their own land". The basis of this interpretation was the still unfulfilled promise that Abraham should possess the land eternally. Besides: "in the prophets there are very plain intimations of it".⁸⁴

Samuel Clarke, a fellow traveller with both Newton and Whiston, was another who claimed that gentile nations would play the central role in restoring the Jews. Clarke argued that "the state of the *Jewish* and *Christian nations* at this day, should be such as renders them easily *capable*, not only of a *figurative*, but even of a *literal completion* in every particular, if the *will of God* be so".⁸⁵ It is therefore important to recognise that debates about Judeo-centrism in this period were concerned, primarily, with vindicating prophecy's reliability. If a prophecy appeared unfulfilled, it was important to show that it would still have a literal, historical fulfilment, rather than to resort to a subjective allegorical method. In their debates with one another, neither Whiston nor Allix allegorised prophecy, both arguing that when scripture spoke of Israel it only spoke of ethnic Jews. The interpreter "must never apply those prophecies to other nations which only concern *Israel* and *Juda*" warned Allix, while Whiston reached the same conclusion.⁸⁶ Their arguments revolved around history rather than whether the focus of the prophecy was on Jews or on gentiles, as such debates often had in the first half of the seventeenth century. Charles Leslie (1650–1722), who wrote a manual on methods of debating against deists, also turned his hand to Jewish evangelisation. His 1689 *Short and Easie Method with the Jewes* was frequently reprinted up until the 1750s. Leslie spent a good portion of his book reminding potential Jewish readers of the literal fulfilment of prophecies of their judgement and constant separation from all other nations. Such a fulfilment served as a rejoinder to claims that the prophecies were invented *ex eventu*, as well as dealing with criticism that it was ridiculous for God to select a weak and obscure nation

⁸³ Ruderman, *Connecting the Covenants*, pp. 68–76.

⁸⁴ John Locke, *A Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans* (London, 1707), p. 111.

⁸⁵ Clarke, *Discourse*, p. 48.

⁸⁶ e.g. Whiston, *Literal Accomplishment*, pp. 25, 88–90; *Essay*, pp. 226–229.

to be his chosen people.⁸⁷ Indeed, the Jews would not always seem so powerless: “When the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, the *Jews* will be the *head* and not the *tail*...*thy God shall set thee on high, above all the nations of the earth*...And [your nation] may be more *glorious* than all this that I have said. Even all that *temporal grandeur* and *empire* which you expect”.⁸⁸ Musing on where this conversion would begin, Leslie focused on England: “And let their conversion begin (*cum bono Deo*) in this *Church* and *Nation*; where the good *providence* of *God* has prepar’d the way, by freeing you *Jews* here from those *obstacles* which obstruct your way in other *Christian* nations”.⁸⁹ Although written in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution, evidencing a politically motivated endorsement of England, the continued popularity of Leslie’s book is noteworthy.

The themes central to Judeo-centric thought in the 1640s and 50s reappeared repeatedly in a range of works across the early eighteenth century. Perhaps most influential were clergyman philosopher David Hartley’s (1705–1757) speculations on the question of restoration in his 1749 magnum opus *Observations on Man*. Here, he argued that God must fulfil prophecies to the Jews that promised a restoration to the land. The Jewish people “seem therefore reserved by providence for some such signal favour, after they have suffered the due chastisement”.⁹⁰ Similarly, in a posthumously published work, natural philosopher Thomas Burnet (c. 1635–1715) argued for the eternal value of the land covenant: “And so they should always have a just title to that land whosoever actually possessed it. I say *always* and to the last, by virtue of the divine donation”.⁹¹ This return was a “signal event to be brought to pass in the *latter days*” thought William Lowth, prebendary of Winchester, in 1726.⁹² In 1730, the Church of Scotland historian Robert Millar’s *History of the Church* contained an appendix designed to convert the Jews. The book, dedicated to George II and attracting several hundred subscribers including the

⁸⁷ Charles Leslie, *A Short and Easie Method with the Jews*, Eighth Edition (London, 1737), pp. 98–131.

⁸⁸ Leslie, *Short and Easie Method*, p. 136.

⁸⁹ Leslie, *Short and Easie Method*, p. 137.

⁹⁰ David Hartley, *Observations on Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (London, 1749), Vol. II p. 374. See pp. 360–380 for the full argument on restoration.

⁹¹ Thomas Burnet, *Appendix to the Ninth Chapter of the State of the Dead* (London, 1729), p. 5.

⁹² William Lowth, *A Commentary upon the Prophecy of Daniel and the Twelve Minor Prophets* (London, 1726), p. 164.

Duke of Buckingham, casually commented that the Ottoman Empire would have to be overthrown prior to Jewish conversion, as: “having the Land of Israel in his possessions, we may be sure that [the Jews] shall never peaceably enjoy the inheritance of their fathers again, as long as he hath Power to hinder it”.⁹³ The prophets were “express and clear in foretelling the final return of the Jews to their own land, whence they shall never more be ejected”, noted biblical translator John Mawer in 1737.⁹⁴ This restoration would include Jews ruling over gentiles. Jerusalem would be “the capital of the world and...chief seat of universal empire” claimed Samuel Collett in 1747.⁹⁵ In 1751 Robert Clayton, Bishop of Clogher, was looking forward to a time when “the Jews are to be restored to their own land; and the *Messiah* shall make a triumphant and personal appearance on Mount Zion”.⁹⁶ Burnet argued that the Jews would gain “mighty privileges in the reign of the *Messiah*”.⁹⁷ In 1742 Samuel Johnson, Vicar of Great Torrington in Devon, believed that the Jews would “be restor’d to that natural order, rank and pre-eminence in the Church in which God placed them at first... At which the Gentile Christians must and will acknowledge them as their elders and predecessors in the Church of God, of prior rank and superior dignity”.⁹⁸ Church of England clergyman Nathanael Markwick claimed that the Jews would enjoy “super-eminent, excelling priviledges”. Earlier, he had noted more bluntly “Christians and all nations shall one day become servants and handmaids to the *Jews*”.⁹⁹

Despite similarities, there were two major differences between early eighteenth-century Judeo-centrism and its civil war parentage. Questions of England’s role in the restoration tended to be limited to locating the nation as the place in which the first Jewish conversions would begin. There was reduced focus on the nation expending its military power in

⁹³ Robert Millar, “Discourse to Promote the Conversion of the Jews”, in *The History of the Church under the Old Testament* (Edinburgh, 1730), p. 6.

⁹⁴ John Mawer, *Roma Meretrix Or, an Enquiry Whether the Predicted Apostacy [sic] of the Roman Church Have Not the Nature of a Divorce from Christ* (Newcastle, 1737), p. 24.

⁹⁵ [Samuel Collett], *A Treatise of the Future Restoration of the Jews and Israelites* (London, 1747), p. 76 msl. 68.

⁹⁶ Robert Clayton, *An Impartial Enquiry into the Time of the Coming of the Messiah* (London, 1751), p. 6.

⁹⁷ Burnet, *Appendix*, p. 38.

⁹⁸ Samuel Johnson, *An Explanation of Scripture Prophecies Both Typical and Literal* Vol. II (Reading, 1742), pp. 270–272.

⁹⁹ Nathanael Markwick, *A Calculation of the LXX Weeks of Daniel* (London, 1728), pp. 72, 358.

attacking the pope or Ottoman Empire. Lowth, for example, argued that the chief role in the restoration would go to “the western parts of the world... expressed in *Isaiah* by *the Islands of the Sea*”.¹⁰⁰ Elsewhere, he noted with satisfaction that this interpretation “confutes the cavil of Mr. White’s... against understating this part of the chapter of the restoration of the Jews in the latter times, because there is no mention made of *England, Holland, Germany, &c*”. Those Islands, he added, are the places in which “the Christian religion should take deepest root”.¹⁰¹ Markwick followed Leslie in claiming that England was a likely site of the first Jewish conversions: “And in this our *English* nation, not so infamous for inhumane, Popish, Devilish practices, may they find so much favour and indulgence, as government wise, charitable, prudent and (which is above all these) Christian can possibly afford them”.¹⁰²

Some of the more marginal works did return to a military role for England. Thomas Newans, a Shropshire farmer who journeyed to London over fifty times to warn ministers of his terrible visions in the 1740s, believed that the papacy and the Turks were about to overwhelm Europe. The nations would “send their ministers of state to the King of Great Britain, both for counsel and strength”.¹⁰³ This was a wise move, for as Newans showed, God had rejected Israel for their refusal of Christ and chosen England in their place: “For after the death of Christ, the Romans fell upon Jerusalem, and made it a desolation, and the Jews were scattered over all the earth, and the scripture began to flourish in England”.¹⁰⁴ The nation would lead a crusade against pope and Turk, before offering the sceptre to the Jews, who would once again be God’s chosen people.¹⁰⁵

Part of the reason for this shift was a decline in an expectation of the imminent coming of Christ’s kingdom. Where Whiston was prepared to set dates for the millennium within his own lifetime, others followed Newton and delayed into the far future. Markwick saw the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 2299 or 2300, with the Jews restored in 2400.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ Lowth, *Daniel*, p. 245.

¹⁰¹ William Lowth, *A Commentary upon the Larger and Lesser Prophets* (London, 1739), p. 27.

¹⁰² Markwick, *Calculation*, pp. 359–360.

¹⁰³ Thomas Newans, *A Key to the Prophecies of the Old and New Testament* (London, 1747), p. 6.

¹⁰⁴ Newans, *A Key*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁵ Newans, *A Key*, pp. 64–87.

¹⁰⁶ Markwick, *Calculation*, pp. 249–254

Clayton thought the millennium would start in 2015.¹⁰⁷ Such distant dates dissuaded writers from making overly politically based conjectures, given they lacked any knowledge of the political context of the distant future. This was possibly one effect of the rising postmillennial influence appearing through the works of Daniel Whitby and Jonathan Edwards.¹⁰⁸ Yet this needs to be carefully qualified: as Reiner Smolinski has pointed out, pre-, post-, and a-millennial categories remain deeply problematic in the eighteenth century, with writers such as Edwards more concerned about issues such as the number of literal resurrections and whether the millennium would be inchoate or perfectionist than about its precise timing.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Whitby used Judeo-centric arguments to attack his millenarian opponents, suggesting that as the Old Testament promises applied only to the Jews, there could be no personal reign of the Saints on earth without usurping the Jewish prerogative.¹¹⁰ Regardless of the precise millennial terminology, the rise of evangelicalism was a factor in the increasing focus on England as a site of conversion and missionary endeavour. The revivals that swept both England and the American colonies in the 1730s and 40s placed a firm emphasis on the importance of personal faith and missionary action. Combined with the biblical focus of evangelical faith, it is no surprise that these elements of Judeo-centric thought gained more prominence in the first half of the eighteenth century.¹¹¹

The second major change focused on the idea of the restoration of the temple and ceremonial worship. Some still vehemently opposed the idea. For Lowth, the temple remained “a proper figure of CHRIST’S Church, and of the spiritual worship instituted by Him”.¹¹² For those who followed Whiston, however, a literally restored temple became an important part of their eschatology. Collett thought “the glory of God will reside in the future Temple”.¹¹³ He finished his work on Jewish restoration by remind-

¹⁰⁷ Clayton, *Impartial Enquiry*, p. 32.

¹⁰⁸ Gribben, *Evangelical Millennialism*, pp. 58–62.

¹⁰⁹ Reiner Smolinski, “The Logic of Millennial Thought: Sir Isaac Newton among His Contemporaries”, in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (eds), *Newton and Religion*, pp. 259–289.

¹¹⁰ Daniel Whitby, *A Treatise of the True Millennium* Vol. II (London, 1718), pp. 9–15.

¹¹¹ Gribben, *Evangelical Millennialism*, pp. 51–70. See David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 1–17 for his classic definition of evangelicalism, in particular in terms of its “conversionism” and “activism”.

¹¹² Lowth, *Larger and Lesser Prophets*, pp. 332–333.

¹¹³ Collett, *Future Restoration*, p. 56.

ing Jews that the ceremonial laws “were instituted by God himself, and therefore must be strictly obeyed and exactly performed”.¹¹⁴ Such thinking allowed a nascent futurism to develop. Although it would not find widespread popularity until the nineteenth century, a number of writers in the first half of the eighteenth century adopted an approach that presumed that Revelation referred primarily to the future. This form of exegesis, popularised most notably by the Jesuits Ribera and Bellarmine in the late sixteenth century, had been largely alien to the English tradition at the time. Richard Hayter’s 1675 *The Meaning of Revelation*, for example, read the text as a chronological narrative of events to take place at the end of time. Hayter thus found a literal conversion of 144,000 Jews in Revelation 7, criticising those who spiritualised the reference to refer to gentiles. There would be a “rebuilding of two holy places at *Jerusalem*, for the people of the *Jews* to worship in”.¹¹⁵ Edward Wells, doctor of divinity, incumbent at Cotesbach in Leicestershire, and sometime adversary of Samuel Clarke, formed his own synthesis of the Cambridge tradition and futurism. While he found the majority of Revelation fulfilled in the past, he nonetheless expected the return of Enoch and Elijah to Jerusalem and a “literal or personal Antichrist”.¹¹⁶ Samuel Johnson also foresaw a personal Antichrist who would march to Jerusalem, occupy the rebuilt temple, and declare himself God. At this point, the Jews would be all that stood between the gentile church and destruction: “like *Moses*, [they] may stand in the gap and turn away his [God’s] wrathful indignation, lest he should destroy it”.¹¹⁷

The reasons for the development of this proto-futurist interpretation, which was far from universal, are less clear. The logic presumed by the use of Judeo-centrism against deist works certainly advocated a more rigidly focused “literalism” which had already been emerging in Newton and Whiston.¹¹⁸ To all intents and purposes, earlier figures such as Brightman

¹¹⁴ Collett, *Future Restoration*, p. 86.

¹¹⁵ Richard Hayter, *The Meaning of the Revelation, or a Paraphrase with Questions on the Revelation of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Divine* (London, 1675), p. 131; see also p. 136.

¹¹⁶ Edward Wells, *An Help for the More Easy and Clear Understanding of the Revelation of St John the Divine* (Oxford, 1717), pp. 79–85, 101.

¹¹⁷ Johnson, *An Explanation of Scripture*, Vol. II p. 305.

¹¹⁸ See Rob Iliffe, “‘Making a Shew’: Apocalyptic Hermeneutics and the Sociology of Christian Idolatry in the Work of Isaac Newton and Henry More”, in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (eds), *The Books of Nature and Scripture*, pp. 55–88.

and Mede had tried to have the best of both worlds—a highly literalist interpretation of Revelation combined with an allegorisation of the temple. While there were good hermeneutic reasons for this, particularly in terms of ecclesiology and soteriology, the logic of the method they used slowly pushed towards adopting a literal reading of the temple as well.

It is therefore wrong to presume that Judeo-centric thought faded away after the chaos of the 1650s. While it certainly moderated its character, it did not disappear. The emphasis on England’s part in bringing about the redemption of the Jews shifted—while they might still play a key role in their restoration, the nation’s primary duty would be in orchestrating their conversion rather than physically carrying them back to Palestine. In the context of the development of evangelicalism and the resultant missionary impulse, this is perhaps unsurprising. Yet the militaristic, millenarian hope that England would play the key geo-political role in ordering the restoration continued to bubble just under the surface. In 1753, such impulses would break out once again, and the question of Jewish restoration would assume vital political importance. The future of the Jews, and England’s relationship to them, became a crucial question for politicians, theologians, and all those concerned with what it meant to be English.

2 THE JEW BILL, 1753

On 14th July 1753, *The Craftsman* ran an article purporting to be a news report from one hundred years in the future. The story was so good that the *London Evening Post*, the most popular journal of the day, immediately reprinted it. This was no piece of science fiction speculation. Instead, its author imagined a nightmare vision in which Jews overwhelmed England. Now renamed “Judea Nova”, the (now Jewish) government concerned itself with fighting criminals such as the pork smuggler George Briton, shooting highlanders given to the “superstition of the *Galileans*” and banning *The Merchant of Venice*.¹¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, this bizarre synthesis of political satire and antisemitic tropes has fascinated writers working on Anglo-Jewish history.¹²⁰ Yet beyond the clever satire of the Pelham

¹¹⁹ *London Evening Post* 4003, 12th–14th July 1753, p. 1. Hereafter *LEP*.

¹²⁰ For a discussion of both “News from a Hundred Years Hence” and the “Jew Bill” see Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England 1714–1830: Tradition and Change in a Liberal Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), pp. 13–117; Todd M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656–2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 41–77; Frank Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in*

administration and repetition of anti-Jewish hearsay, commentators have missed one of the most interesting aspects of the piece. The report opened with news from “Jerusalem” concerning the collapse of the middle arch of the temple. The great cost of the repair would be met by the citizens of Great Britain, funded through a lottery for half a million pounds. The presumption in the report, as ridiculous as it might seem, was of Jewish empire, with a restored temple, based in Jerusalem. This point was emphasised in the earlier editorial in the same issue of the *Post*. The Jews, the author reminded his readers, expected “a temporal messiah and deliverer, under whose victorious banner they are to fight their way to their Jerusalem again”.¹²¹ The fictitious news report imagined what would happen if they succeeded.

“News from a Hundred Years Hence” and other similar productions were just one part of the controversy that raged over the Jewish Naturalization Act of 1753,¹²² commonly (and inaccurately) described as the “Jew Bill” by contemporaries.¹²³ A relatively minor measure, the fact that the Bill caused one of the most sustained political clamours of the 1750s, and an uncharacteristic burst of open antisemitism, has led to wide scholarly attention. Centring on the question of what it meant to be English, and how to understand national identity in relation to Judaism, the debates that surrounded the Bill illuminate important questions of identity, religious tolerance, and antisemitism. Nonetheless, historians have tended to overlook the role of Judeo-centrism in the debates, despite writers on both sides repeatedly referring to the idea of Jewish restoration to Palestine and the rebuilding of the temple. This oversight is important for two reasons. First, ignoring the role that prophetic speculation played in the debates risks missing the importance of the theological issues that the Bill threw up for contemporaries. How, asked ministers and pamphlet writers,

English Popular Culture, 1660–1830 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 187–214; Katz, *The Jews in the History of England*, pp. 239–283; Thomas W. Perry, *Public Opinion, Propaganda, and Politics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study of the Jewish Naturalization Act of 1753* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1962); Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, pp. 195–224.

¹²¹ LEP 4003, 12th–14th July 1753, p. 1.

¹²² Secondary sources vary in their spelling between “Naturalization” and “Naturalisation”. Here, I have followed the most common eighteenth-century spelling in using the letter “z”.

¹²³ The name has stuck and is used in all of the secondary literature on the subject. The name is distasteful in its derogatory use of “Jew”, as well as misusing the term “Bill”. A Bill refers to a measure still under discussion and not yet on the statute book. When the Bill was passed into law, it became an Act of Parliament, although contemporaries continued to refer to the “Jew’s Bill”. I follow them in describing the Act as a Bill here for the sake of consistency.

were they to understand the prophecies concerning the Jews in the context of attempts to naturalise them? Second, it ignores the fact that the debate took place against a background narrative of Judeo-centrism that was still very much alive. As discussed above, speculation about the full restoration of the Jews and their reign over other nations did not disappear in the 1650s. This narrative background served to both unnerve opponents of the Bill and remind its supporters that England faced judgement for their treatment of the Jews. The suggestion that England might one day take orders from Jerusalem was not limited to satire, but was a serious consideration for those on both sides of the debate.

Naturalisation represented more than simply a change of citizenship. Instead, it recognised an individual as a native-born subject of the British monarch, and allowed them to enjoy the benefits befitting that status. An un-naturalised immigrant in England faced a number of limitations, including being unable to have an heir, being barred from owning land and ships (and thus the colonial trade), and paying “alien duties” on all imports, usually around double the standard tax rate. For those immigrants who wanted to change their status, two options were open. Letters of denization granted by the Crown removed some of the strictures that lay upon immigrants, but kept the alien duties in place. The second option was full naturalisation, which required a private act of parliament. Both were expensive, with few immigrants able to afford the necessary fees.¹²⁴

There was a further obstacle to overcome for Jews. According to a statute of 1609, the act of naturalisation included taking communion in the Church of England. In this context, the sacramental test acted as a guarantee that the individual being naturalised was serious about claiming the full identity of an Englishman, including membership of the national church. It therefore served to keep not only Catholics, but also undesirable foreign Protestants out of the country.¹²⁵ It is important that this wider context is remembered when debates on the Jew Bill are examined. At the height of the controversy, the *London Evening Post* claimed that a certain rabbi had “circumcised in Holland and Germany several Lutherans

¹²⁴ Statt reports that denization cost around £25, naturalisation around £65. See Daniel Statt, “The City of London and the Controversy over Immigration, 1660–1722”, *The Historical Journal* 33:1 (1990), pp. 45–61.

¹²⁵ Statt, “City of London”, pp. 46–47. It is important to note that supporters of naturalisation were aware that the majority of immigrants from Europe, while Protestant, would not be Anglican. The swiftly repealed 1709 Naturalisation Act therefore allowed communion to be taken in any Protestant church as a precursor to naturalisation.

and Calvinists, who having some scruple about receiving the sacrament according to the sense of the Church of England... are determined to ease their consciences of that difficulty, and become Englishmen under the denomination of Jews”.¹²⁶

To understand the nature of the debate over the Jewish Naturalization Act, it is important to locate the measure in the wider context of discussions of mid-eighteenth-century immigration policy. As Daniel Statt has highlighted, the early eighteenth century saw a fierce political debate over whether admitting and “naturalising” foreigners would improve England’s economic situation. Eighteenth-century economic theory often linked economic success to the size of a nation’s population. A policy of general naturalisation therefore seemed, particularly to those who followed the suggestions of economist Josiah Childs (1631–1699), a certain route to economic growth. Just such a strategy was a recurrent feature of Whig policy from the 1690s into mid-century. In 1709, a Whig administration passed an act for general naturalisation that allowed immigrants to be naturalised without a private act of parliament, reduced the cost to one shilling, and permitted the sacramental test, previously administered in the Church of England, in all Protestant churches.

For opponents, however, policies of general naturalisation appeared to offer a way for other nations to dump their unwanted and unproductive citizens into England. Always eager to emphasise that Whig policy endangered both the state and the Church of England, Tory opponents of naturalisation complained that it would introduce large numbers of people who lacked any knowledge of (or interest in) England’s distinct political and ecclesiastical culture.¹²⁷ Debates on the issue often split down politico-ideological lines. After around 10,000 immigrants, mostly from the Palatinate, took advantage of the 1709 Whig act, a Tory government swiftly repealed it in 1711. Parliament continued to debate the topic over the first half of the eighteenth century, with general bills for naturalisation defeated in 1747 and 1751.

Of course, for many within the English Jewish community naturalisation was of little or no practical concern. All Jews born within Great Britain were legally natural-born subjects, regardless of their religion. While Jews born in the country could not vote, take degrees at the universities, or serve in government positions, they shared these social disabilities with all

¹²⁶ LEP 4013, 4th–7th August 1753, p. 1.

¹²⁷ Statt, “The City of London”, pp. 45–61; Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 196–206.

non-Anglicans.¹²⁸ Yet for those who had been born abroad, or who had entered England as merchants, the appeal of naturalisation was obvious in terms of the financial and legal benefits it offered. The English Jewish community had itself undergone a transformation over the course of the eighteenth century. Although their commercial rivals occasionally challenged the legal basis for Jewish readmission, by the 1750s the Sephardi community in London was generally prosperous.¹²⁹ While many had made their money through trade, the Sephardi were associated in the popular imagination with brokering, stock-jobbing, and the organisation of lotteries, all activities that were commonly seen as being of dubious moral value.¹³⁰ Prominent members of the Sephardi congregation, such as Samson Gideon (1699–1762) and Joseph Salvador (1716–1786), were important government financiers and, along with other Jewish investors, had helped to prevent a bank run in London during the Jacobite rebellion of 1745. In general, rich Sephardim were indistinguishable from other members of the English upper classes—wearing fashionable clothes, owning country mansions and marrying into the English high society. Gideon went so far as baptising his children and raising them as Christians, a move that won a baronetcy for his son, who later entered parliament.¹³¹ The Bevis Marks synagogue, opened in 1701, was a landmark of the respectability and acceptance of the Sephardi community within England. With this background in finance, trade, and integration into English society, naturalisation was highly desirable for foreign-born Sephardi merchants.

However, by 1753, Ashkenazi immigrants from Germany and Poland outnumbered the Sephardi community. Generally arriving with little or no English, Ashkenazim continued to wear traditional dress and generally took up low-paying occupations such as peddling, collecting old clothes, or engaging in street vending. Where the Sephardim were generally towards the upper-end of the social spectrum, the Ashkenazim tended

¹²⁸ A point noted by Endelman, *The Jews of Georgian England*, p. 10.

¹²⁹ The Lord Mayor and Corporation of London petitioned Charles II to expel the Jews in 1664. In 1673, when indicted for “riotous assembly” for conducting worship, Charles ordered charges dropped against Jews. A move to charge 37 Jewish merchants under recusancy laws in 1685 was again overturned by the crown. See Katz, *Jews in the History of England*, pp. 107–145 and Endelman, *Jews of Georgian England*, pp. 17–22.

¹³⁰ Endelman, *Jews of Britain*, pp. 41–77; Perry, *Public Opinion*, pp. 11–12.

¹³¹ Endelman, *Jews of Georgian England*, pp. 28–31; 118–165; Katz, *Jews in the History of England*, pp. 239–283. This should not imply that the Sephardi were unconcerned with their religious heritage however.

towards the other extreme. Financial hardship was commonplace. The challenge of poor relief was a significant strain upon the centre of Ashkenazi religious life, Duke’s Place synagogue, while the Sephardi often viewed their co-religionists with snobbery and disdain.¹³² For the majority of poor Ashkenazi immigrants, naturalisation was of little concern.

These are broad generalisations. There were rich Ashkenazim and poor Sephardim.¹³³ In the eyes of the English public, however, distinctions within the Jewish community meant little. Caricatures of a figure such as Gideon dressed in fashionable clothing, speaking in the broken English of a recently arrived Ashkenazi immigrant were commonplace, despite the fact that he was born and brought up in England.¹³⁴ When the debates over the Jewish Naturalization Act began, there was seldom much awareness of the fact that the Jewish community was diverse and combined a number of different traditions.

The story of the Bill itself is relatively straightforward. A number of measures were passed in the years leading up to 1753 that seemed to point towards willingness by the government to consider Jewish naturalisation. The 1740 Plantation Act, for example, had allowed Jews to be naturalised if they resided for seven years in the American colonies. Sephardi leaders had gently lobbied for a change to naturalisation laws in Great Britain from the mid-1740s onwards, with a bill allowing for the naturalisation of Ireland’s Jews passing in Dublin in 1747, although it was vetoed by the Primate in council. In January 1753, Salvador wrote to the Duke of Newcastle, one third of the ministry’s ruling “triumvirate”, to request permission for private acts of naturalisation, substituting the oaths of supremacy and allegiance for taking the sacrament.¹³⁵ Newcastle’s brother and Prime Minister Henry Pelham, and Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, the

¹³² Endelman, *Jews of Georgian England*, pp. 166–191. A second Ashkenazi synagogue, the Hambro Synagogue, opened in 1707 as the result of a dispute over divorce laws. The driving force behind the opening of the synagogue, diamond merchant Marcus Moses, was the father of the most prominent Christian convert in the early part of the eighteenth century, Moses Marcus. On this see Ruderman, *Connecting the Covenants*, pp. 11–38.

¹³³ Edgar Samuel estimates that of the richer Jewish merchants, Sephardim outnumbered Ashkenazim two-to-one. See Edgar Samuel, “The Jews in English Foreign Trade in 1753”, in *At the End of the Earth: Essays on the History of the Jews in England and Portugal* (London: Jewish Historical Society of England, 2004), pp. 351–368.

¹³⁴ See for example “The Grand Conference or the Jew Predominant” (October 1753) reprinted in Perry, *Public Opinion*, pp. 4–5.

¹³⁵ The letter, dated 14th January 1753 is found in British Library Add. MSS 33053. A reprint is available in Samuel, “The Jews in English Foreign Trade”, pp. 367–368.

other key members of the Ministry, saw no objection in the measure. Lord Halifax, president of the Board of Trade, introduced a bill to allow for this proposal in the House of Lords on 3rd April 1753. It progressed without major difficulties (although some limiting clauses were added) and while debates in the Commons were heated, it attracted little controversy prior to its second reading in mid-May, having passed its first reading by a margin of 95 to 16. Opposition to the Bill began to become more widespread around the second reading on 15th May. Prior to its final reading on 22nd May, a number of petitions circulated among merchants—the most notable being from Portuguese merchants claiming that the measure would destroy their trade by inciting traditional Iberian antipathy towards Jews. A final petition resulted from a rushed meeting of the Aldermen and Common Council in London, and charged the Bill with devastating economic, political, and religious effects. Signed by the Lord Mayor and approved by the Common Council, parliament viewed it as an affront to their authority—not only insulting the bishops who had passed the measure in the Lords, but in raising such serious objections to policy so late in the Bill’s process. Despite increased opposition in the Commons, the Bill was sent for royal assent after its final reading.¹³⁶

The very limited nature of the measure needs to be emphasised. This was not, as was the case with the 1709 Act, a proposal for general naturalisation. The individual wishing to be naturalised still needed to obtain a private act of parliament at considerable expense. Neither was there thoroughgoing Jewish support for the Bill. Gideon, who had predicted the unwelcome attention the measure would bring, resigned his membership at Bevis Marks in protest at the synagogue’s implication that he supported it.¹³⁷ Nonetheless, both points were lost in the growing clamour over the Bill that continued throughout the summer of 1753. A concerted campaign against it in the anti-ministerial *London Evening Post*, a paper that provided much popular material for the regional press, led to widespread publicity for the measure.¹³⁸ Critics imagined the government was in

¹³⁶ Perry provides a detailed breakdown of the debate over the Bill and the parliamentary reaction. See Perry, *Public Opinion*, pp. 45–72.

¹³⁷ The *London Evening Post* noted at the very start of the controversy that “Some of the wisest amongst the disciples of Moses disapprove the scheme so warmly pushed by their less prudent brethren, as they perceive it will expose them to much Odium” (*LEP* 3979, 17th–19th May 1753, p. 1).

¹³⁸ G.A. Cranfield, “The *London Evening Post* and the Jew Bill of 1753”, *The Historical Journal* 8:1 (1965), pp. 16–30.

league with a Jewish lobby (led, ironically, by Gideon) planning to naturalise all Jews resident in Britain, and encourage ever-greater Jewish immigration. The continued criticism, combined with the prospect of a General Election in 1754, resulted in the Ministry moving to end the controversy. The Jew Bill had never been a central plank of Whig policy and it was therefore expendable. Despite the confidence of some that “no British parliament whatever...will ever cancel so laudable, and advantageous an institution as is the Jew Act”¹³⁹ the measure was repealed on 28th November 1753.¹⁴⁰ No Jews had made use of its provisions.

The question of how to interpret this bizarre episode in Anglo-Jewish history has consistently puzzled historians. Thomas Perry proposed that the debate should be viewed through a political lens as an example of the still strong divisions between Whig and Tory ideology that, in a Namierite interpretation of the period, appeared to have faded into insignificance by the 1750s. The debate was therefore not about the Jews at all, but about using a convenient stick to beat the government. Claims of religious concern were a mask for political intent.¹⁴¹ There is certainly truth in this. “For with respect to the public cry, *No Jews! No naturalization! Christianity and Old England forever!*”, wrote economist Josiah Tucker, “They are known to be words of course, invented purely for the sake of inflaming the unthinking populace against the next General Election”.¹⁴² With tongue planted firmly in cheek, one author praised “the lively spirit of Christianity which has so suddenly and remarkably started up at the alarm given, that our religion was in danger from the *Jews*”, noting that he had thought Christianity dead given the lack of concern for it prior to the Act.¹⁴³ Yet while the political background to the public debate is important, to over-emphasise it is to risk marginalising the very real religious issues that did emerge. As critics of Perry have consistently noted, while religion could serve as a front for political attacks, many of the criticisms or defences of

¹³⁹ *The Unprejudiced Christian’s Apology for the Jews* (London, 1753), p. 84

¹⁴⁰ This was the date of the Commons’ approval of repeal. The Bill was proposed by Newcastle on 15th November, and passed by the Lords on 22nd November. The Commons received the Bill on the 23rd November, and it received its third reading on the 28th. Royal assent was given on 20th December.

¹⁴¹ Perry, *Public Opinion*, pp. 161–99.

¹⁴² Josiah Tucker, *A Second Letter to a Friend Concerning Naturalizations* (London, 1753), p. 3.

¹⁴³ *The Motives to the Senseless Clamor [sic] Against the Act Concerning Jews Exposed, and the Act Set in a True Light* (London, 1753), p. 7.

the Bill based on Christian motives were entirely serious.¹⁴⁴ The number of pamphlets arguing about biblical history was an important sign of this. As Felsenstein pointed out, an overemphasis on the political aspect of the debate also risks dismissing genuine antisemitism in discussions over the Bill as mere rhetoric.¹⁴⁵ Yet we should also be cautious in painting the furor as motivated entirely by inherent antisemitism in English society. Certainly, the charges made against the Jews in pamphlets and newspapers were horrendous: “What can they get out of you but your very blood and vitals?” warned one writer.¹⁴⁶ Evangelical preacher William Romaine argued that a Jew’s eyes: “throws such a dead, livid aspect over all his features that he carries evidence enough in his face to convict of being a crucifier”.¹⁴⁷ To these can be added accounts of crucifying children and poisoning wells, and the blood libel.¹⁴⁸ While such statements were reprehensible, to place a disproportionate emphasis upon them presents an unbalanced picture of the debate as a whole. With one possible exception, antisemitic feeling did not break out into open violence against Jewish communities.¹⁴⁹ While this should in no way downplay the seriousness of the rhetoric, it does go some way to demonstrate the limits of antisemitism in practice. As Todd Endelman has noted, even with the Jew Bill controversy, England remained a nation in which Jews were comparatively untroubled compared to their European co-religionists.¹⁵⁰

While it is vital to recognise the importance of both political concerns and English antisemitism in the debate on Jewish naturalisation, the centrality of religion and national identity should be key areas in the discussion.

¹⁴⁴ Endelman, *Jews of Georgian England*, pp. 24–26;

¹⁴⁵ Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes*, pp. 187–214.

¹⁴⁶ J.E., *Some Considerations on the Naturalization of the Jews* (London, 1753), p. 21.

¹⁴⁷ William Romaine, *A Modest Apology for the Citizens and Merchants of London, Who Petitioned the House of Commons against Naturalizing the Jews*, Second Edition (London, 1753), pp. 8–9.

¹⁴⁸ For example, Archaicus, *Admonitions from Scripture and History, from Religion and Common Prudence Relating to the Jews* (London, 1753); Britannia, *An Appeal to the Throne Against the Naturalization of the Jewish Nation* (London, 1753).

¹⁴⁹ The tract literature does have some suggestion of abuse of poor Jews. One work bemoans the “ridiculous, mean and uncharitable” nature of people who “molest, insult, terrify, and personally abuse, those lower *Jews*, who travel the country to get a livelihood (several of whom have lately been so treated)” (Oliver Oak, *An Appeal with Due Submission Addressed to Caesar and the British Senators* [London, 1753], p. 18).

¹⁵⁰ Endelman, *Jews of Georgian England*, pp. 272–288. See also Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, p. 199.

Historians have largely dismissed the use of prophecy in the debate as rhetorical posturing or as a form of satire. There are some obvious examples of this—cunning rabbis representing the Ministry or reworkings of Genesis in which Jews drove “Pelhamites” from the land were clearly not intended to be taken entirely seriously.¹⁵¹ The use of such abstracted satire for political purposes, including invented “prophecies”, was an established tool of the press in the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁵² As Jeremy Black noted, the Ministry was well aware that some newspaper satires were so ridiculous that they were unlikely to have any impact on public opinion.¹⁵³ Yet even with this in mind, the Ministry took some religious attacks on their positions seriously. Josiah Tucker, the economist and clergyman commissioned by the government to write an official response to criticism, made addressing the question of prophecy and the Jew Bill one of his central concerns: “one would think from the clamours that have been raised, that the question was, whether the temple at *Jerusalem* was to be re-established”.¹⁵⁴ As Stephen Taylor noted in his discussion of attempts to set up an Anglican episcopate in America in the mid-eighteenth century, both clergy and the Ministry were fearful of a popular backlash and return to cries of the “Church in danger” which had marked the Sacheverell controversy in Anne’s reign. The government recognised that religious commitment was powerful and viewed it as prudent to avoid controversy in the area. Indeed, Taylor notes that the reaction to the Jew Bill served to confirm that the Ministry had made the right strategic decisions in their policy, as it demonstrated the extent to which religious feelings still ran high.¹⁵⁵ In August 1753, the Archbishop of Canterbury encountered this first hand when, during a visit to Lewes he found himself facing an angry crowd shouting “No Jews!”¹⁵⁶ The opposition press often painted itself as the defender of religion and printed straightforward devotional material.¹⁵⁷ All of this should provide context for the use of Judeo-centrism in the debates. Recently published Judeo-centric works included Hartley’s

¹⁵¹ LEP 4047, 18th–20th October 1753, p. 1; LEP 4029, 6th–8th September 1753, p. 1.

¹⁵² Jeremy Black, *The English Press 1621–1861* (Stroud: History Press, 2001), pp. 30–36.

¹⁵³ Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1987), pp. 117–118.

¹⁵⁴ Josiah Tucker, *A Letter to a Friend Concerning Naturalizations* (London, 1753), p. 15.

¹⁵⁵ Stephen Taylor, “Whigs, Bishops and America: The Politics of Church Reform in mid-Eighteenth-Century England”, *The Historical Journal* 36:2 (1993), pp. 331–356.

¹⁵⁶ Thomas Birch to Philip Yorke, 11th August 1753, BL Add MS 35398, fos. 145r-v.

¹⁵⁷ Black, *English Press in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 248–257.

Observations, with its defence of the idea of Jewish empire, and Clayton's *Dissertation on Prophecy* in 1749, in which he advocated for the Jewish return to Palestine, and argued that Jerusalem was promised "an exaltation higher than all other nations".¹⁵⁸ Ideas of Jewish restoration provided a backdrop for the use of prophecy in the discussions that followed. While the debates of 1753 represent a flaring up of interest in prophetic matters due to their political currency, it would be wrong to paint this as an isolated moment of interest. Discussions of prophecy were ongoing before, and continued after, the repeal of the act. Editions of *The Gentleman's Magazine* for January and February 1753, for example, featured letters relating to the question of the likelihood that the Beast of Revelation 16 was China.¹⁵⁹ Correspondents to *The London Magazine* in February 1756 debated the links between recent earthquakes and the Apocalypse.¹⁶⁰ As Jeremy Gregory has argued, the eighteenth century was as much an "age of faiths" as an "age of reason".¹⁶¹ An awareness of the important role that religion continued to play in the period suggests, that for some at least, apocalyptic speculation continued to be legitimate. This awareness is a necessary part of taking the "lived religion" of the eighteenth century seriously.¹⁶²

The analysis that follows is a modification of the positions recently adopted by James Shapiro, Dana Rabin, and Michael Ragussis, all of whom see the debate on the Bill as an attempt to redefine English religious and national identity at a time of crisis. All three writers emphasise the way in which Jewish otherness worked as a marker by which English identity could be formed. Taking his starting point from Linda Colley's theory of national identity shaped by an othering of Catholic France,¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ Robert Clayton, *A Dissertation on Prophecy* (Dublin, 1749), pp. 72–73.

¹⁵⁹ *The Gentleman's Magazine* 23: 1 (January 1753), p. 90; 23: 2 (February 1753), pp. 116–119.

¹⁶⁰ *The London Magazine* 25: 2 (February 1756), pp. 67–68.

¹⁶¹ Jeremy Gregory, "Transforming the 'Age of Reason' into 'An Age of Faiths': or, Putting Religions and Beliefs (back) into the Eighteenth Century", *Journal for Eighteenth Century Studies* 32 (2009), pp. 287–305.

¹⁶² See Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 1–20; Phyllis Mack, "The Unbounded Self: Dreaming and Identity in the British Enlightenment", in A. M. Plane and L. Tuttle (eds), *Dreams, Dreamers, and Visions: The Early Modern Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp. 207–225.

¹⁶³ Colley, *Britons*, Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1720–1830* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1987).

Shapiro saw the Jew Bill debate as revolving around the “Jewish other... trying to claim for itself a part of Englishness”.¹⁶⁴ Rabin and Ragussis developed this concept further. As this idea of the Jew as a firmly defined other threatened to break down, so writers used the debate to explore their own fears of a national identity that would be undermined by infiltration. Aware of the divisions raised by the still fragile Act of Union, recent Jacobite risings, and particularly the execution of Dr Cameron in June 1753 for his role in the Elibank Plot, those opposed to the Bill projected their fears of national instability onto the imagined Jewish threat.¹⁶⁵ They therefore re-established firm barriers between Jew and Gentile. The anti-Jewish pamphleteers attempted to do this by an extreme “othering” of the Jewish people that was soon matched in the aftermath of the controversy by the portrayal of “outlandish” Jews on the stage as stereotypical paradigms of Jewishness and alterity.¹⁶⁶ The Jew Bill controversy therefore represented the continuing allosemantic impulse to maintain the Jews as consistently other.

In order to understand better how allosemitism worked on national identity in this case, it is necessary to nuance these positions further. By taking the religious concerns of those involved in the debate seriously, it becomes clear that the centrality of the idea of Jewish and gentile separation developed from Judeo-centric ideas. Opponents of the Bill therefore worried that the government was undermining England’s identity through deliberately attempting to falsify Old Testament prophecy. In their eyes, Pelham’s administration was part of a wider deist plot to hasten the destruction of the Church of England. Focusing on prophecies thus helped to rebuild the essential difference between Jew and gentile, and to prove the validity of Christianity. Their fears of Jewish military power, while partly antisemitic hearsay, were made possible by the continuing rhetoric of Judeo-centric thought which concentrated on the power possessed by the Jewish people. Indeed, the idea of the Jews as a ferocious army, motivated by desperation for land, had distinct prophetic roots and provided a powerful image for writers in the debate. This discourse, centred on land and the treatment of “natives” by a foreign power, also provided an opportunity to reflect concerns and aspirations of empire.

¹⁶⁴ Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, p. 207.

¹⁶⁵ Dana Rabin, “The Jew Bill of 1753: Masculinity, Virility, and the Nation”, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39:2 (2000), pp. 157–171.

¹⁶⁶ Michael Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation*, pp. 118–138.

While historians have generally focused on the rhetoric produced by the opponents of the Bill, when we turn to those writing in favour of the measure, the picture is both complicated and significantly expanded. While Nabil Matar claimed that a strong emphasis on restorationism was present among the Bill's opponents, the same idea was equally important to many of its supporters.¹⁶⁷ Just as for opponents, for these writers the naturalisation of the Jews served to build up English national identity. Where opponents believed that Jews remained separate in order to testify to their judgement, the Bill's supporters argued that their separation from gentiles was testimony to God's continued plan for them. Their works emphasised that English national identity had always been fluid and inclusive. However, even when incorporated within the English body politic, the Jews would retain an eschatological separation that would see them return to Palestine. It was in providing the conditions that would lead to this return that England could find its role and reconstruct its sense of national identity. Examining the Jew Bill controversy through the lens of restorationism makes it possible to see it as part of the continuing discussion of England's role in prophecy that had generated such excitement in the seventeenth century, and would do so again in the 1790s.¹⁶⁸

3 JEWISH RESTORATION IN WORKS OPPOSED TO THE JEW BILL

The claim that religious concern among the Bill's opponents was merely political posturing under another name offended those who claimed to stand for the Church of England. "It is alleged", wrote one frustrated pamphleteer, "that all this ferment has been excited with no other view, than only with the hopes of misleading the people, and making a party at the next general election; yet I am inclined to think that upon a serious and unprejudiced view of the consequences, which are likely to attend it,

¹⁶⁷ Matar, "Controversy over the Restoration of the Jews", pp. 249–256.

¹⁶⁸ For the continued importance of prophecy in the later seventeenth century see Johnston, *Revelation Restored*. For the 1790s see Clarke Garrett, *Respectable Folly: Millenarians and the French Revolution in France and England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975); Susan Juster, *Doomsayers: Anglo-American Prophecy in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), and Deborah Madden, *The Paddington Prophet: Richard Brothers's Journey to Jerusalem* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010).

they will become of a different opinion”.¹⁶⁹ A variety of writers explored this opinion. It consisted of three main concerns. The first argued that naturalisation would constitute a denial of the prophecies that the Jews should be a wandering nation for their sin in crucifying Christ. The second, which bears an obvious relation to the first, feared that by naturalising the Jews, England would also be claiming a share in God’s curses against the Jewish nation. The third expressed a fear of the Jewish people, who might attempt to claim England as their own country or use it as a launching pad for reclaiming Palestine.

Combined with general attacks on the Jews as dangerous foreigners who practised an alien faith, the fear that the Pelham administration was attempting to act against God’s will was a primary concern. The Jews were “appointed by GOD to be scattered over the face of the whole earth, ‘till they would believe in CHRIST, and take him as their King and Saviour, which they and the *Turks* will surely do, before the end of time”.¹⁷⁰ As that time had not yet come, however, the government was putting profit ahead of prophecy by ignoring the clear prohibitions against allowing the Jews to become a gathered nation. “The arguments from the several prophecies relating to the dispersion of the *Jews*, to their becoming a by-word and reproach among all nations (which are to this day literally fulfilled)”, noted George Coningsby, “are all of too great moment to be lightly passed off with an irreligious sneer”.¹⁷¹ The measure, stormed another writer, “must needs be looked upon as an impious endeavour to thwart the divine decree, against [God’s] deservedly rejected people: Nay, I know not whether such an attempt to impede God’s wrath, may not properly be termed open *rebellion* against him”.¹⁷² Samuel Eccles was even more downcast at the prospect. “But alas! What are we in this nation now about?” he asked his hearers in a sermon of July 1753. The government had acted in “express contradiction to God’s word, spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets, to admit these men, still denying, nay blaspheming the name of Christ, citizens of our *Jerusalem*; to *naturalize* and *incorporate* with men who *bear witness and allow the deeds of their fathers!*” He

¹⁶⁹ *A Candid and Impartial Examination of the Act Passed Last Session of Parliament for Permitting the Foreign JEWS to be Naturalized Without Their Receiving the Sacrament* (London, 1753), p. 10. See also J.E., *Some Considerations*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁰ J.E., *Seasonable Remarks on the Act Lately Pass’d in Favour of the Jews; Containing Divers Weighty Reasons for a Review of the Said Act* (London, 1753), p. 14.

¹⁷¹ George Coningsby, *The Jewish Naturalization Considered* (London, 1753), p. 21.

¹⁷² *A Candid and Impartial Examination*, p. 11.

concluded with a further question for his audience: “Is Christianity clean gone, and in *England* is it no more to be found?”¹⁷³

The precise prophecies that the government was challenging were particularly those in Deuteronomy 28, which predicted a series of curses, including exile, for disobedience to God, and Christ’s prophecy of Jerusalem’s destruction, seen to have ended the Jewish polity for good. These biblical injunctions were mixed with the legend of the wandering Jew, a figure supposed to have cursed Christ on his way to Golgotha, and have been condemned to wander the earth without rest ever since.¹⁷⁴ As we have seen in previous chapters, it was possible to interpret the Jews’ continued existence as a separate people in two ways—as either implying a future restoration, or suggesting that their separation was a witness against their sin. Opponents of the Bill favoured the second option. To naturalise Jews seemed to be breaking down the separation that had been previously presumed, imagining that Jews could freely intermingle with the English. The witness of their punishment would thus be lost. “May we not reasonably conclude from what we see”, asked one opponent, “that it is the will of providence, they should be preserved as a distinct people, never to be incorporated with other nations, whilst they continue in the same faith?”¹⁷⁵ To naturalise the Jews was to help confirm them in their unbelief, a point picked up by several authors, not least in the popular press. “By the Christian Revelation the Jews were to be a dispers’d and scatter’d people. They by theirs expect a Restoration: We are going by this Bill to collect them together, and thereby, as far as in us lies, to falsify our own Prophets and verify the predictions of theirs” grumbled “Britannicus” in the *London Evening Post*.¹⁷⁶ Arthur Murphy’s interlude *The Temple of Laverna*, originally written in 1752 and republished the following year, imagined that Jews would view naturalisation as proof that Christianity was false. “Shall we have a fixed place of residence at last!” exclaimed a broker, “Have we baffled the prophecies of the *Galileans*?”¹⁷⁷ One ballad writer wondered how the process of naturalisation could fit into God’s

¹⁷³ Samuel Eccles, *The Candid Determination of the Jews in Preferring a Thief and a Robber Before Our Saviour: A Sermon Preached June 10, 1753* (London, 1753), p. 14.

¹⁷⁴ Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes*, pp. 58–89.

¹⁷⁵ [Jonas Hanway], *A Review of the Proposed Naturalization of the Jews* (London, 1753), p. 28.

¹⁷⁶ LEP 3980, 19th–21st May 1753, p. 1.

¹⁷⁷ Andrew Murphy, “The Temple of Laverna”, in *A Collection of the Best Pieces in Prose and Verse Against the Naturalization of the Jews* (London, 1753), p. 19.

plan: “Are these then the people that mark’d with the brands/That the C--G—Y have preach’d shall inherit no land/ Which now they gain’d against God’s command/Which nobody can deny”.¹⁷⁸

These fears were not limited to the popular press, even appearing in the original parliamentary debates on the Bill. Sir Edward Isham noted that by the Bill: “we are giving lie to all the prophecies in the New Testament, and endeavouring, as far as we can, to invalidate one of the strongest proofs of the Christian religion”.¹⁷⁹ These writers feared that deists were seeking to undermine the rational basis of Christian faith by deliberately attempting to prove the prophecies false. If Jews could be naturalised, worried some of the Bill’s opponents, this would disprove the curses against them in the Old Testament, demonstrating the Bible’s inaccuracy. By naturalisation, argued one of the *Post*’s letter writers, “we labour, as much as in us lies, to defeat the prophecies in the New Testament, which is destroying the very essentials of our religion, and may subject us to the wrath of God”.¹⁸⁰ “Judaism and Deism lift up high their proud and unbelieving heads, whilst humble Christianity lies under a cloud” bemoaned “Britannicus” in early August.¹⁸¹ The ballad “The Jews’ Triumph” made the link explicit: “But ‘tis hop’d that a mark will be set upon those/Who were friends to the Jews, and Christians’ foes/That the nation may see how deism grows”.¹⁸² According to one correspondent, the Jew Bill was thus a good way of revealing its supporters as dangerous to the Church: “*Believers* will take care to mark them out as *Freethinkers*, *Latitudinarians*, and *Deists*”.¹⁸³ Another writer to the *Post* felt that such attempts to violate the prophecies were doomed to fail: “The wretches who are trying to falsify the prophecies, are, in truth, fulfilling them; for the *Jews* are every day becoming more and more an execration, and would think none but such as are wilfully blind could help seeing it”.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁸ “The Jews Triumph, a Ballad”, in *The Tom-Tit, or, Something to Please Everybody* (London, 1753), p. 4.

¹⁷⁹ *The Parliamentary History of England, From the Earliest Period to the Year 1803* (London: T.C. Hansard, 1813), 14: 1381.

¹⁸⁰ *LEP* 4012, 2nd–4th August 1753, p. 1.

¹⁸¹ *LEP* 4013, 4th–7th August 1753, p. 1.

¹⁸² “The Jews Triumph”, p. 4. Significantly, this was the stanza used to advertise the work in the *London Evening Post* (*LEP* 3991, 14th–16th June, p. 3).

¹⁸³ *LEP* 4071, 13th–15th December 1753, p. 1.

¹⁸⁴ *LEP* 4027, 1st–4th September 1753, p. 1.

These writers had a ready model for those who deliberately tried to disprove prophecy: Roman Emperor Julian “The Apostate”, who in 365 CE had tried to rebuild the Jerusalem temple and reinstitute ceremonial worship in direct contradiction of the New Testament. As Julian’s temple was apparently destroyed by fire from heaven and an earthquake, his project served as an ominous warning to those who wanted to deny prophecy. A petition from the Sheriff and Aldermen of Wiltshire to their parliamentary representatives in August thus asked “May we not with reason, apprehend that we shall draw upon ourselves the resentment of almighty God for our endeavours to establish the body politic of the *Jews* in the same manner as *Julian* the Apostate?”¹⁸⁵ Those in government “imitate the impiety of the Apostate *Julian*, by endeavouring, like him, to falsify the Word of God”.¹⁸⁶ The comparison baffled the Bill’s supporters. “Let me ask any serious sober person”, one author wrote, “is there the least *similitude* between the legislature’s passing this bill in favour of the Jews, and *Julian*’s declaration...in open defiance of Christ, in order to prove him to have been a false prophet and an imposter?”¹⁸⁷ For political reasons, it was certainly useful to paint Pelham as a second Julian, working as part of a deist conspiracy to undermine the Church of England. Yet there is no reason to think that some of the concern at least was not genuine, connecting as it did with high church suspicion of Whig “enthusiasm” and links to deism.¹⁸⁸

Concerns did not end with the fear that prophecy was under attack. Rather, it was the threats contained within the prophecies and the danger that England could inherit Jewish guilt for crucifying Christ that emerged as the predominant theme. In many ways, this was a reversal of Judeo-centric logic, which presumed that England would acquire blessing from her interactions with the Jews. As with many aspects of allo-Semitism and national identity formation, this allowed writers to form an external measure by which they could gauge whether the nation was living up to her “chosen” role. Whereas Judeo-centrists accepted Jews as eternally blessed, and saw Anglo-Jewish relations in that light, their opponents used the same logic to argue that the nation would suffer for associating with Jews.

¹⁸⁵ LEP 4014, 7th–9th August 1753, p. 1; See also *A Collection of the Best Pieces*, p. 80.

¹⁸⁶ LEP 4008, 24th–26th July 1753, p. 1.

¹⁸⁷ *A True State of the Case Concerning the Good or Evil which the Bill for the Naturalization of the Jews May Bring Upon Great Britain* (London, 1753), p. 11.

¹⁸⁸ A concern that Harris notes is symptomatic of the *London Evening Post*. See Harris, “*London Evening Post*”, pp. 1153–1156.

The question for those who supported the Bill was clear: “Can any *Christian* state receive such a nation as this into its bosom now, without subjecting itself and all its dependents, to the wrath and curses which God has so solemnly denounced against them, and which has for so many ages pursued and accompanied them in all places?”¹⁸⁹ Again, this concern was present in the Commons debates on the issue. “There is a curse attends the nation in general” argued Sir John Barnard, “and I wish, that by bringing them here, we may not bring along with them the curse that pursued them through all countries, and for so many ages”.¹⁹⁰ “All fellowship and inter-community of *Christians* with *Jews*, in rights civil and religious (which cannot but be often intermix’d among people naturaliz’d together)”, noted “Archaicus”, “must make *those* partakers in sin and guilt with *these*, and involve them in their judgement and plague”.¹⁹¹ By “associating or uniting with sinners... must they be undoubtedly pronounced partakers of the same who incorporate and associate with them” argued Eccles,¹⁹² while Coningesby feared “a monstrous connection” that would make England “involved in their guilt”.¹⁹³ “Would it be of any public benefit to import the wealth of the whole *Indies*, if there should come a curse along with it?” asked Romaine. “And if there be a God”, he concluded ominously, “a curse there will come with the *Jews* money”.¹⁹⁴ The *London Evening Post* expressed this fear regularly: “[Do not] they, who can think of being united in a Civil Community with the *Jews*, have not great reason to be afraid that they shall be united with them in all their plagues and curses?”¹⁹⁵; “May we not expect to be involved in the same curse which God has inflicted on them, and be a reproach to all nations forever?”¹⁹⁶; “May we not, by such an unnatural union, reasonably expect to be incorporated into their curses, and that it will call down upon this nation the just vengeance of the almighty?”¹⁹⁷

¹⁸⁹ Britannia, *Appeal to the Throne*, p. 14.

¹⁹⁰ *Parliamentary History* XIV: 1395.

¹⁹¹ Archaicus, *Admonitions*, p. 21.

¹⁹² Samuel Eccles, *Religion the Truest Loyalty, Protestantism no Fanaticism or Judaism* (London, 1753), p. 18.

¹⁹³ Coningesby, *Jewish Naturalization*, p. 5.

¹⁹⁴ [William Romaine], *An Answer to a Pamphlet, Entitled, Considerations on the Bill to Permit Persons Professing the Jewish Religion to be Naturalized* (London, 1753), p. 56.

¹⁹⁵ *LEP* 3986, 2nd–5th June 1753, p. 1.

¹⁹⁶ *LEP* 3991, 14th–16th June 1753, p. 1.

¹⁹⁷ *LEP* 4024, 30th August–1st September 1753, p. 1.

Many writers went so far as to describe the nature of the curses that would fall upon England through the naturalisation of the Jews. While their predictions often seemed to veer towards the absurd, in the context of Judeo-centric eschatology the visions of England's nightmare fate begin to become much more coherent. It is important to note, as Jane Shaw has argued, that the wondrous continued to hold a fascination in mid-eighteenth-century England. Her work on Mary Toft, famous for supposedly giving birth to rabbits in 1726, shows the persistence of the story into the 1750s, including her being cited by William Whiston as a sign of the forthcoming restoration of Jews in a 1750 lecture. In 1753 the story of Elizabeth Canning, who had supposedly survived for a month on a single jug of water and half a loaf of bread after being kidnapped by gypsies, captivated newspaper and magazine readers as a possible supernatural wonder.¹⁹⁸ Of course, as E.J. Clery has pointed out, the popularity of these sorts of cases might represent a shift towards viewing the supernatural merely as a titillating spectacle, or as an experience broadly analogous with attending the theatre.¹⁹⁹ Many of the examples mentioned above attracted interest due to their entertainment value. But this was not the case for all of those who followed them. As Shaw argued, press warnings against credulity in such cases suggest that many took them seriously.²⁰⁰ While reports of supernatural judgements that would fall on England might seem beyond the realms of possibility, in a context in which wondrous events gained popular attention, they became at least broadly plausible.

In reversing the usual Judeo-centric position on the blessings offered to the nation by interactions with Jews, the Bill's opponents used the underlying restorationist narrative of Jewish militarism, connection to Palestine, and messianic expectation to argue against those who supported the Bill. At times, they employed satirical re-imaginings of Jewish restoration in their work. "The ten tribes, when they hear of this Act, will undoubtedly discover themselves and take advantage of it", noted one cynical commentator.²⁰¹ Another believed that "all Bishops, Priests and persons in Holy

¹⁹⁸Jane Shaw, "Mary Toft, Religion and National Memory in Eighteenth-Century England", *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32:3 (2009), pp. 321–338.

¹⁹⁹E.J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762–1800* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp. 1–32. In particular, see her examination of the Cock Lane ghost of 1762, a phenomenon that drew spectators including Samuel Johnson and the Duke of York to the site of the supposed haunting.

²⁰⁰Shaw, "Mary Toft".

²⁰¹J.E., *Seasonable Remarks*, p. 12.

orders [will] say and maintain, that the Call of the *Jews* is now come, and that the Kingdom of Christ is at hand”.²⁰² One wit in the press suggested, “an army may be speedily raised for the retaking *Jerusalem*, which happy event would enable our good friends and new countrymen *Israelites* to rebuild their temple”.²⁰³ Of course, for such satire to have its intended effect, these writers relied on their readers noticing the common Judeo-centric tropes they mocked. The writer of *Esther’s Suit to King Abasuerus* was obviously familiar with the eschatological position when he suggested that “this seems to prepare the way for the call of the *Jews*, which the learned say, must precede [*sic*] the second coming of the Messiah; this may bring about the conversion of the sons of *Jacob*... and if at the coming of the messiah, *London* should be fixed on by him, for his glorious reign on earth as his metropolis, will not all nations by that means be subject to *Britain*, and will not the law go forth from *Sion*?”²⁰⁴ Another imagined that the Act would lead to a land swap: “Thus the Kingdom of *Old Jerusalem* will be ours in *Reversion*, for this *giving them Britain in present possession*; and there can be no other obstacle to our having the whole land of Canaan for our inheritance, but the opposition of its present possessors”. Even further: “All the old prophecies will be thus fulfilled; a *New Jerusalem*, rising like a phenix out of the ashes of the *Old*, shall be establish’d in the *West*, while the *Old One in the East* will become our Colony, and while both the one and the other shall cry aloud, *This is the P-rl---ts doing and it is marvellous in our eyes!*”²⁰⁵

For all of this ribaldry, some writers displayed a subtle grasp of Judeo-centric narratives of restoration that was able to aim directly at the roots of concerns over national identity. Perhaps the most remarkable piece in this vein was “The Prophecy of Shylock”, printed by the *London Evening Post* in late August. A parody of biblical prophecies of restoration, it is notable for focusing its attacks upon the English rather than the Jews.²⁰⁶ It is worth quoting at length:

²⁰² *A Proposal Humbly Offered to the Legislature of this Kingdom for the Re-Establishment of Christianity* (London, 1753), p. 12.

²⁰³ *A Collection of the Best Pieces*, p. 57.

²⁰⁴ *Esther’s Suit to King Abasuerus* (London, 1753), p. 16.

²⁰⁵ LEP 4008, 24th–26th July 1753, p. 1.

²⁰⁶ The parody of Old Testament narrative was an established form. See, for example, the anonymous *The Chronicle of the Derbyshire Regiment... By Nathan Ben Shaddai, a Priest of the Jews* (Edinburgh, 1751), which recounted the heroic deeds of the Regiment’s involvement

For it shall come to pass, that as I plucked you [the Jews] out, I will return and have compassion on you, and will bring you again, every man to his heritage, and every man to his land. I have heard your complaints with pity, and visited the afflictions of my chosen people, to bring you together again, and establish you for an everlasting kingdom... The land you are now to possess is fruitful and pleasant, and its inhabitants are ripe for destruction... They deck themselves with jewels, [are] wanton in the midst of their wealth: Their young men delight in gaming and drunkenness, and their women play the whore in the open streets... They were honour'd by their neighbours for their wisdom, and princes stood in awe of them for their strength. I fenced them with the walls of the depth [*sic*]; even by the walls of the mighty ocean... I made the mighty bow to their pavilions and covered the ocean with their fleets: Their fame went from one end of the earth to the other... I was their sure rock of defence while they walk'd in my ways; but they forsook the paths of their fathers... Therefore, thus saith the Lord: I will destroy them in my anger.²⁰⁷

The passage is surprisingly rich for the concerns it raises relative to national identity. Not only had England betrayed its religious roots, but questions of separation from Europe (“fenced with the walls of the depth”), imperialism, and shifting gender roles also emerged clearly in the imagined biblical narrative. These concerns combined with a much darker fear of Jewish militarism and projects to reconquer the Holy Land. Judeo-centrism had promoted an image of the Jews as superior to other nations and blessed with military power, neither of which appeared to recommend Jewish readmission. “The notion they suck with their milk is, that they are *a great nation* and all mankind usurpers of their sovereignty”, noted J.E., “this consideration reconciles their pertinacious adherence to the religion of their forefathers; and invalidates their claim to mix with any other nation”.²⁰⁸ The Jews, noted another, “shortly also expect (we see) their Messiah to come and restore them to the country of their ancestors; and being aliens, they would little love the country, and so do little for it”.²⁰⁹ Indeed, the same author worried: “if an artful *Rabbi* should spirit his nation up with the expectation of a future *restoration* of the *Jewish* kingdom, as history informs us has often been done, who would be able to

in defeating the Jacobites in the idiom of the Book of Joshua, with chapter and verse format.

²⁰⁷ LEP 4022, 25th–28th August 1753, p. 1.

²⁰⁸ J.E., *Some Considerations*, p. 84.

²⁰⁹ *An Appeal to the Throne*, p. 31.

defend the crown itself from a people, that have in all times and place, where the least success has buoy'd 'em up, left examples of this imperious and rebellious spirit?"²¹⁰ There were repeated fears that the Jews would raise a messiah. "As they always blindly expected a temporal messiah and deliverer, under whose victorious banner they are to fight their way to their Jerusalem again, and to flourish there in great splendour and glory", noted "Christianus", "so there have never been wanting artful, ambitious, or presumptuous men among them, who from time to time taking advantage of their blind expectation".²¹¹ Romaine cited both current prophetic hope amongst Jews and false messiahs from Bar-Kochba to Sabbatai Sevi to prove his point. Repeating the legendary claim that Jews had studied Cromwell's genealogy to see if he could be the messiah, Romaine suggested that Samson Gideon represented a likely candidate at present.²¹² The *London Evening Post* thought Henry Pelham more probable.²¹³

The unease over messianism, combined with the supposed military power of the Jews, also offered an arena in which to examine England's own imperial concerns and insecurities. Opponents of the Bill repeatedly referred to a fear of the loss of land, and the reduction of Britain to the status of a colony. The Duke of Bedford, speaking in the Lords in November, argued that should the Act remain on the statute book: "they might then call this island their own land, and whatever respect some of the superstitious among them might retain for their prophecies, every sensible man would think that had made a happy exchange".²¹⁴ "Archaicus" feared that a corrupt ministry might use Jews as an alternative standing army.²¹⁵ The *Gazetteer* reported a dream in which the natural inhabitants of a land mercifully allowed "goggle-eyed creatures with long whiskers"

²¹⁰ *An Appeal to the Throne*, p. 22.

²¹¹ *LEP* 4003, 12th–14th July 1753, p. 1.

²¹² [Romaine], *An Answer*, pp. 31–34. Hardwicke, in a letter of 20th October 1753, criticised Romaine for this suggestion, describing him as guilty of "impudence, buffoonery, virulence and insincerity". While the legend was false, Menasseh ben Israel had suggested Cromwell as a possible candidate for messianic identity in an interview with Arise Evans (see Evans, *Light for the Jews*).

²¹³ *LEP* 4029, 6th–8th September 1753, p. 1. See also the anecdote recorded in the previous issue: "Friend *Nathan*, said an honest Gentleman at *Garraway*, can it be true, that your *sagacious Nation* should be *one and twenty* times cheated by *false Messiahs*? Can you *doubt* it, replied the testy *Hebrew*, when in spite of all this *Experience*, you see us, at this day, the *Dupe* of the *twenty-second*?" (*LEP* 4028, 4th–6th September 1753, p. 1).

²¹⁴ *Parliamentary History* XV: 105.

²¹⁵ Archaicus, *Admonitions*, p. 28.

into their nation, before seeing their government, economy, and lands taken over. The natives were eventually expelled “and the new inhabitants, amid their festivity, proclaimed aloud, ‘*Now is our Kingdom come*’”.²¹⁶ Similar fantasies were present in “News from a hundred years hence” and other popular pieces. A poem in the *London Evening Post* in September 1753 featured a conversation between two Jews, who imagined that Britons would be driven “into the Sea, as their Christ did the hogs/Then our brave Men of War shall scower the main/And our Red-coats restore *Judah’s* Sceptre again”.²¹⁷ A detailed parody of Genesis 34 found the Jews offering money to the “Pelhamites” in return for circumcision, only for them to slay “every Male of the Britons” whilst “their private parts were sore”. The Jews here conspired together to claim power: “Shall not their lands, their cattle, their substance, and every beast of theirs be ours?”²¹⁸ The *Post* attempted to support these satires with more sober reporting. Correspondents reminded readers of the atrocities perpetrated against the Romans and Cypriots by Jews in antiquity,²¹⁹ while Matthew Hale’s *Primitive Origination of Mankind* (1677) was cited to prove that “if all the *Jews*...were collected into one body, they would exceed in number any one of the greatest nations in the world, and yield an irresistible army”.²²⁰ Crime reports shortly after the repeal continued to present Jews as menacing military figures. The *London Evening Post* for 5th–8th January 1754, for example, featured a story on a continental community threatened by a Lutheran trader “imagin’d to be either a Jew or a Papist”, the description of a Polish converso beheaded for returning to Judaism, and a report of the construction of the Jewish ghetto in Vienna.²²¹ As late as May 1754, a report from Bristol described the robbery of a woman by a Jew who cried “You B---h, you thought to have turn’d us out of Bristol, but now we will do for you all!”²²²

These images of militarism are striking, particularly as Felsenstein has argued that the idea of the feeble Jew was common until the rise of Daniel Mendoza and other Jewish pugilists in the early nineteenth century.²²³

²¹⁶ *Best Pieces*, pp. 15–16.

²¹⁷ *LEP* 4032, 13th–15th September 1753, p. 1.

²¹⁸ *LEP* 4047, 18th–20th October 1753, p. 1.

²¹⁹ *LEP* 4050, 25th–27th October 1753, p. 1; 4054, 3rd–6th November 1753, p. 1.

²²⁰ *LEP* 4056, 8th–10th November 1753, p. 1.

²²¹ *LEP* 4081, 5th–8th January 1754, p. 1.

²²² *LEP* 4132, 9th–11th May 1754, p. 1.

²²³ Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes*, pp. 228–232.

Rather, as Rabin recognised, the image of Jews presented throughout the pamphlets was the polar opposite of this: “threatening and aggressive”.²²⁴ In finding a source for these images, Rabin is right to suggest a fear over the breakdown of gender roles. But combined with the other uses of restorationist prophecy in the debate, including its subtle reworking by those who opposed the Bill, it is suggestive of both the continued strength and importance of the Judeo-centric narrative in forming impressions of Jews into the mid-eighteenth century, and broader concerns over empire. In this area, Hartley’s *Observations on Man* may have had a particular influence. Hartley linked the restoration of the Jews with what he argued would be the inevitable decline and destruction of both civil and ecclesiastical power. “As the downfall of the *Jewish State* under *Titus* was the occasion of the publication of the gospel to us Gentiles”, he suggested, “so our downfall may contribute to the Restoration of the *Jews*, and both together bring on the final publication and prevalence of the true Religion”²²⁵ Such an image also revealed insecurities about Britain’s imperial role, which resurfaced in the popular fears of being reduced to a French colony that echoed from the 1745 Jacobite rising until the end of the Seven Years War.²²⁶ The narrative of Jewish military and trade-based colonialism warned of by the Bill’s opponents suggested the precarious nature of Britain’s ability to maintain her hold over land (both at home and overseas), as well as revealing a latent acknowledgement of the violence inherent in the colonising process. It is significant that the image of the Jews as violent enslavers fixated on profit tallied with the popular critique of Creole planters that Jack. P. Greene has recently traced in the period.²²⁷ This concern over the corrupting nature of colonisation coloured English views of American colonists since the early eighteenth century, with the process of colonisation turning an Englishman’s love of liberty towards

²²⁴ Rabin, “The Jew Bill”, p. 160.

²²⁵ Hartley, *Observations*, p. 375. Hartley deals with the downfall of the civil powers see pp. 366–372.

²²⁶ Jack P. Greene, *Evaluating Empire and Confronting Colonialism in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), pp. 36–43; Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715–1786* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp. 137–205; P.J. Marshall, “A Nation Defined by Empire, 1755–1776” reprinted as Chapter VI in *‘A Free though Conquering People’: Eighteenth-Century Britain and Its Empire* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

²²⁷ Greene, *Evaluating Empire*, pp. 20–49.

enslavement and an obsession with financial gain.²²⁸ While not necessarily the dominant view, it remained a regularly expressed worry, surfacing most famously in Samuel Johnson's 1759 *Idler* essay, in which he wrote of the destructive nature of colonialism from the viewpoint of Native Americans.²²⁹ Thus, the *Gazetteer's* dream narrative highlighted the peaceful trading nature of the Jews whose obsession with material gain led them to reduce the native inhabitants of the land that had welcomed them to abject poverty. The *Post* linked growing colonial influence to corruption: "As they increase in Number, so will they increase in power; and as they increase in power, so will they increase in cruelty; 'till be Degrees, we find ourselves become the Slaves of merciless and cruel Tyrants"²³⁰ The allusion to British imperial endeavours in "Shylock's" boast that "our brave Men of War shall scower the main/And our Red-coats restore *Judah's* Sceptre again"²³¹ was obvious. It is therefore significant that the methods opponents of the Bill feared Jews using to fulfil the prophecies anticipated criticism of the East India Company that would emerge in the 1760s. Both the *Gazetteer* dream and the Genesis 34 parody included a pattern of feigned friendship, followed by increasing numbers of colonists and tyranny until they reduced the natives to slavery, or expelled them. Compare this with Samuel Foote's 1768 play *The Nabob*, which recounted that the Company were "admitted as friends" had "a beneficial commerce with the inoffensive and innocent people" until "at length we growing too strong for the natives, we turn them out of their lands, and take possession of their money and jewels".²³² All of this suggests that reflections on prophecy helped to contribute to the wider debates on imperialism current in mid-eighteenth-century England. The presumption in Judeo-centrism of a flourishing Jewish empire invited comparison and critique of Britain's own endeavours. While the Bill's opponents denied that there could ever be any connection of Jewishness with Britishness, the Jews ironically became mirrors of Britain's imperial anxieties.²³³

It is wrong, however, to argue that those who opposed the Bill did so because it made Jewish restoration to Palestine more unlikely. For the Bill's opponents, the idea of Jewish restoration was a threat to their

²²⁸ Greene, *Evaluating Empire*, pp. 54–64

²²⁹ Samuel Johnson, *The Idler in Two Volumes* (London, 1761) Vol. II, pp. 160–165.

²³⁰ *LEP* 4063, 24th–27th November 1753, p. 1.

²³¹ *LEP* 4032, 13th–15th September 1753, p. 1.

²³² Quoted in Greene, *Evaluating Empire*, p. 132.

²³³ On the idea of natives as 'mirrors' of Englishness see Wilson, *The Island Race*, pp. 54–91.

conception of both Christianity and England—when they spoke about prophecies, almost invariably they meant prophecies of Jewish separation. The one notable exception to this was the Commons debate on the Bill of 15th May 1753. Isham’s speech noted that the Jews must be “without fixed habitation, until they acknowledge Christ to be the messiah, and then they are to be gathered together from all corners of the earth, and to be restored to their native land”.²³⁴ Barnard, similarly, argued that they would be homeless until “they have acknowledged Christ to be the messiah: and when they do this, they are to be restored to their native land”.²³⁵ While, at the start of the debate, some of the Bill’s opponents did use prophecies of restoration, they were more common amongst the Bill’s supporters.

4 JEWISH RESTORATION IN WORKS SUPPORTING THE JEW BILL

Much of the Judeo-centric discourse that emerged in the debates surrounding the Bill aimed to counter the prophetic interpretation offered by its opponents. As discussed above, this tended to focus on the curses God had threatened the Jews with, and the idea that these precluded any form of Jewish incorporation into a gentile nation. Against this, Judeo-centric writers aimed to prove that not only was naturalisation possible, but that it was a necessary prelude to the full restoration of the Jews. This position reflected the allo-Semitism of their authors. These writers argued for separation and incorporation at the same time—Jews could become English while remaining separate and still maintaining their unique prophetic promises. For these writers, the Bill represented a point of encounter—the momentary crossing of English and Jewish destinies—that both legitimated England’s eschatological role and allowed the Jews to claim their destiny. The survival of the Jews as a distinct nation since the destruction of Jerusalem provided reassurance that God was able to maintain nations.

The opponents of the Bill thus mistook the nature of prophecies when they argued against incorporation. “This is not the fact”, argued Philo-Patriae, “Christ’s prediction was, that their temple should be destroyed and they dispersed, this is verified; but he never said they should not be

²³⁴ *Parliamentary History* XIV:1381.

²³⁵ *Parliamentary History* XIV:1389.

received as subjects by any nation”.²³⁶ Edward Weston, writing in the aftermath of the controversy, reminded readers “the punishment of the *Jews*, as a people, consists in their separation from the land of promise, in the destruction of their city, temple and civil government, as exercised in *Judaea*, whilst God permitted them to continue a nation under his own theocratical superintendency”.²³⁷ “Tho’ the scriptures inform us, that the Jews shall be dispers’d over the face of the whole earth”, stormed preacher Peter Peckard, “they no where say, that they shall continue in that condition for ever, but plainly assert the contrary”.²³⁸ Josiah Tucker’s official response noted that the prophecies did not exclude the Jews from any nation, and that to claim that they did showed a severe want of Christian charity. While “at present under a dreadful delusion, [they] are still the *natural* branches, and when the divine providence shall think proper, will be *grafted in againe*, i.e. naturalized”.²³⁹ To claim that the Jews’ situation was hopeless, Tucker intimated, was to ignore clear prophecies of their future blessing. As *The Gentleman’s Magazine* concluded in frustration in June 1753, the claim that prophecy was being frustrated by the Bill’s opponents “will for ever stigmatize the present age of moral philosophy, in which every one boasts to detect the frauds of superstition”. This was not because the prophecies were not true, but because the Bill’s opponents interpreted them illogically: “if the prophecies concerning the *Jews* are not fulfilled, Christianity is not true; and if Christianity is true, these prophecies cannot but be fulfilled”.²⁴⁰ The Bill’s opponents, its supporters argued, were guilty of a form of extreme supersessionism that ignored any

²³⁶ Philo-Patriae, *Further Considerations on the Act to Permit Persons Professing the Jewish religion to be Naturalized by Parliament* (London, 1753), p. 62. Edgar Samuel believed Philo-Patriae to be a pseudonym for Joseph Salvador, although I am not convinced by the evidence offered (see Samuel, “The Jews in English Foreign Trade”, pp. 351–354). While Philo-Patriae is aware of Jewish customs and Talmudic learning, this was not unusual in the period (see Ruderman, *Connecting the Covenants*, pp. 11–19). Neither is the fact that the *London Evening Post* claimed that Philo-Patriae was Jewish—a common insult against anybody writing in favour of the Bill (see in particular the *Post’s* treatment of the Sephardi community’s [Christian] lawyer, Philip Carteret Webb “the Jew”, “the Jew lawyer” etc.—i.e. *LEP* 3997, 4004, 4014).

²³⁷ [Edward Weston], *ΔΙΑΣΠΟΡΑ: Some Reflections upon the Questions relating to the Naturalization of the Jews* (London, 1754), p. 17.

²³⁸ Peter Peckard, *The Popular Clamour Against the Jews Indefensible: A Sermon Preached at Huntingdon, October the 28th, 1753* (Cambridge, 1753), pp. 17–18.

²³⁹ Josiah Tucker, *A Letter to a Friend*, p. 14.

²⁴⁰ *Gentleman’s Magazine*, 23:6 (June 1753), p. 280.

relevance at all for the Jewish people other than as markers of judgement. While this was one way to read their continued separation and survival as a people group, it was also possible to recognise that God kept them distinct for a special prophetic purpose. “What is become of the ancient *Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans*” asked “A True Believer” rhetorically, “Do any of them survive in their successors?”²⁴¹ “If you act consistently with the gospel, and your own doctrine of the *call*, you ought to protect the *Jews*, and prevent their ruin”, noted the author of *Looking Glass for the Jews*, “For if they are to be destroyed, how can the *call* take place? How can the kingdom of *Israel* be restored to them?”²⁴² Those who opposed the Bill should thus remember, “the Almighty seems still to have a regard to the gracious promises he made to their pious ancestors, that he will not cast them off for ever, but in his own due time, will again distinguish them by his favours”.²⁴³

What was the future purpose? “We can have no doubt, but *all* the prophesies concerning that people will have their accomplishment, in God’s good time; as those concerning their dispersion, *have* been most evidently and remarkably completed”, noted one correspondent in the *Norwich Mercury*. Thus “we cannot but look with pleasure and delight at any step; which may seem to tend, how remotely so-ever, to their restitution to their own land; whether before or after their conversion to Christianity”.²⁴⁴ “To bring them back from the four winds, to the land of their Fathers”, noted Weston, “to convert and put them again in possession of *Jerusalem*, and the holy mountain: This is the true end of the dispersion; the revocation of the decree of their national punishment, the completion of every prophecy”.²⁴⁵ The logic of restoration helped the proponents of the Bill, as it combated claims that the Jews were seeking to take over England. The Jews, noted Philo-Patriae, “have no thought of having an independent state in any country, but the *Holy Land*. What possibly can ever make them desire to leave our obedience, while we let them enjoy their private liberties?”²⁴⁶ “And let not any of my countrymen be

²⁴¹ “A True Believer”, *An Apology for the Naturalization of the Jews* (London, 1753), p. 3.

²⁴² *A Looking Glass for the Jews: Or, the Credulous Unbelievers* (London, 1753), p. vii.

²⁴³ *An Apology for the Naturalization*, p. 4.

²⁴⁴ *Some Queries Relative to the Jews* (London, 1753), p. 10. This work reprinted a series of letters from the *Mercury*.

²⁴⁵ [Weston], *ΔΙΑΣΠΟΡΑ*, p. 20.

²⁴⁶ Philo-Patriae, *Considerations on the Bill to Permit Persons Professing the Jewish Religion to be Naturalized by Parliament* (London, 1753), p. 18.

terrified with dreams of a *Jewish State* and *Sanhedrin* in our *Island* as the consequence of their conversion”, another pamphleteer advised, “see with your own eyes, and believe your Bibles. Thus saith the Lord, ‘Behold, I will take the children of *Israel* from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into *their own land*’”.²⁴⁷ For others, those who opposed the Bill were being selective in their use of prophecy. It was common to hear the Jews cursed on the basis of the Old Testament, complained another correspondent to the *Norwich Mercury*, “yet although the same God hath said they shall be *restored* [the Bill’s opponents] will not hear of their *restoration* with patience”.²⁴⁸

The debate over the Bill also offered an opportunity for a general discussion of Judeo-centric ideas. The author of *An Explanation of Some Prophecies* used the furore over the measure to justify publishing his eschatological speculation. As he argued, “At a time when the Jews are become the subject of much conversation and much controversy in this Kingdom, it cannot be improper to enquire, as strictly as we can, after the very time of their conversion and restoration to the promised land”.²⁴⁹ This restoration was, claimed Weston, the centrepiece of the Bible:

In truth, Sir, the connection of that people with the holy promised land, which was given for a possession to *Abraham* and his seed for ever, has something in it to my apprehension very extraordinary and remarkable. It is a connection, the importance and value of which may be traced through all the books from *Genesis* to the *Revelations*; a connection magnified by the prophets, and adored by the people; regretted most bitterly when broken, and triumphed in when restored. It is the subject of God’s almighty’s [*sic*] favour, and of his anger, of his rewards, and of his punishments. It extends from the time of *Abraham* to that of *Titus*; and when once more renewed, as renewed it must be, may perhaps out-live the present system.²⁵⁰

For these writers, the Bill was a first step towards the coming restoration to the land. Even Pelham, in seeking to address concerns that the Bill undermined prophecy in May, hinted as much. The Jews could never expect to be “established in a country which they could call their own”

²⁴⁷ *The Crisis, or an Alarm to Britannia’s True Protestant Sons* (London, 1753), p. 23.

²⁴⁸ *Some Queries*, p. 28.

²⁴⁹ *An Explanation of Some Prophecies Contained in the Book of Daniel* (London, 1753), p. 13.

²⁵⁰ [Weston], *ΔΙΑΣΠΟΡΑ*, p. 19.

until “they have acknowledged Christ to be the messiah, and have embraced his religion. If the indulgence proposed to them in this country could contribute to this desirable end, as I think it will, I hope every gentleman will admit that it is a strong argument in favour of the Bill”.²⁵¹ Pamphleteers writing in favour of the measure stated this position much more forcefully. “I have observed indeed and sincerely hope it will be so”, noted a writer who identified himself only as a member of the Church of England, “that the *conversion* of the *Jews* may be the consequence of *this bill*... the opinion of their *conversion* and *restoration* had been a settled and determined one, strengthened and supported in many passages of scripture”.²⁵² “It is not here said, that the CONVERSION of the JEWS was the thing intended by this ACT”, noted the preacher Thomas Winstanley, “though it would be hard to say it was not. But whatever was the end proposed, or whatever were the motives to it, whether good or bad; if it should hereafter be productive of such good and excellent fruits, we Christians surely shall have no just cause of complaint”.²⁵³ The Jews might remember, “there are several passages in the same scriptures, which speak of their restoration, as well as their conversion, in the plainest and most expressive terms”—could the Bill, he wondered, be seen “as something more than human, as something providential, in their favour”?²⁵⁴ For some, to fight against the Bill was “to deny what the scripture so expressly affirms, that they will be restored to the privilege of being the peculiar people of God”. The same writer, rather optimistically given the tone of the debate, argued that “the first step towards their restoration will be that God will give them favour in the sight of all sincere Christians”.²⁵⁵

All of these commentators placed the Bill within an eschatological context. It was to act as the catalyst for the conversion of the Jews and the restoration to their land. The implication was, as at Whitehall and throughout the earlier eighteenth century, that England would have a distinct role to play in Jewish restoration. Where at Whitehall that role had been based around a geo-political military alliance, and earlier eighteenth-century

²⁵¹ *Parliamentary History* XIV:1415.

²⁵² *An Earnest and Serious Address to The Electors and Freeholders of Great Britain* (London, 1753), pp. 16–17.

²⁵³ Thomas Winstanley, *A Sermon Preached at the Parish-Church of St. George, Hanover-Square, Sunday October 28, 1753: On Occasion of the Clamours against the Act for Naturalizing the Jews* (London, 1753), p. 14.

²⁵⁴ Winstanley, *Sermon*, p. 18.

²⁵⁵ *A True State*, pp. 31–32.

writers viewed the nation as uniting as one in prayer for Jewish restoration, the “chosen” role for writers in favour of the Jew Bill was based around political action centred on England. This is not to say that older positions did not come into the debate. Prayer, once again, was central: “How different is the language of the *popular* clamor [*sic*] from that of our church towards this people. Curses and not prayers are uttered now from every quarter”.²⁵⁶ The belief that England would physically restore the Jews re-emerged. The ships of Tarshish mentioned in Isaiah 60, thought one author, “clearly implies that the *first* return of these *Jews* shall be by ships passing along the Mediterranean, from remote islands”.²⁵⁷ The privileges that naturalised Jews could now enjoy anticipated their future restoration: “the first setting out of the *Jews* to their own land will be from *England*, not only by assistance of an *English* fleet, but that, by the late naturalization of the *Jews* here, they may be enabled not only to extend their trade, enrich themselves, but purchase ships of their own”.²⁵⁸ The predominant eschatological idea linked English piety with the prophetic potential for conversion. This was another theme discussed at Whitehall, but it emerged in a new way within the eighteenth-century context. In one sense, this explicitly challenged ideas of a stable, English identity, by embracing Englishness as a fluid identity marker that could incorporate Jews temporarily. On another, however, these same writers continued to emphasise the inevitability of Jewish restoration to Palestine. The Jews would thus contribute to English identity, and gain from it those attributes that would prepare them to resume their rightful role as God’s people on earth. Where their opponents feared pollution of the national body through contact with foreigners, so the Bill’s supporters embraced a model in which national (and imperial) expansion was beneficial. It was, in other words, an archetypal example of the point of encounter between English and Jewish identity, as God restored his previous favourites.

While emphasising the Jews’ separation from gentiles, at the same time supporters of the Bill imagined how this incorporation would work. This idea of elect identity saw the Jews as a blank slate: “Like cloth ready to receive any dye” as Philo-Patriae put it.²⁵⁹ The Jews could therefore

²⁵⁶ *An Earnest and Serious Address*, p. 12. See also Winstanley, *Sermon*, p. 27.

²⁵⁷ *The Full and Final Restoration of the Jews and Israelites, Evidently set Forth to be Nigh at Hand: With Their Happy Settlement in Their Own Land* (London, 1753), p. 14.

²⁵⁸ *Full and Final Restoration*, p. 15.

²⁵⁹ Philo-Patriae, *Further Considerations*, p. 7.

incorporate into the nation without any difficulty. This historical process of national integration had been ongoing since prehistory. “But do we remember, that our ancestors, and Christianity itself, were both originally of a *foreign* growth?” noted the author of *Crisis*, “Neither the soil nor the climate produced either. Into what a *chaos* would this whimsical notion of a *native* of *Great-Britain* reduce us! At this rate neither laity nor clergy would find it easy to trace out an hereditary right to their land in religion”.²⁶⁰ By recognising that the nation itself was a mixture of people groups, it was possible to imagine a Jewish presence without difficulty. The claim by some opponents of the Bill that even a Jew born in England was not English was therefore ludicrous: “Who are the English, than by any other method, than by being born here in *England*? For is not our nation a mixture of *Saxons*, *Danes*, *Germans*, and *French*, with the *Antient Britons*?”²⁶¹ The elusive quality of Englishness was not defined simply by drawing on the idea of a pure English bloodline, but rather upon ideas of birthright and connection to the inherent qualities of the land. Awareness of the compound nature of British identity after the Act of Union helped to condition this.²⁶² Yet it would be wrong to view this as a complete repudiation of alterity as a way of defining nation identity. Rather, there was an awareness of the potential for positive transformations through residence in England. Philo-Patriae illustrated this when he concluded that Jews “from *Spain* have the pride, ostentation and jealousy peculiar to that nation... those from *Holland* and *Germany* many of the vices of those nations; and, among those of this country, may be found many of the *English* virtues, and more particularly love of liberty and their country”.²⁶³

By allowing the Jews to claim a part of English identity, the nation would therefore be able to impart their own positive characteristics to them. These writers saw even this “naturalisation” within a prophetic context. It was by passing on the beneficial attributes of Englishness that the

²⁶⁰ *The Crisis, or an Alarm*, p. 11.

²⁶¹ *An Address to the Friends of Great-Britain Occasion'd by the Debates among the People and the Answer to Considerations on the Bill for Naturalizing the Jews* (London, 1753), p. 7.

²⁶² Colley, *Britons*, pp. 11–18; J.C.D. Clark, “Protestantism, Nationalism and National Identity, 1660–1832”, *Historical Journal* 43:1 (2000), pp. 249–276; Colin Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World, 1600–1800* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), pp. 99–122.

²⁶³ Philo-Patriae, *Further Considerations*, p. 7. See also p. 42: “I ever was of the opinion, that men’s geniuses, nationally considered, are equal; where there is any difference, it must arise either from education or circumstances”.

Jews would be prepared not only to convert to Christianity, but also to return to their own land. This was the point of encounter, in which English and Jewish destinies crossed. In this way, England would play the key role in their glorification. God had kept the Jews separate from other nations in order that they could become naturalised, convert in England, and then return to Palestine. Their essential separation therefore became a legitimisation of England itself.²⁶⁴ Ironically, through access to naturalised status and true English character, the Jews would recognise their own Jewishness. Their time in England would therefore remove any negative traits, allow them to convert to Christianity, and thereby to reclaim what these authors argued was “true” Jewish identity. “The general conversion of the *Jewish* nation must begin *somewhere*, and none can tell *how soon*, why should we endeavour to prevent its *beginning* here?” asked Tucker.²⁶⁵ *A Looking Glass for the Jews* posed the same question: “Unless you can see into future events, and are acquainted with the precise time of their call, how do you know but their naturalization here is the first step to their conversion; and that *England* is this happy country where this great revolution in the affairs of the world is to commence?”²⁶⁶ “They will not continue long with us”, predicted the author of *Full and Final Restoration* confidently, “and that even the passing this Naturalization Act, may in some measure, strengthen them both earlier and easier to depart to their own land”.²⁶⁷ Where the opponents of the Bill worried about the consequences of blessing a people cursed by God, for the supporters of the Bill the opposite was true: “Let us seriously consider what danger attends the misusing them”, warned Philo-Patriae, “and I defy any one to shew a nation, either ancient or modern, that has not proved the truth of this menace. The *Spanish* and *Portuguese* monarchies have been late instances of it in the strongest manner”.²⁶⁸ Weston sombrely noted that the English “beware, that *we*

²⁶⁴This contrasts with Alan Singer’s point that the Jews became an “anti-nation” in works opposed to the Bill, providing a negative reflection of the English (Alan H. Singer, “Great Britain or Judea Nova? National Identity, Property, and the Jewish Naturalization Controversy of 1753”, in Sheila A. Spector (ed.), *Romanticism and the Jews: History, Culture, Literature* [Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002], pp. 19–36). In works supportive of it, the Jews become not merely a positive reflection of the English, but also the legitimators of the nation’s mission.

²⁶⁵Tucker, *Second Letter*, p. 42.

²⁶⁶*A Looking Glass*, p. vii.

²⁶⁷*Full and Final*, p. 2.

²⁶⁸Philo-Patriae, *Further Considerations*, p. 90.

curse not those whom God hath not cursed; more especially, as we know not how near that time may be, when it shall please God to fulfil in the eyes of all nations, what remains to be fulfilled of his covenant with their illustrious ancestor”.²⁶⁹ The idea that England would face blessing or curse dependent on her treatment of the Jews was still clearly an important part of the debate.

This chapter has highlighted the range of ways in which Judeo-centrism continued to have an impact in the mid-eighteenth century. The debate over the Jew Bill was complex and the arguments that surrounded it absorbed a number of concerns, including criticisms of the Pelhamite ministry, worries about the unity of the state, concerns over Britain’s imperial role, and fears over the future of religion. Within all of these categories, Judeo-centrism had a role to play, whether in providing the narrative background that allowed wide discussion of theories of Jewish militarism and takeover, or in continuing to argue for the centrality of the restoration of the Jews and England’s role within it. That the exact understanding of what this was had shifted from the 1650s and earlier eighteenth century is no surprise. Yet the fact that commentators still believed England to have a role at all, and that this was bound up with the most important debate on what constituted Englishness in mid-century, shows the continued strength of Judeo-centrism as a tool of identity construction. Indeed, the split between the Bill’s supporters’ and opponents’ use of prophecy might represent an early example of the ambiguity Cheyette found in his examination of late nineteenth-century imperial views of Jews as both idealised imperial subjects, and as a dark threat to empire due to their inability to assimilate.²⁷⁰ Regardless of this, in the eighteenth-century context the five-point model laid out in this book’s introduction continued to apply. Judeo-centrists continued to view England as a chosen nation that found its destiny tied to Israel. This provided a national mission, at the same time as it raised concerns about the nation’s future. Naturalising Jews also offered opportunity for repentance for past sin, and, finally, legitimated the nation in a time of uncertainty. When writers emphasised the polyglot nature of their own identity, theoretically dismantling the otherness of the Jews, the idea of restoration and promotion above the gentiles and the belief that God judged nations by the manner in which they treated the Jews continued to emphasise Jewish difference. Nonetheless, the restored

²⁶⁹ Weston, *ΔΙΑΣΠΟΡΑ*, pp. 40–41.

²⁷⁰ Cheyette, *Constructions of ‘The Jew’*, pp. 55–93.

Jews would have imbibed English ideas (and Christianity) during their brief, naturalised period in the nation. This represented a dynamic point of encounter, in which English and Jewish identities briefly crossed. These ideas, along with prophetic criticisms of imperialism, continued to develop into the later eighteenth century. By the time of the seemingly apocalyptic events of the French Revolution, an expectation of Jewish restoration unmatched since the Whitehall conference developed, and with it, new ideas of what England stood for.



“Ignorance, Infatuation, and, Perhaps, Insanity!”: Jewish Restoration and National Crisis, 1793–1795

Browsing a Glasgow bookshop in 1793, a curious customer may have stumbled across a small book with an ambitious title. *The Christian's Diary, or An Almanack for One Day* not only claimed to predict “great wars and commotions in several parts of the world, together with dreadful earthquakes in many places”, but also promised that it foretold “the utter destruction of the heathens and Turks; the general calling of the Jews together; and what happy times will succeed to many people; when the poor will be had in equal (or perhaps superior) estimation with the rich”. Any readers doubting that they were the book’s intended audience were reassured that it was suitable for “every Christian, who may have some share of the afore-mentioned wonderful events, which will certainly happen”.¹ Given its title, the book’s contents (not to mention prophetic accuracy) may have caused some disappointment: nowhere did it address the question of the “calling of the Jews together” or destruction of the church’s enemies. Instead, these stock prophetic phrases were commonplace advertising tools, which helped to tie together a whole range of apocalyptic ideas. A book on prophecy, without some reference to the general restoration of the Jews, was unthinkable.

The fact that a passing reference to Jewish restoration was a normal part of these sorts of texts raises important questions about how Judeo-centric

¹ *The Christian's Diary; Or, an Almanack for One Day* (Glasgow, 1793), cover page.

belief developed as a whole over the eighteenth century. It might suggest that belief in Jewish restoration had been reduced to little more than a popular trope, a remnant of “superstition” or folk religion that had little place in serious public discourse.² Yet events of the 1790s were to show that public debate on the prophetic relationship between Englishness and Jewishness could still extend to the heart of national consciousness. Arguments during the Jew Bill furore revealed the controversial nature of the prophecies of restoration, particularly when combined with the possibility of the incorporation of Jews within the English body politic.³ These reappeared forcefully in the 1790s. In the midst of political and public tension over the threat of revolution, the emergence of Richard Brothers as the self-proclaimed “Prince of the Hebrews” led to political and religious debates on the position of Jews in England, and the possibility of their restoration to Palestine. Where the point of encounter between England and Israel in 1753 allowed Jews to absorb English qualities and convert, for Brothers it would take place through the revelation that England’s finest were in fact secret Jews. In suggesting that there were many “hidden Jews” in England, who presumed that they were English despite their inherent Jewishness, Brothers’s mission returned to questions of whether Jews could be part of the wider English nation. His prophecies implied, on the one hand, that the incorporation was automatic and had already happened. After all, if Brothers himself, William Pitt, and the Countess of Buckinghamshire were unknowingly Jewish, then Jewish identity might prove unproblematic for any Englishman.⁴ At the same time, Brothers did not believe that the “hidden Jews” would remain English for much longer. Under his leadership, they were to depart for Palestine where he would establish a new empire ruling from Jerusalem.

²Of course, it would be wrong to dismiss “popular” or “folk” religion as simple or unimportant. Sarah Williams’ use of oral histories of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Southwark have shown the depth of vernacular theology and personal meaning in beliefs dismissed by church authorities as “superstitious” (Sarah Williams, *Religious Belief and Popular Culture in Southwark, c.1880–1939* [Oxford: OUP, 1999]). Recent studies of “lived religion” have also demonstrated the way in which ideas dismissed by religious authorities can powerfully influence the lives of believers in the same tradition. See, for example, Meredith McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford: OUP, 2008).

³Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation*, pp. 1–11.

⁴Richard Brothers, *A Revealed Knowledge of the Prophecies and Times, Book the First* (London, 1794), pp. 62–64.

There, Jewish identity would come to supersede the English, as Brothers’s new kingdom would place all other nations firmly in the shade. Adding to this controversy, Brothers stated that England had the primary responsibility for restoring the Jews. Rejection of this role would result in “its utter annihilation from the face of the globe”.⁵ At the same time, he clung to Englishness, praising the nation as “the incomparable garden” containing the bravest, best, and strongest people, and modelling his plans to rebuild Jerusalem on an idealised version of London.⁶

This fragmented view of national identity, and the questions it raised over England’s future eschatological role, were part of a broader debate that raged in the context of the revolutionary tumult in France. The idea of England’s unique role, and a physical restoration of the Jews to Palestine, remained as a consistent element in eschatological thought; as in the Jew Bill controversy, it served as a way to explore what it meant to be English in a changing world. While Judeo-centrism changed over the course of the later eighteenth century, it continued to have a role in wider English religious thought. However, it was a contested area. Both conservatives and radicals employed it as part of their broad impression of Englishness—both claiming that England could guarantee its status among the nations through its relationship with Jews.

1 JUDEO-CENTRISM 1753–1790

As Neil Hitchin has noted, it would be a mistake to see apocalyptic speculation suddenly emerging from hibernation in the 1790s.⁷ As was the case in the 1750s, interest in prophecy remained strong in the following decades. This has often been divided into two streams—one scholarly, and one popular.⁸ Essentially, this looks at works of advanced exegesis on one side, and the cheap pamphlet popularisations of prophets on the other. Yet, as those who pioneered this approach have been careful to argue, the

⁵ Richard Brothers, *A Letter from Mr. Brothers to Miss Cott* (London, 1798), p. 36.

⁶ Brothers, *Letter...to Miss Cott*, pp. 64–65.

⁷ Neil Hitchin, “The Evidence of Things Seen: Georgian Churchmen and Biblical Prophecy”, in Bertrand Taithe and Tim Thornton (eds), *Prophecy: The Power of Inspired Language in History 1300–2000* (Thrupp: Sutton, 1997), p. 134.

⁸ See Clarke Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, pp. 152–154 and J.F.C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism 1780–1850* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), pp. 3–10. Susan Juster refers to “respectable” and “underworld” traditions (Susan Juster, *Doomsayers*, p. 15).

division is largely an interpretative fiction.⁹ Ideas from scholarly exegesis could (as in the 1650s) be picked up by popular prophets, reimagined, and incorporated into their prophetic works. Edward May's 1790 publication of Pierre Jurieu's prophetic writings, condensed and glossed extensively (May had a cunning solution to Jurieu's dating the end of the papacy in 1785), shows the way in which this crossover could work.¹⁰ Similarly, Brothers's dedicated follower Nathaniel Brassey Halhed (1751–1830), MP and distinguished scholar of Hinduism, wrote pamphlets that could easily be located on either side of the scholarly/popular divide. With this caveat in place, the split between scholarly and popular works is still useful as a heuristic device. Late eighteenth-century reviews of apocalyptic texts reveal that while a firm division between the two categories may not have existed, commentators presumed that it should do. A magazine correspondent who dismissed pamphlets predicting the French Revolution as a "farce of prophecy", for example, approvingly quoted Bishop Newton's *Dissertations on the Prophecies* as an intelligent study of the subject.¹¹ One of the most interesting elements of the Brothers controversy was that it forced contemporary writers to struggle with the artificiality of the division of millennialism into scholarly and popular streams.

As the anonymous correspondent above suggested, in terms of scholarly commentaries, Thomas Newton's (1704–1782) magisterial *Dissertations on the Prophecies* was the most important work of the later eighteenth century.¹² Newton, bishop of Bristol from 1761, was an orthodox churchman well regarded for his scholarship. He published the first volume of the *Dissertations* in 1754, and developed the later sections of the work from his Boyle lectures of 1755. The second volume followed in 1758, with the complete text spanning around 900 pages in total. Newton suggested twenty-six dissertations on prophecy, ranging from predictions relating to Noah and Ishmael, to multi-part commentaries on the destruction of Jerusalem and the book of Revelation. The commentary was safely within the established English prophetic tradition in its anti-Catholic positions. The final dissertation, "Recapitulating of prophecies relating to the

⁹ Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, p. 154; Harrison, *Second Coming*, p. 5.

¹⁰ Edward May, *Remarkable Extracts, Selected from a Work Printed in the Year 1687, by Pierre Jurieu, Entitled the Accomplishment of Scripture Prophecies, &c.* (Henley, 1790).

¹¹ C.H., "On Prophetic Interpretations", *Universal Magazine* 96 (March 1795), pp. 194–195.

¹² On the popularity of Newton see Hitchen, "Evidence of Things Seen", pp. 120–123.

papacy”, mined a rich vein of existing anti-papal rhetoric from the preceding 800 pages (and indeed, the previous 200 years).

In his eighth dissertation, Newton dealt explicitly with prophecies relating to the Jews. For him, the Jews would always be a people set apart. The future bishop used extreme language to emphasise their separation from gentiles. Their customs, he wrote, distinguished them to such an extent that they were “in all respects treated, as if they were of another species”.¹³ God had stopped them from merging with the nations in order to provide evidence that they retained a role in his ultimate plan, as well as a warning of the danger of rejecting Christ. At some point in the future, “the Jews will in God’s good time be converted to Christianity, and upon their conversion be restored to their native city and country”.¹⁴ The predictions of a literal restoration were, he concluded in the second volume, “innumerable”.¹⁵ Nations who opposed the Jews, Newton warned, had faced terrible judgements in the past, although he conceded that this appeared to have declined since their rejection of the gospel.¹⁶ Nonetheless, he vehemently condemned those who persecuted the Jews in the present. With the main dissertation on Jews written in the year following the Jew Bill controversy, the level of invective applied against them appears to have had a profound effect on him, and his condemnation of persecution relates directly to his understanding of what England represents. God had decreed that only “wicked nations” persecute the Jews; “persecution is the spirit of Popery... the spirit of Protestantism is toleration”. With one eye on the arguments of the Jew Bill’s opponents, he argued that “compassion to this unhappy people is not to defeat the prophecies”.¹⁷

Newton’s primary concern with the prophecies relating to the Jews, as with his *Dissertations* in general, was to bolster his attacks on Catholicism and deism. He therefore denied preterist readings of Daniel’s visions and the possibility of a personal antichrist.¹⁸ This meant that he was cautious when suggesting the precise whys and wherefores of prophetic fulfilment.

¹³ Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies, Which Have Remarkably been Fulfilled, and at This Time Are Fulfilling in the World* (London, 1789), Vol. 1, p. 114.

¹⁴ Newton, *Dissertations* Vol. 1, p. 138. See also Thomas Newton, *Dissertations on the Prophecies, Which Have Remarkably been Fulfilled, and at This Time Are Fulfilling in the World* (London, 1789), Vol. 2, p. 69.

¹⁵ Newton, *Dissertations*, Vol. 2, p. 394.

¹⁶ Newton, *Dissertations*, Vol. 1, p. 127.

¹⁷ Newton, *Dissertations*, Vol. 1, pp. 139–140.

¹⁸ Newton, *Dissertations*, Vol. 1, pp. 271–286; 409–412; Vol. 2, pp. 69, 82–121.

Readers should rest content in the reliability of prophecy “without knowing *how* they shall be”.¹⁹ Yet Newton was not beyond occasional geopolitical speculation. When considering how the Jews would be restored, for example, he speculated on the possibility of either Persia or Russia being the agent of their return to Palestine.²⁰

Newton’s influence on the course of prophetic exegesis in the eighteenth century was vital. He remained one of the most frequently cited sources by later commentators, and his hearty commendation of restorationism helped to ensure its respectability into the nineteenth century. As one admirer, Joseph Eyre, wrote in 1771, the “*Dissertations on the Prophecies* are, upon the whole, perhaps not to be equalled to anything that has hitherto been published on that subject”.²¹ Yet Eyre was less impressed with the limited amount of space that the bishop had dedicated to the concept of Jewish restoration. Partially conceived as a response to the noted preacher Gregory Sharpe’s 1765 *The Rise and Fall of the Holy City and Temple of Jerusalem*,²² Eyre’s own work provided a robust defence of restorationism in general, and evidence for a continued belief in the firm division of God’s promises between Jews and gentiles.

Eyre therefore believed allegorical interpretations of Jewish promises as predictions of the church’s spiritual glory to be deeply flawed. All prophecies of restoration in the Old Testament “relate to the conversion and restoration of the *literal Israel*, the *Jews* and Ten Tribes”.²³ Eyre ranged widely over prophecies in the Pentateuch, prophets, and apocrypha, demonstrating that “*Israel* shall be restored, and become the most powerful nation upon earth”.²⁴ In an extended appendix, he directly engaged with Sharpe’s arguments relating to Jerusalem’s fall and the permanence of her punishment. Sharpe, who adopted a preterist position, argued that restorationism undermined the uniqueness of the new covenant. He suggested both that land promises were impermanent and that Judeo-centrism erred

¹⁹ Newton, *Dissertations*, Vol. 2, p. 397.

²⁰ Newton, *Dissertations*, Vol. 1, p. 408.

²¹ Joseph Eyre, *Observations upon the Prophecies Relating to the Restoration of the Jews* (London, 1771), pp. vii–viii.

²² Sharpe was master of the Temple, chaplain to the king, and a fellow of the Royal Society. See W. P. Courtney, ‘Sharpe, Gregory (1713–1771)’, rev. Emma Major, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25230>]. Accessed 21st November 2016.

²³ Eyre, *Observations*, p. xi.

²⁴ Eyre, *Observations*, p. 37.

in making Jews superior to gentiles.²⁵ As in restorationist arguments from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, Eyre used scripture to rebut Sharpe’s claims. He attempted to show that if his own interpretation of just one of the hundreds of scriptures he cited was correct then “the point I have undertaken to prove is thereby ascertained and indubitable, tho’ all the rest should seem to be inconclusive”.²⁶ Alongside this, Eyre used evidence from the contemporary Jewish community. Where Sharpe argued that the Mosaic Law had been definitively abrogated after Jerusalem’s destruction, Eyre responded “that this is not true in fact, for the *Jews* to this day observe the greatest part thereof”.²⁷ Reflecting a growing interest in contemporary Jews that had developed after the Jew Bill controversy, Eyre criticised Sharpe for forgetting that the Jewish community still existed and continued to live in hope of restoration to Palestine, a fact that made such a restoration much more likely due to the willingness of its potential participants. While the Jews would still be converted to Christianity, there was nothing to stop them becoming “a separate civil body or nation” in their own land.²⁸

Mayir Vreté has argued that the rising number of publications defending the standard supersessionist reading of Jewish promises in this period implies that there was an increasing need to counter Judeo-centric interpretation.²⁹ While works such as Sharpe’s suggest this to some extent, it seems that rather than a sudden increase in radical belief in Jewish restoration, there was instead a stable interest over the mid-to-late eighteenth century. The treatment of the theme in the period provides evidence for the same pattern as seen earlier in the century: espousing Jewish restoration was a respectable (but always contested) position. Richard Hurd (1720–1808), future bishop of Worcester, therefore stated in 1772 that as prophecies of Jewish scattering had been fulfilled to the letter, so would prophecies of their restoration.³⁰ The idea was not limited to theological

²⁵ Gregory Sharpe, *The Rise and Fall of the Holy City and Temple of Jerusalem* (London, 1764), pp. 36–38.

²⁶ Eyre, *Observations*, p. 123.

²⁷ Eyre, *Observations*, p. 140.

²⁸ Eyre, *Observations*, pp. 154–155.

²⁹ Mayir Vreté, “The Restoration of the Jews in English Protestant Thought, 1790–1840”, *Middle Eastern Studies* 8:1 (1972), p. 24.

³⁰ Richard Hurd, *An Introduction to the Study of the Prophecies Concerning the Christian Church* (London, 1772), p. 174. Hurd preached the twelve sermons in this collection in his position as Warburton lecturer, where he was tasked to “prove the truth of revealed religion,

works. William Hayward Roberts, fellow of Eton College, published a two-volume epic poem in 1774 entitled *Judah Restored*. While he based his Miltonic epic primarily on the end of Jewish captivity in Babylon, he concluded with an evocative image of the coming restoration: “So to your heritage, the promis’d land/Your God once more his scatter’d tribes shall bring;/ Again on Moriah’s mount his shrine shall stand/And Christ shall reign, an universal King”.³¹

The Baptist theologian John Gill (1697–1771) illustrates this continuing interest well. Gill was one of the most important non-conformist theologians of the eighteenth century, and his voluminous works reveal a sustained focus on eschatology. Both his *Exposition of the Books of the Prophets* (1757) and his magnum opus, the three-volume *Body of Doctrinal Divinity* (1769), reveal a concern for the future of the Jews. Gill adopted a literal hermeneutic, which he used to justify both his millennialism and belief in Jewish restoration: “It is a rule to be observed, that a literal sense is not to be departed from without necessity”.³² Old Testament prophecy therefore demonstrated the inevitability of the restoration of the Jews. Gill’s unusual millennial interpretation split Christ’s coming kingdom into two distinct periods: Christ’s spiritual reign and his physical rule on earth. The spiritual kingdom would be similar to the present world, except with a great increase in conversions, holiness, and an end of most theological errors. However, it would not be perfect, and sinners would still be present.³³ Christ’s personal reign, the millennium of Revelation 20, would begin with the resurrection of the righteous, and proceed on a renewed earth for a thousand years.³⁴ The conversion of the Jews would take place during Christ’s spiritual reign. Once the papacy had fallen, Protestant princes would pour out the first five vials of God’s judgement (Rev. 16:1–11) through the invasion and defeat of Catholic nations. At this point, the Jews would convert *en masse* and “return to their own land and

in general, and of the Christian in particular, from the completion of the prophecies in the Old and New Testament which relate to the Christian church, especially in the apostasy of Papal Rome” (p. viii).

³¹ William Hayward Roberts, *Judah Restored: A Poem* (London, 1774), Vol. 2, p. 118.

³² John Gill, *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity* (London, 1769), p. 1005.

³³ Most notably the papacy and child baptism. See Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, pp. 711–713. On Gill’s millennialism see Gribben, *Evangelical Millennialism*, pp. 62–67.

³⁴ Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, pp. 970–1044.

possess it, being assisted, as they will be, by Protestant princes, who will drive out the *Turk* and establish them”.³⁵

Gill set out exactly which Protestant princes would be responsible in his 1757 *Exposition...of the Prophets*. His exegesis of Isaiah 60, a favourite passage for those tracing England’s eschatological role, was particularly noteworthy. The Jews would convert and “shall gather together in a body, and go up to *Jerusalem*, where a Christian church of them will be formed”.³⁶ Isaiah’s description of the ships of Tarshish bringing God’s sons and daughters from the isles was interpreted as “the *Jews* converted in distant parts of the world, who shall be brought in transport-ships to the churches of Christ, particularly in *Judea*... and what ships can be better understood than ours of *Great-Britain*, so famous for shipping, and which claims the sovereignty of the seas? these [*sic*] may be principally employed in bringing great numbers of converts from different places to the church of God”.³⁷

Despite this, Gill did not subscribe to some of the more extreme divisions between God’s promises for Jews and gentiles traced over the last three chapters. Alluding to Ezekiel 37, Gill was clear that “These two sticks, Jews and Gentiles, will become one”.³⁸ Yet he also placed severe practical limits on this unity. The Jews would travel to Palestine immediately on their conversion, with the territory destined to become a base from which Protestant rulers could carry the gospel into “*Tartary, Persia, China*, and the countries of the great *Mogul*”.³⁹ While affirming the spiritual unity theoretically promoted by the gospel, at the same time Gill imagined Jews set safely apart from other Christians and outside of Europe. Concerns about national identity were clearly working on him as he preached the 1766 sermon that formed the basis for *A Body of Doctrinal Divinity*’s discussion of the Jewish future.⁴⁰ In a striking passage, he recalled his horrified reaction to the Jew Bill. He had thought the legislation impossible “being so contrary to scripture-revelation and prophecy”

³⁵ Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, p. 716. His exegesis of the vials is on pp. 715–719.

³⁶ John Gill, *An Exposition of the Books of the Prophets of the Old Testament* (London, 1757), Vol. 1, p. 330.

³⁷ Gill, *Exposition...of the Prophets*, p. 331.

³⁸ Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, p. 716.

³⁹ Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, p. 717.

⁴⁰ Gill refers to prophecies that the millennium would commence in 1766 as “this very year”. A footnote confirms the date of the sermon. See Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, p. 715.

and was thrown into confusion when it became law. The Bill's repeal ("and that before one Jew was naturalized") reaffirmed his faith; he suggested that the Bill had only been able to pass in order to demonstrate to humanity that God would ultimately frustrate any attempt to undermine prophecy.⁴¹ It is suggestive that the uncomfortable memory of a time when the potential dissolution of boundaries between Jew and Gentile raised the fluidity of Englishness was only banished by an appeal to a prophecy in which spiritual barriers would be replaced by geographic separation.⁴²

Popular references to the restoration of the Jews, as in the almanac at the start of this chapter, were also present throughout the eighteenth century. Susan Juster has identified 189 self-identified prophets operating in Britain from 1750–1820 from newspaper reports, archives, and journals—it is likely there were more.⁴³ Pamphlets such as *Great and Wonderful News to All Christendom* (1780), reprinted from a 1750 original, continued to offer generalised predictions of the return "to the Holy Land of Canaan... for the ten tribes must return" alongside more colourful warnings that the "Grand Turk shall destroy Christendom" because of its many sins.⁴⁴ Alongside these, new appeals directly to the Jews began to appear. The majority of these were more irenic than the angry rhetoric of the 1750s, and called for conversion. Some were by Jewish converts, such as Daniel Tnangam Alexander's *Call to the Jews* (1770), while concerned gentiles wrote others.⁴⁵ The independent minister Richard Clarke, for example, published a number of short books designed to convince Jewish

⁴¹ Gill, *Body of Doctrinal Divinity*, p. 716.

⁴² Another notable use of the Jew Bill from the 1760s was published in 1765 by an author who identified himself as "Rabby Shylock". *The Jew Apologist, or, Considerations of the Jew Bill* (London, 1765) was a Roman Catholic attack on Protestantism's denial that St. Peter was the rock that the Church would be built upon, per Jesus's statement in Matthew 16:18. The author claimed that Protestants' argument that the Jew Bill would invalidate prophecy was patently invalid given their own ignorance of the clear prophecy in Matthew. He wondered why Protestants "make such a pother [*sic*] about the prophecies, which seem to denounce Jews for ever vagrants; whilst, in opposition to their own messia's [*sic*] solemn promises, pledged for the perpetuity of his reigning successors, that continue at variance with them?" (p. vi).

⁴³ Juster, *Doomsayers*, p. 64.

⁴⁴ *Great and Wonderful News to All Christendom* (London, 1780), pp. 3, 7.

⁴⁵ On conversion narratives in the period see Katz, *Jews in the History of England*, pp. 202–204.

readers that Jesus was the messiah.⁴⁶ While Clarke did not mention restoration in his publications, the theme emerged prominently elsewhere. This is unsurprising, given that many of these works appealed directly to prophecy for validation. The 1783 *A Call to the Jews*, written by an unidentified Unitarian, found the author optimistically keeping himself “in readiness to accompany you, and, if called on by you, to lead you back”, and offering to meet any Jew to develop a practical plan for restoration.⁴⁷ Like Gill, the author revealed that the Jew Bill debate left an ongoing mark on English views of Judaism. The Jews would not have any “settlement, on the rights of citizenship, till you believe”;⁴⁸ recalling that “the clamours of the nation were so vehement against it” that the government had to abandon the Bill.⁴⁹

The most famous of these direct appeals were Joseph Priestley’s (1733–1804) collected letters to Jews, which led to a spirited exchange with the self-educated Jewish controversialist David Levi (1742–1801).⁵⁰ Priestley, a Unitarian minister as well as a pioneering chemist, argued from 1772 onwards that Jewish restoration was a necessary precondition of the millennium.⁵¹ He published his first *Letters to the Jews* in 1786. The *Letters* opened with the declaration that he “reverences your nation [and] is a believer in the future glory of it”.⁵² His central argument was that Jews were under judgement for their continued rejection of Jesus, but could overcome their objections to his messiahship by taking a rational (Unitarian) view of his claims. Priestley hoped that the letters would start dialogue between Unitarians and Jews, and lay the foundation for the Jews’ eventual conversion and establishment in Palestine. A firm boundary

⁴⁶ For example: Richard Clarke, *Signs of Times, or, a Voice to Babylon... and to the Jews in Particular* (London, 1773) and *A Series of Dialogues Addressed to the Jews* (London, 1775).

⁴⁷ A Friend of the Jews, *A Call to the Jews* (London, 1783), pp. 9, 241.

⁴⁸ A Friend of the Jews, *A Call*, p. 3.

⁴⁹ A Friend of the Jews, *A Call*, p. 5.

⁵⁰ Levi produced his own *Disertations on the Prophecies of the Old Testament in Two Parts* (London, 1793). On Levi, see Jack Fruchtman, “David and Goliath: Jewish Conversion and Philo-Semitism in Late-Eighteenth-Century English Millenarian Thought”, in James E. Force and Richard H. Popkin (eds), *The Millenarian Turn*, pp. 133–144 and Richard Popkin, “David Levi, Anglo-Jewish Theologian”, *Jewish Quarterly Review* 87 (1996), pp. 79–101.

⁵¹ Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, pp. 129–133; Joseph Priestley, *Institutes of Natural and Revealed Religion*, Second Edition (Birmingham, 1782), pp. 420–429.

⁵² Joseph Priestley, *Letters to the Jews; Inviting Them to an Amiable Discussion of the Evidences of Christianity* (Birmingham, 1786), p. 1.

would remain between Jew and gentiles, even after conversion: “since you are still be distinguished as *Jews*, no less than as Christians, it will be more convenient for you to form a separate church”.⁵³

Priestley’s work drew a number of responses, most notably from Levi,⁵⁴ who claimed that Priestley must be a false Christian as he rejected the clear testimony of the gospels.⁵⁵ This was one of the few areas that Levi and Priestley’s Christian critics could agree upon. As James Bicheno (d. 1831) noted, while Priestley should receive “much praise” for his efforts, “his intemperate zeal for his own peculiar opinions” sullied his noble aims in “traducing those as idolators who hold the divinity of Jesus Christ”.⁵⁶ Bicheno, a Baptist minister and author who wrote on both religion and politics, appealed to Jews from a more orthodox position. God would gather the Jews together and “restore them to their own land”, which would result in gentiles discovering a deeper experience of God.⁵⁷

The debate over Priestley’s work often turned to national interest. Richard Worthington, a minister and medical doctor, joined Bicheno in criticising Priestley, while also praising his focus upon prophecies of Jewish restoration. The Jews, he noted, would rise to glory while the nations of the world declined. This might, he suggested, offer “some improved maxims of policy... advantageously applied by each state to itself”.⁵⁸ The Taunton minister Thomas Reader agreed with Worthington in viewing Priestley as an infidel, but went further in producing a long work affirming the eternal right of the Jews to Palestine. He predicted that restoration and conversion, under a new Davidic king, would take place in 1866 with the assistance of gentiles, while the new Christian faith of London Jews would revive Christianity in England.⁵⁹ One of the most intriguing of these appeals is a copy of a pamphlet made by Lord Cornwallis in May 1785. Apparently written by a “British American Royalist”, it appealed directly to Jews regarding “your wish to regain your country” and

⁵³ Priestley, *Letters*, pp. 42–43.

⁵⁴ Katz, *Jews in the History of England*, pp. 296–300; Endelman, *Jews of Georgian England*, pp. 220, 284.

⁵⁵ Joseph Priestley, *Letters to the Jews Part II, Occasioned by Mr David Levi’s Reply to the Former Letters* (Birmingham, 1787), pp. 8–13.

⁵⁶ James Bicheno, *A Friendly Address to the Jews* (London, n.d. [1787]), p. 24.

⁵⁷ Bicheno, *A Friendly Address*, p. 58.

⁵⁸ [Richard Worthington], *A Letter to the Jews* (Warrington, 1787), p. 17.

⁵⁹ Thomas Reader, *Israel’s Salvation: Or, An Account from the Prophecies of Scripture* (Taunton, 1788), pp. 81–90.

promised them the help of a deliverer nation: “Britain and America... again united and the greatest empire that ever was on earth”.⁶⁰

Richard Beere, incumbent of Sudbrooke in Lincolnshire, was another of those inspired to take up his pen. Responding to Levi’s “ill-founded and uncharitable” claim that Christians despised Jews, Beere emphasised the standard Judeo-centric position of God’s continuing faithfulness and promises to them.⁶¹ Developing the idea of a coming Davidic deliverer that had already found expression in Priestley, Beere argued that Jews would return in unbelief under a Davidic king, with the gentile nations taking the lead. Referring to Isaiah 58, he concluded that the ships of Tarshish were English vessels and “that this island shall be among the first of the nations, to convey you to your own country”.⁶² After the restoration, the Jews could look forward to protection from an English-led force guarding them in Palestine.⁶³

The exchange between Levi and Priestley combined with current affairs to increase interest in prophetic matters. In 1787, Lord George Gordon (1751–1793), former leader of the Protestant Association, commonly held responsible for the “No Popery” or Gordon Riots of 1780, converted to Judaism.⁶⁴ His biographer suspected that millennialism might have encouraged Gordon down this path. The peer apparently regularly quoted prophecies of restoration and may “have expected to have led back the Israelites to their *fathers’ land*”.⁶⁵ This interpretation filtered into reporting of his conversion.⁶⁶ He had allegedly already read prophecies of

⁶⁰National Archives Pro/30/11/59r-v.

⁶¹Richard Beere, *An Epistle to the Chief Priests and Elders of the Jews* (London, 1789), p. 117.

⁶²Beere, *An Epistle*, p. 134. Beere also returned to Thomas Brightman’s conception of the “threefold coming” (*Epistle*, p. 147).

⁶³Beere, *An Epistle*, pp. 205–206.

⁶⁴Gordon initially attempted to convert in 1784, but his request was refused by Rabbi David Tevele (William D. Rubenstein, Michael A. Jolles and Hilary L. Rubenstein (eds), *Palgrave Dictionary of Anglo-Jewish History* [Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011], pp. 358–359). For more on Gordon see Katz, *Jews in the History of England*, pp. 302–310.

⁶⁵Robert Watson, *The Life of Lord George Gordon* (London, 1795), p. 79

⁶⁶Gordon had fled England following a libel conviction, and returned to Birmingham, where he lived incognito amongst the Jewish community after his conversion. At his arrest he was surrounded by Jews “who affirmed that his Lordship was MOSES risen from the DEAD in order to instruct them, and enlighten the whole world” (*The British Chronicle, or, Pugh’s Hereford Journal*, 13th December 1787, p. 3).

his future role in the Gordon Riots as early as 1775.⁶⁷ The radical Robert Hawes suggested in 1793 that Gordon was a prophetic sign to the nation of their need for repentance, and that England would take the lead role in converting the Jews when just laws were instituted.⁶⁸ Edmund Burke, on the other hand, suggested that his conversion to Judaism was linked to political subversion.⁶⁹

Gordon's conversion raised issues that recalled the Jew Bill debate. As leader of the Protestant Association, Gordon was a figurehead who personified the link between Protestantism and Britishness. His conscious rejection of this identity demonstrated the ease with which Jewish and English identities could mingle. Reports of the conversion attempted to highlight the total transformation that had taken place in the peer: "a metamorphosis no less surprising than the conversion of Saul of Tarsus".⁷⁰ The *English Review* reaffirmed separation between Jews and Christians by stating that as a gentile proselyte, Gordon had no access to the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, as it was "altogether impossible that he can descend from *their loins*".⁷¹ Reports fixated on the length of Gordon's beard, and his voluntary submission to circumcision.⁷² The *Gentleman's Magazine* reported "His Lordship, both in dress and appearance, made a very grotesque figure".⁷³ The intense focus upon Gordon's stereotypically Jewish appearance mirrored theatrical practice in making Jews appear what Michael Ragussis described as "super-Jewish" on stage in order to affirm their separation from English identity.⁷⁴ At the same time, the ease with

⁶⁷ *A Dissertation on the Existence, Nature, and Extent of the Prophetic Powers in the Human Mind* (London, 1794), pp. 35–38.

⁶⁸ Robert Hawes, *An Acrostical Tribute of Respect, to the Memory of the Late Right Honorable George Gordon* (London, 1793), p. 4.

⁶⁹ Michael Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion: 'The Jewish Question' and English National Identity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 122–124.

⁷⁰ "The Conversion of Lord George Gordon", *English Review* 10 (December 1787), p. 481.

⁷¹ "The Conversion of Lord George Gordon", p. 482. Given that the author implies that Gordon converted out of lust for Jewish women, who subsequently rejected him, it is probable that he is employing a double entendre here.

⁷² For example: *Norfolk Chronicle*, 15th December 1787, p. 2; *Northampton Mercury*, 15th December 1787, p. 1; *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 14th December 1787, p. 1. In private correspondence, Horace Walpole also evidenced a fascination with Gordon's beard (Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation*, p. 39).

⁷³ *Gentleman's Magazine* 58:1 (January 1788), p. 80.

⁷⁴ Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation*, p. 127.

which Gordon could fully embody Jewish identity highlighted how unstable this boundary actually was. As *The Leeds Intelligencer* admitted, Gordon “appeared with no other marks of the Jewish religion about him, except a long beard on his chin”.⁷⁵

While Gordon’s case may have caused both anxiety and amusement, the revolutionary events in France from 1789 provided impetus for a wider wave of apocalyptic speculation. To contemporaries, and to some later historians, this appeared at times to return to some of the prophetic excesses of the 1650s.⁷⁶ The variety of apocalyptic interpretations circulating in the later period certainly suggest this, but we should be cautious of exaggerating similarities with the interregnum. Writers in the 1790s could draw on developed traditions of Behmenist mysticism, Swedenborgianism, and the millennial works of the preceding hundred years in addition to works from the 1650s. The developed news culture of the 1790s also offered a wider circulation for prophecies, as well as new venues (in coffeehouses and salons) for their discussion.⁷⁷ Rather than suggest a sudden conversion of the formerly disinterested to millennialism, it is better to view the Revolution as activating and intensifying already existent millennial belief.⁷⁸ Millennialism did not (and does not) operate as a constant focus of faith, rather constituting just one part of an individual’s wider faith world.⁷⁹ The relative importance of eschatology changes when events suggest the possibility of real change—a shift from the regular flow of time to a kairic moment in which change appears possible.⁸⁰

Of course, this did not mean that apocalyptic rhetoric needed to support the Revolution. Some, such as the high churchman William Jones, used the prophecies to warn of the horrors of tumults in church and state,

⁷⁵ *The Leeds Intelligencer*, 5th February 1788, p. 4.

⁷⁶ Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists*, p. 43.

⁷⁷ Juster, *Doomsayers*, pp. 7–15.

⁷⁸ Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, pp. 225–230.

⁷⁹ As Jonathan Downing points out, this risks distorting holistic understandings of self-identified “prophets” in the eighteenth century (“Prophets Reading Prophecy: The Interpretation of the Book of Revelation in the Writings of Richard Brothers, Joanna Southcott and William Blake” [University of Oxford: Unpublished PhD Thesis, 2015], pp. 48–62).

⁸⁰ “Kairos” refers to “God’s time”—a period when radical change appears to be possible and blessed by God. This contrasts with “Chronos”, or “normal” time. On using Kairos as a lens through which to view millennialism in the Revolution see Burdon, *Apocalypse in England*, pp. 90–93.

and the importance of supporting the political status quo.⁸¹ Others detected in the political changes the first signs of global transformation. The London-based American Universalist preacher Elhanan Winchester (1751–1797) suggested in 1789 that the world was on the cusp of the literal fulfilment of the prophecies. The Jews, and their restoration to Palestine, were at the centre of Winchester’s vision. The “bounds of the land of Canaan, as promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their posterity”, he wrote, were “their MAGNA CARTA”.⁸² Winchester’s universalism led him to adopt some unconventional positions in his interpretation of prophecy,⁸³ but he consistently returned to the importance of the Jews in a restored Jerusalem. Current events, along with his interpretation of the numbers of Daniel and Revelation, suggested that their return was imminent. This return would be effected through a particular gentile nation, which would be especially blessed in this responsibility. As was usual in Judeo-centric thought, the Jews would rise to a position superior to all other nations, although Winchester’s rhetoric suggested some unease about this relationship.⁸⁴ Nations that had blessed the Jews would fare particularly well, with Winchester raising his native United States to God as an example of a land “where thy ancient people are suffered to dwell unmolested”.⁸⁵ The Jews would return in unbelief and convert through a literal appearance of Christ.⁸⁶ Those interested in the technicalities of the resettlement could consult a map of the New Jerusalem, demonstrating the division of the Holy Land between the twelve tribes.⁸⁷

Two further important works followed in 1790. Vreté has identified Edward May’s *Remarkable Extracts* as the first to link the emerging

⁸¹ William Jones, *Popular Commotions Considered as Approaching Signs of the End of the World* (London, 1789).

⁸² Elhanan Winchester, *A Course of Lectures on the Prophecies that Remain to be Fulfilled* (London, 1789), Vol. I, p. 75.

⁸³ For example, he believed that the first covenant *could* have been literally fulfilled by the Jews. He also believed that the temple and full animal sacrifices would be restored, but as thank offerings rather than guilt offerings. See Winchester, *Course of Lectures*, Vol. I, pp. 85–122; Vol. 2, pp. 245–271.

⁸⁴ Gentiles will treat Jews “as though they were their best beloved children”, placing them in a parental role. At the same time, kings, nobles and all ranks “shall seek with their utmost desire to serve them” as their inferiors. (Winchester, *Course of Lectures*, Vol. II, p. 295).

⁸⁵ Winchester, *Course of Lectures*, Vol. II, p. 295.

⁸⁶ Winchester, *Course of Lectures*, Vol. I, pp. 169–192.

⁸⁷ Winchester, *Course of Lectures*, Vol. II, p. 142.

Revolution and the restoration of the Jews.⁸⁸ The Baptist May printed an edited text of French preacher Pierre Jurieu’s 1686 *L’accomplissement des Prophéties ou la Délivrance Prochaine de l’Eglis*, with his own comments and editorial additions. Jurieu had predicted that the French would represent the tenth part of the Beast’s kingdom that falls away (Rev. 11:13), believing that this was likely to occur within ten years of 1785. May triumphantly footnoted Jurieu’s interpretations with references to anti-Papal Acts of the National Assembly to vindicate the Frenchman’s prediction. These also served as a sign that the conversion of the Jews was approaching, which was the signal for the general conversion of all nations.⁸⁹

The second work was Richard Beere’s *Dissertation on the 13th and 14th Verses of the 8th Chapter of Daniel*. Beere, having written to Pitt on the importance of Jewish restoration in the meantime,⁹⁰ claimed to have perfected the calculations he had first used in *An Epistle* the previous year, and again found England at the forefront of Jewish restoration. References to Tarshish in Isaiah, Jonah, and the Psalms were to England’s role in this endeavour. The “great changes and revolutions [which] have of late happened” served as further evidence for the imminent restoration of the Jews.⁹¹ Beere advocated both scriptural and mercantilist reasons for England to pursue Jewish restoration. While this was both a “duty... from religious motives”, it was also “sound policy”: “they will stand in need of many manufactured articles... these things therefore they must purchase from other nations, many years after their return”.⁹² Beere was fiercely loyal to George III, and imagined the king elevated to a station “superior to that of *Cyrus*” in restoring the Jews.⁹³

Over the following years, an increasing number of works addressed the concept of Jewish restoration in both an apocalyptic and contemporary political context. Debates on Judaism continued around the interest raised by the debate between Priestley and Levi. Jacob Barnet, a converted Jew, attacked Priestley’s Unitarianism while agreeing with his position on Jewish restoration. This led Barnet to an unusual piece of exegesis on the parable of the shrewd manager (Lk. 16:1–10). After receiving warning of

⁸⁸ Vreté, “Restoration of the Jews”, pp. 5–6.

⁸⁹ May, *Remarkable Extracts*, pp. 22–24.

⁹⁰ Katz, *Jews in the History of Britain*, p. 315.

⁹¹ Richard Beere, *A Dissertation on the 13th and 14th Verses of the 8th Chapter of Daniel* (London, 1790), pp. 34–41.

⁹² Beere, *Dissertation*, pp. 42–43.

⁹³ Beere, *Dissertation*, p. 44.

his imminent dismissal, the manager ensured his future well-being through courting his master's debtors and reducing the amount they owed. For Barnet, the manager represented the Jews and the debtors, the gentiles. Facing rejection by their master, and too weak to work in physical employment (Lk. 16: 3), the Jews turned to trade to ingratiate themselves with their neighbours. Christ's command for the "children of light" to take the "children of the world" as friends (Lk. 16:8) thus became a command for Christians to embrace Jews. For Barnet, this acted as a form of eschatological insurance in preparation for the Judeo-centric reversal that would occur at Christ's return: "that they (the Jews and elder brother) may receive you (be one with you, Christians, in love) into everlasting habitations;—namely at the consummation of all things, the grand and final period of universal change".⁹⁴ Clarke also returned to the theme of Jewish conversion in 1792, writing directly to the Jewish community, as well as dating their conversion to no later than 1811.⁹⁵

The following year continued to bring familiar names back to the topic. James Bicheno's *Signs of the Times* suggested that the current war was the pouring out of the vials of God's wrath; fighting against the French was akin to fighting against God. Bicheno believed that the Jews would return to Palestine under the sixth vial, when the kings of the earth would gather for a climactic battle. The nation could choose to fight for freedom and the Jews, or to oppose them. He remained hopeful that God would show mercy because of the country's protection "of the rights of conscience, and the civil rights of mankind".⁹⁶ Winchester made a similar point in his February sermon on the three woe trumpets (Rev. 8–11).⁹⁷ The links between radical politics and eschatology in this period are illustrated by the example of Robert Hawes, Winchester's printer for the sermon. Hawes was an active member of the London Corresponding Society, but also dabbled in prophetic writing himself. The title of his *An Acrostical Tribute of Respect, to the Memory of the Late Right Honorable George Gordon* was likely to raise eyebrows with its defence of the deceased peer. The poem contained a prophecy that "the Jews would soon come in/Quit their serility to forms and shows". This was dependent on England living up to

⁹⁴ Jacob Barnet, *Remarks upon Dr. Priestley's Letters to the Jews* (London, 1792), pp. 35–36.

⁹⁵ Richard Clarke, *A Series of Letters, Essays, Dissertations, and Discourses on Various Subjects* (London, 1792), Vol. I, pp. 145–154, 340–345.

⁹⁶ James Bicheno, *The Signs of the Times: Or, the Overthrow of the Papal Tyranny in France* (London, 1793), p. 51.

⁹⁷ Elhanan Winchester, *The Three Woe Trumpets* (London, 1793), pp. 54–56.

her divinely appointed role to embody liberty: “Not yet do I despair to see the days/Comfort for Jews and Gentiles shall increase/England the first free theatre of praise”.⁹⁸

Other, more conservative, theological voices also made use of Judeo-centrism. Although some responded to restorationism’s links to radicalism by denying the possibility of Jewish return,⁹⁹ at times it was used to support government positions. Pitt’s administration had not been above using prophecy to support the war with France in the past. In 1793, ministerial papers such as the *Whitehall Evening Post* and *St James’s Chronicle* printed Robert Fleming’s early eighteenth-century identification of the French as the beast of Revelation, whose downfall he predicted for 1794.¹⁰⁰ Loyalist uses of prophecy followed from this. James Wright, minister of Maybole in Glasgow, published a sermon on Romans 9 that called for his hearers to remember that while God had rejected the Jews, he also promised, “the blessed period shall at last come, when the Jews shall be converted, and restored to their own country of Judea”.¹⁰¹ Wright’s hearers had the opportunity to participate in this restoration, but only due to the blessings that God had showered upon Britain. Preachers had a duty to “let your people know that they live under the best system of government, of which ancient or modern times can boast”.¹⁰² A similar use of prophecy was evident in the republished works of another Scottish minister. Two fiercely loyal sermons preached in 1742 by the revivalist Presbyterian minister John Willison, appeared as *A Prophecy of the French Revolution and the Downfall of Antichrist*.¹⁰³ The title located the text in the same genre as the reprints of earlier prophecies by figures such as Fleming. Willison identified France as the tenth part of the city prophesied to collapse in Rev. 11:13, an event he described as “a marvellous revolution”.¹⁰⁴ He looked

⁹⁸ Hawes, *An Acrostical Tribute*, p. 4.

⁹⁹ See, for example, N. Nisbitt, *The Scripture Doctrine Concerning the Coming of Christ* (Canterbury, 1792), pp. 91–96.

¹⁰⁰ Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, pp. 166–170.

¹⁰¹ James Wright, *God’s Long-Suffering Towards the Jews and His Goodness Toward the Gentle Christian* (Glasgow, 1793), p. 19.

¹⁰² Wright, *God’s Long-Suffering*, p. 29.

¹⁰³ Nathan Friend identifies Willison as a key figure in the Scottish revival, and the popularisation of postmillennialism in Scotland in the 1740s. See Nathan Friend, “Inventing Revivalist Millennialism: Edwards and the Scottish Connection”, *Journal of Religious History* 42:1 (2018), pp. 52–71.

¹⁰⁴ John Willison, *A Prophecy of the French Revolution and the Downfall of Antichrist; Being Two Sermons Preached Many Years Ago* (London, 1793), p. 23.

forward to a time when “the Jews shall be gathered out of all countries where they are dispersed and brought to their own land”.¹⁰⁵ Britain may have an important role to play in this final regathering. Willison highlighted the extent to which the nation had already contributed to Antichrist’s downfall through the defeat of the Jacobite rising of 1715, and called on his congregation to pray for Jewish restoration.¹⁰⁶ Printed as part of the government’s response to political unrest, it serves as testimony to the extent to which prophecy could both defend and challenge the status quo.

While James Wright had praised the end of political unrest in 1793, events of the following year proved this to be wishful thinking. In May 1794, the government suspended Habeas Corpus, and arrested prominent radicals including Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke, and John Thelwell. In April of that year, Joseph Priestley finally left England for Pennsylvania after determining that he would have no future in Europe. His final English works reflected on Jewish restoration. Both *Discourses Relating to the Evidences of Revealed Religion*, and his last sermon at the Gravel Pit in Hackney, warned his hearers of impending judgement. His focus, however, was not solely on contemporary politics, but rather on the Jews. After recounting prophecies of restoration in *Discourses*, he suggested that readers pay attention to “the plain intimations of the heavy judgements that are denounced against every nation that has oppressed the Jews”.¹⁰⁷ These nations would suffer the harshest judgements. “That there is a day of visitation for all the nations in this part of the world (all of whom have distinguished themselves by their oppression and massacre of the Jews)”, he noted in his sermon, should be “sufficiently apparent”.¹⁰⁸ Although the current generation were comparatively kind to Jews, God would hold them accountable for the prior sins of the nation towards them.¹⁰⁹ Priestley ended his final message with an appendix of extracts from David Hartley’s 1749 *Observations on Man*.¹¹⁰ This had already been

¹⁰⁵ Willison, *Prophecy*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁶ Willison, *Prophecy*, pp. 26–27, 44.

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Priestley, *Discourses Relating to the Evidences of Revealed Religion* (London, 1794), p. 238.

¹⁰⁸ Joseph Priestley, *The Present State of Europe Compared with Antient Prophecies* (London, 1794), p. 18.

¹⁰⁹ Priestley, *Discourses... Revealed Religion*, pp. 238–241.

¹¹⁰ On the importance of Hartley for Priestley’s philosophy and theology see Jack Fruchtman, Jr., “The Apocalyptic Politics of Richard Price and Joseph Priestley: A Study in

influential in the debate over the Jew Bill, and its presence here signalled Priestley’s belief in the imminent reversal between Jews and gentiles. The rising of the former would result in destruction and judgement for the latter. As public discontent over the war and food shortages rumbled on into the following year, Priestley’s departing message would find further support in one of the most colourful and controversial figures of the 1790s—Richard Brothers.

2 RICHARD BROTHERS, PRINCE OF THE HEBREWS

The controversial career of the “Paddington Prophet” Richard Brothers (1757–1824) has long attracted historians’ attention. As was the case in the late eighteenth century, he has continued to split opinion. Brothers is seen as everything from a (perhaps well-intentioned) symbol of delusion¹¹¹ to a champion of popular discontent with the government;¹¹² from a figure who attempted to introduce “rationality” to his prophecy,¹¹³ to one who should be interpreted on the terms of his own prophetic, “pre-critical” logic.¹¹⁴ For the historian of Judeo-centrism, Brothers raises important issues—viewing his mission as being specifically to the Jewish people, but reconstituting what a “Jew” meant as he did so. Brothers was in no way representative of the mainstream of Judeo-centric belief in the eighteenth century, and in terms of the numbers of followers he attracted, his impact was comparatively small. Brothers’s importance rests in the debate he generated. By adopting a pseudo-Jewish identity and claiming that he was poised to return the Jews to Palestine, he led critics and supporters to wrestle with questions of the definition of Englishness, what it meant to make claims to the Holy Land, and the future of the chosen people.

Brothers was born in Placentia, Newfoundland on Christmas Day 1757. He came to England as a boy and trained at Greenwich Naval

Late Eighteenth-Century Republican Millennialism”, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 73:4 (1983), pp. 1–125; also Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, pp. 126–129 and Burdon, *Apocalypse in England*, pp. 105–119.

¹¹¹ Cecil Roth, *The Nephew of the Almighty: An Experimental Account of the Life and Aftermath of Richard Brothers* (London: E. Goldson, 1933).

¹¹² Harrison, *Second Coming*, pp. 57–85.

¹¹³ Juster, *Doomsayers*, pp. 155–162.

¹¹⁴ Downing, “Prophets Reading Prophecy”. Downing here talks about “pre-critical” approaches to the Bible.

Academy. He served in the navy with distinction, reaching the rank of Lieutenant before his discharge in 1783. There is little information on his movements between 1783 and 1791. Although he married in 1787 this quickly broke down due to his wife's adultery, and it is likely that he served at some point in the Merchant Navy.¹¹⁵ Brothers later claimed that his experience in the Navy had proved formative to his thinking about the nature of the world, and it may also have raised questions for contemporaries about his motives as a prophet.¹¹⁶ During 1790, he appears to have experienced a formative religious conversion, which led to him developing a firm conviction against oath-taking.¹¹⁷ As he was required to take an oath of loyalty to the Crown every six months in order to receive his naval pension, Brothers refused to claim his money, writing unsuccessfully to the Naval Board's secretary Philip Stevens in 1790 to request an exception to the requirement.¹¹⁸ His prophetic identity developed over this time, and in July 1791 he left London, convinced that God would destroy the city. Experiencing heavenly visions on the journey, he was able to plead with God to withhold his judgement, and returned to the capital.¹¹⁹ However, his continued failure to draw his pension led to financial difficulties, and he was committed to the workhouse, where his debts were quickly remitted when his pension arrears were paid to the governors.¹²⁰

Prior to leaving the workhouse in February 1792, Brothers's prophetic identity had not emerged in the official letters he wrote to the Admiralty.

¹¹⁵ Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 38–41.

¹¹⁶ As Ian McCalman argues, former soldiers and sailors were involved “in every insurrection plot in London from 1798 to 1820”. (Ian McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London, 1795–1840* [Cambridge: CUP, 1988], pp. 53–54).

¹¹⁷ Richard Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge... Book the Second*, p. 57.

¹¹⁸ Stephens responded to three letters sent in May, June and July on 10th July 1790 to refuse Brothers's request. Brothers sent a longer letter demanding justice on 9th September 1790. These are reprinted in Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, *A Calculation on the Commencement of the Millennium* (London, 1795), pp. 45–54.

¹¹⁹ Richard Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge... Book the First*, pp. 38–43. See also *Revealed Knowledge... Book the Second*, pp. 70–72 for his 1791 visions of the king of Sweden's death. *The Times* added a facetious gloss that he had travelled to Sweden in the spirit to converse with Swedenborg's ghost (*The Times*, 4th March 1795, p. 3).

¹²⁰ Joseph Moser, one of the governors, provides a thorough overview of Brothers's interview prior to entering the workhouse and attempts the governors made to improve his condition. See Joseph Moser, *Anecdotes of Richard Brothers in the Years 1791 and 1792* (London, 1795).

Now, he began sending letters to figures of authority warning of God’s impending judgement. On 12th May, he sent notice to George III and the Speaker of the House of Commons that he would address parliament five days later. However, he was treated with “unfeeling contempt and incivility” when he arrived to begin his speech. God subsequently revealed to him another vision of London’s destruction.¹²¹

Between September and November 1792 Brothers was again in trouble over unpaid debts. His imprisonment in Newgate appears to have added to both his anger over the sins of the capital and despondence over his condition.¹²² On his release, he determined to leave England and give up prophesying, but the power of the Spirit (once again) forced him to return.¹²³ In the following year, Brothers believed that a number of his prophecies were fulfilled. He correctly predicted the assassination of the Swedish king and Louis XVI’s execution, although (as Deborah Madden notes) this suggests astute assessment of contemporary politics more than prophetic ability.¹²⁴ Two terrible thunderstorms on 3rd August and 7th August corresponded with the voice of the angel in the sun (Rev. 19:17) and the angel rising from the east (Rev. 7:2). Only Brothers’s intervention stopped God destroying London on 15th August, a judgement which, although suspended “hangs, however, over all nations”.¹²⁵

Brothers did not publish these prophecies at the time, beyond their inclusion in the letters he sent to Pitt, parliament, and the king. In January 1794, he began publication of his best-known work, the two-volume *A Revealed Knowledge of the Prophecies and Times*. The book went through a number of ever-expanding editions over the following year, including several produced in London and Dublin, eighteen in the United States, and translations into French and German.¹²⁶ Funded by wealthy supporters, Brothers apparently distributed it freely to visitors.¹²⁷ As well as detailing his past and the prophecies up to 1794, the work contained two

¹²¹ Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge...Book the Second*, p. 24.

¹²² Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge... Book the Second*, p. 53.

¹²³ Richard Brothers, *Wrote in Confinement. An Exposition of the Trinity* (London, 1795), pp. 32–33.

¹²⁴ Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, p. 54.

¹²⁵ Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge...Book the First*, pp. 44–48.

¹²⁶ Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, p. 88. US editions were printed in New York, Philadelphia and New London, Connecticut. The Paris edition is erroneously titled *Prophéties de Jacques Brothers*.

¹²⁷ Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, p. 187.

particularly contentious claims. The most worrying, from the point of view of the establishment at least, was that the prophet would claim supreme power and usurp George III. In his interpretation of Daniel 7, Brothers argued that the lion with eagle's wings (Dan. 7:4) represented the king. As the wings were to be plucked, so this meant "taking away the power of the king... his reduction to the condition of other men".¹²⁸ Pitt's decision to ignore Brothers's advances in 1792 would result in the toppling of Britain's empire and the minister's own death. Visions revealed the king handing his crown to Brothers and the queen fleeing from death towards him.¹²⁹ Published at a time of government concern over reformers' intentions, and during the treason trials of Hardy, Tooke, and Thelwell (which Brothers correctly predicted would end with their acquittal),¹³⁰ it is unsurprising that his works attracted the attention of the authorities, as well as those keen to ridicule his pretensions.¹³¹

Brothers's second major claim also attracted concern and amusement in equal measure. As the full subtitle of *Revealed Knowledge* made clear, Brothers was God's chosen instrument, with his work containing details of *the restoration of the Hebrews to Jerusalem, by the year 1798, under their revealed Prince and Prophet*. Brothers's belief in his role as restorer of the Jews' combined mainstream Judeo-centric thought with a number of important elaborations. The process of the Jews' restoration would begin at some point between 25th October 1794 and June 1795, with Brothers revealed as the Jews' prophet by a pillar of fire. Ships from all major European nations would then carry the Jews back to Palestine. As they attempted to establish themselves, heathen nations would attack them, before they ultimately placed their full trust in Jesus and formed a holy nation under Brothers as Davidic king. This would reach its fulfilment in 1798.¹³²

Although Brothers did not appear in public to speak about his claims, his publications generated an increasing interest in his work. He attracted followers from a variety of social backgrounds. The artisans and prophetic

¹²⁸ Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge... Book the Second*, p. 8.

¹²⁹ Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge... Book the Second*, pp. 20–25, 84; Richard Brothers, *Extracts from the Prophecy Given to C. Love* (n.p., 1794), p. 3.

¹³⁰ Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge... Book the Second*, p. 102.

¹³¹ On the popular reaction to Brothers and the government response see John Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide 1793–1796* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), pp. 514–520.

¹³² Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge... Book the First*, pp. 30–36; *Book the Second*, p. 92.

seekers John Wright and William Bryan, who travelled to the mystical Avignon Society in 1788, were important witnesses for Brothers’s mission.¹³³ The engraver and former Swedenborgian William Sharp became a committed disciple, producing the best-known portrait of the prophet.¹³⁴ Copies were printed in popular magazines, and Brothers became an object of fashionable attention. Most notoriously, Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, MP and expert Sanskritist, became his unofficial spokesman; “a strange alliance... between knowledge, taste, wit—and ignorance, infatuation, and, perhaps, insanity!” as *The Monthly Review* described it.¹³⁵ Although attracting the faith of a scholarly MP and the momentary fascination of London society would not normally be enough to worry the government, Brothers’s claims against the king in the political environment of 1795 stoked their fears. In the midst of what Kenneth Johnston has termed Pitt’s “reign of alarm”,¹³⁶ there were fears that “some designing men” had manipulated Brothers “to publish his book for the purpose of promoting apprehension and sedition”.¹³⁷ As McCalman has noted, prophets and political radicals often shared a common culture.¹³⁸ For example, as well as producing Brothers’s works in 1795, his printer George Ribeau was also involved in the printing and sale of texts for the London Corresponding Society alongside Richard “Citizen” Lee.¹³⁹ *The Times* suggested that

¹³³ For Wright and Bryan’s journey to Avignon and conversion to Brothers see John Wright, *A Revealed Knowledge of Some Things that Will Speedily be Fulfilled in the World* (London, 1794) and William Bryan, *A Testimony of the Spirit of Truth, concerning Richard Brothers* (London, 1795). Their exploits caused controversy: defended by many of Brothers’s followers (e.g. *Prophetical Passages Concerning the Present Times* [London, 1795], pp. iii–iv) and attacked as false witnesses in others (Sarah Flaxmer, *Satan Revealed; or the Dragon Overcome* [London, 1795], pp. 9–12). For more on their backgrounds see Harrison, *Second Coming*, pp. 69–73 and Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, pp. 111–114; 159–161.

¹³⁴ On Sharp see Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, pp. 161–162.

¹³⁵ *The Monthly Review, or Literary Journal* 16 (March 1795), p. 339.

¹³⁶ Kenneth R. Johnston, *Unusual Suspects: Pitt’s Reign of Alarm and the Lost Generation of the 1790s* (Oxford: OUP, 2013).

¹³⁷ George Horne [i.e. Walley Chamberlain Oulton], *Sound Argument Dictated by Common Sense, in Answer to Nathaniel Brassey Halhed’s Testimony of the Authenticity of the Prophecies of Richard Brothers* (Oxford, 1795), p. vii. Oulton adopted Horne’s persona here, the late Bishop of Norwich being a noted defender of the church. See Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, p. 153.

¹³⁸ McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, pp. 61–72.

¹³⁹ See *A Summary of the Duties of Citizenship! Written Expressly for the Members of the London Corresponding Society* (London, 1795). On Lee see Jon Mee, *Print, Publicity, and*

millenarian prophets had been responsible for the French Revolution: “It seems, that there are men in this country, who propose to employ the same means to attain their end”.¹⁴⁰

The government arrested Brothers on suspicion of treason on 4th March 1795.¹⁴¹ In his Privy Council examination the following day, Brothers objected that he had no desire to harm the king, and merely desired to offer him the opportunity of avoiding judgement. He disavowed any political motivation for his works, as well as any links to known radicals, including Major Cartwright and the late Lord Gordon. The suggestion of a connection to Gordon, in particular, was unsurprising. The peer was linked to London radicalism and had been viewed in government circles as a continued figurehead for potential unrest. Richard Newton’s 1793 etching “Soulagement en Prison, or Comfort in Prison” depicted Gordon entertaining Painite radicals in his confinement.¹⁴² Brothers’s and Gordon’s shared interests in Judaism, and time together in Newgate, suggested a plausible link to the Privy Council, although Brothers denied any connection.¹⁴³ His interrogators ultimately agreed, and instead they satisfied themselves with examining Brothers as a likely lunatic.¹⁴⁴ On 27th March, Drs Samuel Foart Simmons and Thomas Munro recommended

Popular Radicalism in the 1790s: The Laurel of Liberty (Cambridge: CUP, 2016), pp. 149–167.

¹⁴⁰ *The Times*, 4th March 1795, p. 3.

¹⁴¹ The precise charge against Brothers is unclear. Conflicting press reports suggest that Brothers was arrested for false prophecy, or for treason. John Barrell makes a convincing argument that the original charge was treason, which was then changed to false prophecy when it became clear that Brothers’s papers contained no treasonous material (Barrell, *Imagining the King’s Death*, pp. 519–520).

¹⁴² For example, the rumour that a mob connected with the London Corresponding Society planned to spring Gordon from prison on 14th July 1791. See Mee, *Print, Publicity, and Popular Radicalism*, pp. 61–63. It is also interesting to note that Robert Hawes, who wrote *An Acrostical Tribute of Respect, to the Memory of the Late Right Honorable George Gordon* proclaiming the imminence of Jewish restoration was a regular printer for radical material (including works by Clarke and Winchester), and a member of the LCS.

¹⁴³ Ian McCalman has suggested the possibility of links between Priestley’s, Brothers’s, and Gordon’s views of Jewish restoration. Although this is persuasive, it is better to view all three men’s opinions as stemming from a shared cultural tradition, rather than directly influenced by one another. See Ian McCalman, “New Jerusalems, Dissent and Radical Culture in England, 1786–1830”, in Knud Haakonssen (ed.), *Enlightenment and Religion: Rational Dissent in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), pp. 312–335.

¹⁴⁴ National Archives PC 1/28/60 “Minutes of Examination of Richard Brothers, 5th March 1795”.

that a jury find Brothers criminally insane. On 4th May he was removed to Fisher’s House, a private asylum in Islington, where he remained for the next eleven years.¹⁴⁵ He continued to publish and never abandoned his convictions about his mission. Given this, it is unsurprising that the precise nature of the legal issues raised by Brothers’s arrest and detention have generated a considerable amount of discussion.¹⁴⁶ Rather than repeat these debates directly, it is helpful to examine them through the lens of Brothers’s use and reworking of the Judeo-centric tradition. Viewing his work and the issues that surrounded it in this way offers an opportunity to engage with some of the issues that he raised for contemporaries, and the way in which they reflected on national identity and eschatology.

In many ways, Brothers’s views on Jewish restoration appear consistent with the traditions traced throughout the earlier parts of this chapter. In the first part of *Revealed Knowledge*, Brothers reaffirmed the orthodox position that Jews were currently scattered as punishment for the crucifixion of Christ.¹⁴⁷ Following commentators such as Newton, he affirmed that prophecies relating to Israel were misapplied to the church. Isaiah 54, for example, was a clear reference to the new Jewish state in Palestine: “*this* is the true meaning of the prophecy, and not the Gentiles’ deliverance, as is placed at the head of the chapter in the Bible”.¹⁴⁸ The idea of a thriving, powerful Jerusalem was not unusual, and there was nothing inherently radical about the idea.

Where Brothers departed from more mainstream Judeo-centrism was in his self-designation as a prophet, which included an internalisation of Jewish identity. The Jews, Brothers argued, would only accept a fellow Hebrew as their leader. He therefore proudly proclaimed the Davidic ancestry that made him not only a Jew, but also led God to call him “my nephew”.¹⁴⁹ As controversial as this claim was, it may suggest a knowledge of Priestley’s work on prophecy. In several writings, the Unitarian had denied that Jesus was the Davidic prince predicted in the Old Testament. Jesus was the messiah who suffered for his people, but the Jews should still look for “a temporal prince of the posterity of David” to restore them to Palestine. The Davidic inheritance “would never fail; for though it might

¹⁴⁵ Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 142–146.

¹⁴⁶ John Barrell, *Imagining the King’s Death*, pp. 504–547; Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 142–161.

¹⁴⁷ Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge... Book the First*, pp. 9–10.

¹⁴⁸ Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge... Book the First*, p. 15.

¹⁴⁹ Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge... Book the Second*, p. 72.

be severely punished, it would recover its lustre again". This was precisely the claim that Brothers made.¹⁵⁰ Where Lord Gordon had visibly converted to Judaism, embracing physical transformation as a performative picture of conversion (in beard growth and circumcision), Brothers's realisation of his own Jewishness was internalised and linked to the direct revelation of God. He did not undergo circumcision or change his apparel, but found his Jewish identity compatible with an established English way of life and dress. Where debates on the Jew Bill had contrasted Jewishness and Englishness as entirely incompatible, Brothers brought them uncomfortably together. England was home to many "hidden Jews" who would return to Palestine with him. As he told the Privy Council, "there were many more Jews in this country than people thought—some of us, says he, are Jews as much as the Old Cloathes men".¹⁵¹ Eitan Bar-Yosef has read these claims in class-based terms, arguing that Brothers projected the resolution of working-class deprivation and landlessness onto a colonised Palestine.¹⁵² Yet as Madden points out, the middle-class Brothers showed little interest in working-class concerns across his writings.¹⁵³ In fact, the individuals he identified as hidden Jews were predominantly aristocratic. No doubt figures such as Pitt, Charles Grey, and William Wilberforce were surprised to be included in this number; at his examination, Brothers repeatedly referred to Pitt as "one of his family".¹⁵⁴

Brothers justified his claims of Jewish ancestry by pointing to history. Jews had been dispersed and accepted into many nations to advise on agriculture and development prior to the destruction of Jerusalem. That catastrophe led more Jews to travel across the Roman Empire in chains, while Jewish converts and evangelists made up the bulk of the early church. Given all of this, Brothers concluded that it was reasonable to think that many Jews had settled across Europe and ultimately forgotten their ances-

¹⁵⁰ Joseph Priestley, "Observations on the Prophecies Relating to the Messiah and the Future Glory of the House of David" (1786) reprinted in J.T. Rutt (ed.), *The Theological and Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Priestley*, Vol. 12 (Northumberland: George Smallfield, 1804), p. 412.

¹⁵¹ National Archives PC 1/28/60 "Minutes of Examination of Richard Brothers, 5th March 1795".

¹⁵² Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, pp. 53–56.

¹⁵³ Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 226–228.

¹⁵⁴ National Archives PC 1/28/60 "Minutes of Examination of Richard Brothers, 5th March 1795".

try.¹⁵⁵ These arguments have often led to Brothers being linked with the British Israelites, a claim that is vehemently denied by the group themselves and remains contested in the literature.¹⁵⁶

This notion of “hidden Jews” raised a number of important issues relative to national identity. First, it questioned where the boundaries of Englishness and Jewishness lay. In particular, how should England engage with its Jewish community in order to ensure its own survival? For Brothers, the Jews’ restoration closely linked to the end of warfare.¹⁵⁷ He had embraced pacifism by 1791, when he told the workhouse Board of Governors that he refused his pension as “the wages of *Plunder, Bloodshed* and *Murder!*”¹⁵⁸ As peace was an essential precondition of the Jerusalem that Brothers would establish, an end to war would facilitate both travel to Palestine and allow hidden Jews to discover their identities. With his full revelation as the Davidic ruler, all war would cease. Warships would become transports for the Jews, with cannons recast as tools for commerce and agriculture.¹⁵⁹ England should therefore seek to end involvement in the French Wars, or face certain destruction. The same commitment to peace was necessary for those who discovered that they were hidden Jews. Living up to the standards of millennial Israel was therefore a precondition of the internal revelation of Jewishness, just as Brothers had discovered when he abandoned oath taking and his military pension. His own life experience, which echoed Moses, David, Solomon, and Jeremiah, offered a model for both “natural” and “hidden” Jews to follow.

Complicating this was the fact that Brothers believed that hidden Jews should not immediately reveal themselves. Despite their natural superiority, they were to be careful of provoking the authorities: “you must not show the least pride or insulting superiority in any respect; neither must you find the least fault with their [gentiles’] forms of governments, their laws, their customs, or what they may be doing relative to war and

¹⁵⁵ Richard Brothers, *Wrote in Confinement*, pp. 24–27.

¹⁵⁶ It is important to note that Brothers did not view all Britons as Jews, or argue that they were part of the ten lost tribes—he claimed to be from the tribe of Judah. Harrison has argued for Brothers as a British Israelite (Harrison, *Second Coming*, pp. 79–83). Madden describes the link as “historically inaccurate” (Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 297–298). Downing finds it more persuasive, but recognises that Brothers did not believe all Englishmen were Jews (Downing, “Prophets Reading Prophecy”, pp. 147–149).

¹⁵⁷ Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge... Book the First*, pp. 5, 20, 59.

¹⁵⁸ Moser, *Anecdotes*, p. 15.

¹⁵⁹ Richard Brothers, *Letter... to Miss Cott*, p. 65.

peace”.¹⁶⁰ Given the political situation in the mid-1790s this was prudent advice, and echoes Winchester’s disclaimer in 1793 that prophecies of restoration should not be used as a pretext for attempting to force their fulfilment.¹⁶¹ The exaltation of the Jews (both hidden and visible) could not take place until Brothers was revealed. His predictions therefore mingled with cautions to any Jews reading his works. Apocalyptic prophecy was deliberately obscure to dissuade any from attempting a restoration until the correct time.¹⁶² Jews must remain living peaceably under their present governments in order to avoid government persecution “from the apprehension of rebellion or sedition”.¹⁶³

The identification of some of George III’s subjects as secret Jews also led to questions about the nation’s role in their restoration. Brothers’s position on the details of Jewish restoration, and England’s part in these events, shifted over time. In *Revealed Knowledge*, he placed the emphasis on the nation’s impending judgement. However, as he had previously done, Brothers could intercede with God to remove England’s judgement. Subsequently, the nation would work with the French and Spanish to return the Jews and their wealth to Palestine.¹⁶⁴ As Madden has noted, Brothers’s view of the nation mellowed over later works, as he began to imagine his own empire in more detail.¹⁶⁵ In the address sent to “The Lords of His Majesty’s Council” on 18th March 1798, Brothers was clear that Jewish restoration under his power “does not by any means of construction, imply an hostility to all other governments and descriptions of men; but quite the reverse... all men, whether kings, princes, or republicans, I offer love, friendship, and safety to all”.¹⁶⁶ However, following the provi-

¹⁶⁰ Brothers, *Letter... to Miss Cott*, p. 93. Again, this echoes instructions God gave Brothers about his behaviour when revealed to the world (*Revealed Knowledge... Book the Second*, p. 72).

¹⁶¹ Winchester, *Three Woe Trumpets*, p. 54.

¹⁶² Brothers, *Letter... to Miss Cott*, p. vi.

¹⁶³ Brothers, *Letter... to Miss Cott*, p. 54.

¹⁶⁴ Brothers, *Revealed Knowledge... Book the Second*, pp. 33, 92. The certainty of judgement mingled with the potential for forgiveness. For example, the 1795 *Wrote in Confinement* proclaimed both the eternal fall of “the British empire” (p. 43) and offered an opportunity for repentance and averting of judgement based on the prophecy of Hezekiah’s death (and subsequent miraculous recovery) in 2 Kings 20 (pp. 46–47). In his 1798 “Address”, however, he warned that he had been told by God to no longer intercede for the nation if he continued to be mistreated (Brothers, *A Letter*, pp. 38–39).

¹⁶⁵ Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 278–280.

¹⁶⁶ The address was printed as part of the Brothers’s letter to Cott. Brothers, *Letter... to Miss Cott*, p. 36.

dential readings suggested by earlier Judeo-centrists, Brothers argued that England faced judgement for its treatment of its Jewish inhabitants. “Human opposition to the restoration of the Jews”, he warned, “would not only prove the ruin of England, but likewise its utter annihilation from the face of the globe”.¹⁶⁷

This idea linked consistently in Brothers’s work to the blessings that fell on England for harbouring both hidden and open Jews. While this did not abrogate the nation’s responsibility for bloodshed, it helped to explain their continued survival. The Jews were still the “particular favourites of heaven”;¹⁶⁸ recognition of the “invisible Hebrews” would lead to blessing, while “ridiculing” them would result in God’s judgement on England.¹⁶⁹ In later works, as Brothers received new revelations and had time to contemplate his treatment, his belief in Jewish restoration began to loom larger in his own analysis of his confinement. Although supposedly a hidden Jew himself, Pitt had made “the raising up of the Hebrew monarchy in Asia, and the restoration of the Jews, an act of high treason in England”.¹⁷⁰ By 1801, Brothers had moved from seeing his threats towards George III to his belief in Jewish restoration as the key reason for the government’s actions against him.

Brothers therefore believed that England would have a role to play in the restoration of the Jews, if the nation was prepared to embrace it. As previously mentioned, he argued in 1795 that English ships would be involved in the Jewish return. In his 1798 “Address” he went into more detail about what this would entail. Brothers provided a detailed list of provisions that different nations would provide to the new Jewish state. The Danes and Swedes, for example, would send 300 shiploads of timber and 20,000 tents; the Spanish were to supply ships, trowels, handsaws, shovels, ploughs, sheep, and cows among other provisions.¹⁷¹ England, however, received special attention. No other country enjoyed such rich blessings in terms of agriculture, shipping, and commerce: “the garden of the world: her daughters are all beautiful and her sons are all brave... This incomparable garden has ships for its walls, and seas for its rivers!” The negative points Brothers highlighted in his early works here transformed into positives. England’s mercantile and naval prowess, even the wealth of

¹⁶⁷ Brothers, *Letter... to Miss Cott*, pp. 36–37.

¹⁶⁸ Brothers, *Wrote in Confinement*, p. 27.

¹⁶⁹ Brothers, *Letter... to Miss Cott*, p. viii; p. 64.

¹⁷⁰ Brothers, *A Description*, p. 164.

¹⁷¹ Brothers, *Letter... to Miss Cott*, pp. 47–62.

London that Brothers had once condemned, switched from being signs of impending destruction to signify, instead, the special role that the nation would play in Jewish restoration. George III transformed from a tyrant into an incomparable monarch.¹⁷² Neither would the nation suffer any loss by committing to Jewish restoration. Peace would allow the Navy's ships to serve as transports, "to prevent the merchant's [*sic*] ships being employed out of their usual channel of commerce".¹⁷³ All of this fulfilled the prediction of Isaiah 60:9, that the "ships of Tarshish" would carry God's people back to Palestine.¹⁷⁴ While it would be easy to dismiss Brothers's visions of government-sponsored restoration as "improbable" and "a mere textual construct",¹⁷⁵ there were recent examples of government support for similar, less eschatologically minded, endeavours. The resettlement of black loyalists in Sierra Leone in 1787–1790 was just such an instance of the government "returning" a group to their "native" land. The project's initial proposer, Henry Smeathman (1742–1786), had admitted that he entered near prophetic frenzies in his enthusiasm for it. Swedenborgians, who believed that a pure church was hidden in Africa, had also been enthusiastic supporters of the project, particularly through the anti-slavery campaigner Charles Bernherd Wadstrom.¹⁷⁶ As many of Brothers's supporters, notably Bryan, Wright, and Sharp, were active in Swedenborgian circles in the late 1780s (and continued to oppose the slave trade),¹⁷⁷ memories of the Sierra Leone project may have contributed to their belief in the viability of Brothers's plan for restoration. Indeed, Brothers's required provisions for his expedition, far from being simply a "crazed list",¹⁷⁸ closely resembled a more ambitious version of those presented to (and approved by) the government by Smeathman in 1786.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷² Brothers, *Letter... to Miss Cott*, pp. 64–65.

¹⁷³ Brothers, *Letter... to Miss Cott*, p. 65. Madden notes the importance of mercantile arguments for Brothers in his vision of a restored Israel as a new marketplace for Europe's goods (Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 225–227).

¹⁷⁴ Brothers, *Letter... to Miss Cott*, p. 66.

¹⁷⁵ Harrison, *Second Coming*, pp. 79–80; Bar-Yosef, "Green and Pleasant Lands", pp. 166–167.

¹⁷⁶ Stephen J. Braidwood, *Black Poor and White Philanthropists: London's Blacks and the Foundation of the Sierra Leone Settlement 1786–1791* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994), pp. 12–22.

¹⁷⁷ Harrison, *Second Coming*, pp. 69–71; Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, pp. 185–187.

¹⁷⁸ Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, p. 53.

¹⁷⁹ Henry Smeathman, *Plan of a Settlement to Be Made near Sierra Leona, on the Grain Coast of Africa* (London, 1786), pp. 19–22.

Regardless of the practicalities of his plan for restoration, the level of Brothers’s identification with Israel is a different form to any of those traced in this book so far. Supersessionist positions viewed all Christians as the inheritors of the covenants and promises given to Israel. God judged the Jews for their rejection of Christ, which abrogated the promises made to them, transferring the literal promises of the land to the spiritual promises of the church. A sense of national election developed this idea by seeing a particular nation as the direct replacement for Israel, in the sense that a national grouping served as God’s primary means of engaging with the world. This presumed a reciprocal motion on the part of the people. God was responsible for the election of a particular nation, but the nation must respond to their divine call—whether in fulfilling a particular mission, or in entering into and obeying covenant requirements.¹⁸⁰ The previous chapters have complicated this picture. Judeo-centrists held that Israel remained God’s elect nation, and that his primary focus therefore remained on the Jewish people. This undermined the standard supersessionist position, in which the Christian understood herself as the “true” or “fulfilled” Jew. Judeo-centrists repurposed this narrative by drawing a firm boundary between God’s promises for Jews and his promises for Christians, and by viewing England as a having an important role as an auxiliary “chosen” nation. This incorporated both a covenantal and a missional element, in which England had a higher moral calling because of her eschatological destiny: to restore the Jewish people to Palestine.

Brothers, in some senses, returned to the supersessionist position, in that he found Jewishness within Englishness, appearing to reject the Judeo-centric focus on Jewish–gentile separation. This led him to internalise Jewish identity. In later work, particularly the 1801 *Description of Jerusalem*, Brothers himself became a synecdoche for the Jewish people, “the representative and sign of the whole body of the Hebrews; in my oppression the whole are injured, the power of heaven defied”.¹⁸¹ This is why Bar-Yosef recognises that Brothers complicates his concept of “vernacular orientalism”, in which Jewish identity was not only internalised, but England itself became the “Holy Land”. In his reading, Brothers solves this problem by projecting an English colonial framework onto Palestine.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, pp. 44–66.

¹⁸¹ Richard Brothers, *A Description of Jerusalem: Its Houses and Streets, Squares, Colleges, Markets and Cathedrals* (London: Printed for George Riebau [e.g. Ribeau] 1801), p. 142.

¹⁸² Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, pp. 46–56.

Yet, this is not quite what Brothers argues. The Holy Land will be Jewish territory, not English, and the prophet explicitly recognises that Jews will travel from across Europe and Asia to reach it.¹⁸³ While he imagined a perfection of English laws and architecture in Palestine, in which Jerusalem became an idealised version of London,¹⁸⁴ his Holy Land was nonetheless a cosmopolitan space. Brothers was not a British Israelite. While Harrison is right to highlight similarities between Brothers's views and the idea that Britons had preserved the "true form" of ancient Abrahamic religion, the prophet did not believe that Englishness and Jewishness were synonymous.¹⁸⁵ While Nabil Matar and Bar-Yosef have suggested that Brothers's self-identification as a Jew aimed to justify an English claim for Palestine, the prophet did not go so far.¹⁸⁶ The "hidden Jews" he identified only made up a part of the population, with the remainder of the nation judged on their morality and treatment of the Jewish people. The restored Jerusalem envisioned by Brothers therefore incorporated some visible marks of Jewishness, while rejecting others. His city would include a high priest and Hebrew as the official language, but at the same time, he rejected a rebuilt temple, and concluded that circumcision would be unnecessary.¹⁸⁷ If Brothers's idea of Jewish restoration seemed to blur lines between Jews and gentiles, it nonetheless maintained the essential separation between Jewish identity and Englishness. Returning to the concept of a point of encounter between England and Israel, when God would return the Jews to eschatological primacy, helps us to understand Brothers here. The momentary crossing of English and Jewish destinies would allow Jews hidden within the nation to realise their superiority. In this sense, Brothers's logic followed the arguments of the Jew Bill's supporters—Jews in England would inherit the beneficial characteristics that would aid them on their return to Palestine. So, for

¹⁸³ Brothers, *Letter*, p. 35.

¹⁸⁴ Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, p. 195. Brothers consciously makes this comparison at times "Look at London and Paris, those two great and wealthy cities, there are no such regular streets in either, or healthy accommodations as in ours.... But with us every house throughout the city has its regular portion of ground for a garden, where the poorest families may walk and enjoy themselves" (Brothers, *A Description*, p. 34). See Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 193–201; Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, pp. 53–54.

¹⁸⁵ On this see Harrison, *The Second Coming*, pp. 79–82.

¹⁸⁶ Nabil Matar, "The Controversy Over the Restoration of the Jews: From 1754 until the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews", *Durham University Journal* 82:1 (1990), pp. 33–36; Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, pp. 51–56.

¹⁸⁷ See Brothers, *A Letter*, pp. 41–44; Brothers, *A Description*, pp. 18, 139.

Brothers, the “hidden Jews” were (predominantly) the great and the good of England. Those without Hebrew blood secretly flowing through their veins were not abandoned, however. England still found its national mission in restoring the Jews, even if some of those who appeared English were, in fact, Jewish themselves. This blurring did not constitute a sublimation of Jewish identity into Englishness. Instead, the nation could guarantee its survival in politically turbulent times only by supporting the Jews. Jewish identity therefore served to legitimate continued English identity, rather than overcome it.

3 THE BROTHERS CONTROVERSY

The fact that Brothers published his first works in the midst of fears of revolution and political subversion contributed both to his popularity and to his notoriety. Prophecy was a marketable subject in 1795, and Brothers’s arrest generated a large volume of pamphlet literature and press attention. Although initially dismissing his prophecies as ridiculous, London minister William Huntington complained that he “soon found that the faith of Mr. Brothers spread much faster than the faith of Christ did in his public ministry”.¹⁸⁸ One loyal disciple of David Hume complained that the excitement and sales generated by Brothers’s works would excite “the surprise and contempt of posterity”.¹⁸⁹ Some, like the Mason family of Whissendine in Rutland, apparently sold their possessions to prepare for the journey to Jerusalem.¹⁹⁰ Robert Southey recalled that Brothers’s predictions of an earthquake on 4th June 1795 led to many leaving London, and that a ferocious thunderstorm that evening was interpreted as its fulfilment.¹⁹¹ While Juster has claimed that the development of prophetic print culture led to a “vicarious millennialism”, in which readers trusted the prophet to be vigilant on their behalf, while avoiding visible or political reaction to the prophecies, the practical responses to Brothers, as well as the flood of pamphlet literature he unleashed, demonstrates that reading often led to practical action.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ William Huntington, *The Lying Prophet Examined and His False Predictions Discovered* (London, 1795), p. v.

¹⁸⁹ A Freethinker, *An Enquiry into the Pretensions of Richard Brothers* (London, 1795), p. 3.

¹⁹⁰ *Hereford Journal*, 22nd April 1795, p. 3.

¹⁹¹ Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, p. 109.

¹⁹² Juster, *Doomsayers*, pp. 134–142.

The success of works discussing prophecy encouraged more publications on the subject. For example, William Dukes, who had written a commentary on Micah's eschatology in 1792, was emboldened to publish by the demand for such work.¹⁹³ The question of Jewish restoration proved particularly marketable. In early 1795, as controversy about Brothers and his predictions began to develop, *The Weekly Entertainer* began a serialisation of Priestley's *Discourses Relating to the Evidence of Revealed Religion*, focusing particularly on sections on the Jews' future as "the great catastrophe to which tend all the dispensations of Providence". Significantly, the publication edited out Priestley's linkage of England's fate to their treatment of the Jewish people.¹⁹⁴

Brothers's followers appear to have held, along with political radicals, to what John Mee has described as "print magic". This was a firm faith in the power of printed ideas to transform individuals, as if the ideas existed in an almost unmediated form, transferring their power from the text to the mind of the reader like an electrical charge. The fear of the power of the printed word was evident in conservative critics such as Burke, and in the government's (unsuccessful) determination to prevent Brothers writing any further works. As Mee notes, "print magic" was not naivety about the realities of the press. Radicals were adept at walking the fine line between clever allegory, satire, and libel. Similarly, they were fully aware that not all books sold, or were read even when bought.¹⁹⁵ As Brothers's most devoted follower, John Finlayson bemoaned in 1797, the prophet's books were "lying in several booksellers shops in London unsought for; and they are in most people's houses, unopened, silent, dead".¹⁹⁶ Combined with prophecy, however, a belief in "print magic" led supporters to believe that these books would live again. Placing Brothers's ideas in the public sphere was God's chosen way of communicating his message. As the *Critical Review* astutely noted, while Brothers had predicted rivers of blood, none of his predictions "shew he was aware how much ink would be shed on the occasion of his mission".¹⁹⁷ A belief in the power of the press therefore combined with market conditions to help precipitate this

¹⁹³ William Dukes, *Religious Politics: Or, The Present Times Foretold by the Prophet Micah* (London, 1795), p. i.

¹⁹⁴ *The Weekly Entertainer*, 26th January 1795, p. 624.

¹⁹⁵ Mee, *Print, Publicity*, pp. 38–42.

¹⁹⁶ John Finlayson, *An Admonition to the People of All Countries That Our Saviours Second Coming Is at Hand* (Edinburgh, 1797), p. 25.

¹⁹⁷ *Critical Review* 13 (April 1795), p. 467.

tidal wave of publications. By autumn 1795, the exasperated publication complained, “we hear our readers cry out, Enough! enough! [*sic*]” on reviewing another raft of pamphlet literature.¹⁹⁸

Much of the driving force behind the controversy came from Halhed’s intervention. Although initially sceptical of Brothers’s claims, Halhed changed his mind after meditating on *The Revealed Knowledge* and the scriptures. His experience as interpreter of the Vedas was an important factor in this decision—just as he believed he had been able to discover the mysteries behind Hindu texts, so Halhed argued that he was qualified to judge the obscurities of biblical prophecy. God had kept these mysteries hidden until Brothers came to reveal them.¹⁹⁹ Like Brothers, his conviction linked, in part, to his own anti-war feelings.²⁰⁰ Many critics went so far as to accuse the MP of using Brothers for his own political gain.²⁰¹ This was unfair. In response to Brothers’s predictions Halhed had withdrawn a request for employment he sent to the East India Company, and had forwarded 25 copies of Brothers’s work to the mayor and corporation of Leicester, hardly the actions of a man looking to further his political career. As *The Critical Review* lamented in October 1795, “His sincerity at least cannot be doubted... he has given proofs of it which must have cost him not a little”.²⁰² Halhed, who had never spoken in the Commons prior to 1795, delivered his first speeches in defence of the prophet. On 31st March, he attacked Brothers’s arrest and the clamour surrounding the prophet. Recalling the history of prophetic interpretation, he reminded his colleagues that there was little controversy when Asia, Rome, or France were identified in the prophecies “but if one solitary individual happen to pitch on Great Britain as the destined spot for the elucidation of these enigmatical predictions, surely it is not unreasonable that he should request cool and dispassionate investigation”.²⁰³ Halhed’s intervention in the debate did not receive a seconder. A second speech, delivered on 21st

¹⁹⁸ *Critical Review* 15 (October 1795), p. 217.

¹⁹⁹ Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, *Testimony of the Authenticity of the Prophecies of Richard Brothers* (London, 1795), pp. 10–11. See also Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, *A Calculation of the Millennium* (London, 1795), p. 40.

²⁰⁰ Halhed, *Testimony*, p. 40. His works reveal guilt over his previously voting in favour both war and the suspension of Habeas Corpus, see Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 79–80.

²⁰¹ A Country Curate, *Strictures on the Prophecies of Richard Brothers* (Oxford, 1795), pp. 39–40.

²⁰² *Critical Review* 15 (October 1795), p. 214.

²⁰³ Halhed, *A Calculation*, p. 32.

April, expressed Halhed's frustration at the government's treatment at Brothers, bluntly challenging Pitt to charge him with treason if Brothers's writings were deemed to be treasonous.²⁰⁴ On a practical level, Halhed's intervention had little impact on Brothers's treatment. Nonetheless, it kept the controversy alive, resulting in the flood of pamphlets that overwhelmed the *Critical Review* by October 1795. These works engaged with both Brothers's and Halhed's writings, addressing the controversy surrounding the prophet's confinement as well as his ideas. Given that the impending judgement on England and the notion of "hidden" Jews were two of Brothers's most eye-catching ideas, it is no surprise that questions relating to Jewish restoration and national identity emerged consistently in the literature.

Supporters of Brothers were eager to reaffirm the orthodoxy of their positions. In this context, discussion of Jewish restoration served to link them into a long apocalyptic tradition. Writing to the Methodist leader Joseph Benson in 1796, the minor poet Walter Churchey defended his belief in Brothers through pointing to the scripture the prophet fulfilled. Brothers predicted "that long expected Pentecost kingdom of the latter days foretold by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel... the Grand *Desideratum* on Oath of the Apostles and primitive Christians, the *Restoration* of the Jews"²⁰⁵ A similar strategy followed in print. "You who profess a firm belief in the bible, have ye not always understood, that a period *must* come, when the Hebrews will be restored again to possession of *Canaan*...?" asked J. Crease in a 1795 pamphlet.²⁰⁶ Scripture, another pamphlet argued, showed that "the restoration of the Jews is a certain fact not yet accomplished",²⁰⁷ while Samuel Whitchurch pointed out that "almost all of the ancient Prophets foretold of the restoration of Israel, and the establishment of the Kingdom of Peace".²⁰⁸ The writers of these pamphlets were fully aware that the conversion and restoration of the Jewish people would not be straightforward. As we have seen in previous chapters, the concept

²⁰⁴ Nathaniel Brassey Halhed, *The Whole of the Testimonies of the Authenticity of the Prophecies and Mission of Richard Brothers* (London, 1795), pp. 70–71.

²⁰⁵ Walter Churchey to Joseph Benson, Undated [Likely 1796], John Rylands Methodist Archive DDP1 1/16. Emphasis in original.

²⁰⁶ J. Crease, *Prophecies Fulfilling: Or, The Dawn of the Perfect Day* (London, 1795), p. 3.

²⁰⁷ Thomas Taylor, *An Additional Testimony Given to Vindicate the Truth of the Prophecies of Richard Brothers* (London, 1795), p. 7.

²⁰⁸ Samuel Whitchurch, *Another Witness! Or Further Testimony in Favour of Richard Brothers* (London, 1795), p. 7.

of a miraculous sign appearing to convert the Jews (based on Paul’s Damascus Road experience) was a trope in scholarly millennial writing stretching back to Joseph Mede. The authors of the pro-Brothers pamphlets used this to their advantage. If a miraculous sign was expected, then why should it not be the prophet? This strategy demonstrates the flexibility of apocalyptic interpretation in the late eighteenth century. As McCalman has noted, the line between conservative and radical prophecy was flexible.²⁰⁹ Writers charged with being “radical” were well aware of this, and self-consciously highlighted the supposedly radical implications of the “conservative” apocalyptic tradition. “It is foretold, both in the Old and New Testament”, wrote one supporter, “that the Kingdom of the Jews shall be re-established; and if so, who can say RICHARD BROTHERS is not appointed, like MOSES, to conduct them back to Jerusalem and there establish the Kingdom of God?”²¹⁰ This strategy also implied that Brothers’s opponents doubted the clear scriptural witness to the Jews’ restoration. As the Hull merchant George Coggan wrote in his *Testimony of Richard Brothers*, a denial of the restoration of the Jews “is a downright contradiction of the sacred scriptures, which uniformly argue that there shall be a literal gathering of the Jews”.²¹¹ This allowed the authors to charge that the true radicals were their opponents, who were playing into the hands of Painite freethinkers and infidels by questioning the Bible. Halhed had already used this approach in his first speech to the Commons in March. Parliament, he argued, was setting a dangerous precedent in condemning a man “because he quotes Scripture and believes in God”.²¹² In his written *Testimony*, he applied this logic to Jewish restoration: “all Scripture as well as all Tradition bears testimony to the certainty of the recall of the Jews in the latter ages of the world, no man who has but a smattering of acquaintance with either can for a moment pretend to deny”.²¹³

Of course, as the previous chapters have shown, this was not entirely true. The concept of restoration was more contested than Halhed claimed, and Brothers’s testimony again drew out its opponents. The supposed

²⁰⁹ McCalman, “New Jerusalem”, p. 317; see also Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 110–113.

²¹⁰ *Look Before You Leap, Or, the Fate of the Jews. A Warning to People of Other Nations, in the Case of Richard Brothers, the Prophet* (London, n.d. [1795]), p. 16.

²¹¹ G. Coggan, *A Testimony of Richard Brothers, in an Epistolary Address to the People of England* (London, 1795), pp. 30–31.

²¹² Halhed, *A Calculation*, p. 60.

²¹³ Halhed, *Testimony of the Authenticity*, p. 36.

impracticality of Jewish restoration offered satirists an opportunity to mock the prophet, and to make use of standard antisemitic tropes. Most infamously, the cartoonist James Gillray's "The Prophet of the Hebrews, or the Prince of Peace, conducting the Jews to the Promised Land" (used as this book's cover image), depicted Brothers as a crazed sans-culotte leading a group of hook-nosed rabbis and peddlars towards the scaffold.²¹⁴ Several politicians, including Charles Fox, were strapped to Brothers's back as the "bundle of the elect". Published the day following his arrest, the print drew on standard Jewish stereotypes and restorationist tropes, such as the Jews' portable wealth, to mock the reality of Brothers' proposal and the concept of "hidden Jews". The same idea appeared in the pamphlets. Henry Spencer's satire *A Vindication of the Prophecies of Mr. Brothers* rhapsodised over "the inhabitants of Duke's Place—old-clothesmen, buyers of old rags, broken bottles, old china, &c., &c, quitting their vile occupation". He urged readers not to be concerned about the practicalities of the trip to Jerusalem such as ships, provisions, clothes and agriculture: "all these things can be very easily done by miracles".²¹⁵ This was echoed by the anonymous *Descendant of Baal-Peor*, which called out "ye pampered lazy Israelites" for failing to heed Brothers's call to leave England. The Jews, the author supposed, preferred "the joyful realms of *Dukes-Place*" over fighting against the Ottomans.²¹⁶ "Malachi Moses" praised the Jews for exercising their reason in rejecting Brothers—in England they "liv'd to prosper, and awak'd to play... upheld by wealth, by industry employ'd".²¹⁷ Another pamphlet, also written in the character of a Jew, highlighted the incongruity of the concept of "hidden" Jews. Writing as "Moses Gomer Pereira", the author noted that those Brothers identified as Jews appeared to deserve God's judgement for their actions during the war. As such, Pitt, Gray, and many within the government "are exempted from the destruction" while "the great body of the people... are involved in the fatal sentence".²¹⁸

²¹⁴ James Gillray, "The Prophet of the Hebrews, or the Prince of Peace, conducting the Jews to the Promised Land", 5th March 1795. British Museum 1868,0808.6420. On Jewish portrayal in this work see Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes*, pp. 96–97.

²¹⁵ Henry Spencer, *A Vindication of the Prophecies of Mr. Brothers and the Scripture Expositions of Mr. Halhed* (London, 1795), pp. 30–31.

²¹⁶ Quoted in Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, p. 159.

²¹⁷ Malachi Moses, *The Prophecies of the Times: A Satire* (London, 1795), p. 10.

²¹⁸ Moses Gomez Pereira, *The Jew's Appeal of the Divine Mission of Richard Brothers and N.B. Halhed, Esq to Restore Israel and Rebuild Jerusalem* (London, 1795), pp. 60–61.

Huntington’s *Lying Prophet Examined* opened up another, more serious, objection to Judeo-centrism. The independent minister’s work was a detailed attempt to reinforce the conservative prophetic tradition, and to steer away from what he saw as the dangerous excesses of the Judeo-centric position. Huntington reaffirmed the certainty of Jewish restoration, although he argued that both the papacy and Turks had to fall before the Jews could return. The end of the Ottoman Empire, contra-Brothers, would be extremely violent and brought about by Christian princes aiding the Jews.²¹⁹ As Huntington continued, it became increasingly clear that he was uncomfortable with the reversal at the heart of both Brothers’s work and Judeo-centrism is general. Far from Jerusalem issuing orders to the nations, as Brothers had claimed, “the Jews themselves will receive the gospel at the hands of gentile ministers”.²²⁰ Huntington therefore used the opportunity presented by Brothers to attempt to dismantle restorationist exegesis. Where Brothers read Ezekiel 38 as predicting the superiority of the Jews, Huntington attempted to close down such interpretation. Israel, for him, remained “the spiritual believers... who are the real Jews” while contemporary Jews were now a “synagogue of Satan”: “Instead of all nations receiving the commands of God from them, Christ says they shall come and worship *before the feet of the Gentiles*”.²²¹ While Huntington’s response revealed a deep-seated insecurity at the idea of Jewish supremacy over gentiles, it also demonstrated another way in which the Brothers controversy allowed writers to explore the boundaries of what was (or was not) considered acceptable in prophetic exegesis. This again suggests that, even within Judeo-centric prophecy, “conservative” and “radical” were not only fluid categories, but under constant negotiation. Brothers’s emergence served as a crisis point that revealed the extent to which prophecy was a discourse that was constantly evolving and responding to contemporary events.

The treatment of national identity, and particularly of England’s role in restoring the Jews to Palestine in the debate, also bears this out. While supporters of Brothers highlighted the standard Judeo-centric trope that England faced judgement for her poor treatment of the Jews, opponents concentrated instead on the comparative lack of antisemitism in the nation when compared to continental Europe. The author of the pro-Brothers

²¹⁹ Huntington, *Lying Prophet*, pp. 10–13.

²²⁰ Huntington, *Lying Prophet*, p. 13.

²²¹ Huntington, *Lying Prophet*, pp. 33–34.

Look Before You Leap argued that England should take warning from Jewish history. Their rejection of Christ had resulted in their extinction as a nation and exile, and the English faced a similar fate if they failed to accept Brothers's mission of restoration.²²² From a providential point of view, England had to use the Jewish people as a picture of the choices before them. The current state of the Jews and Jerusalem provided an image of England's future should she reject Brothers. In the same way, the restored Jewish nation provided a guarantee that God could preserve nations who followed his will. Henry Francis Offley followed Priestley in concentrating more particularly on England's record towards the Jewish people in his work. While admitting that Jews fared better in England than elsewhere, he nonetheless criticised their general treatment: "so much are they held in derision in this Christian country, that even children deride them and *laugh them to scorn*". Despite this, they were more highly favoured than any other nation, thus requiring that God's people express particular interest in their well-being.²²³ Thomas Taylor took up a similar theme. He speculated that the English faced judgement for their love of warfare and colonial ambitions. These merely human efforts contrasted with the land promises between God and the Jewish people. "Who authorised you to commission, and send men to distant lands... to turn them out of, and ransack, their habitations", asked Taylor.²²⁴ This followed his reflection on the land covenant and the certainty of Jewish return. British imperialism was therefore a pale imitation of the true territorial claims of the Jews. Only God could authorise the displacement of peoples and the appropriation of territory. If England focused on the Jews and their nation, they could legitimate their own national ambitions.²²⁵ On 25th February 1795, a national day of fasting for success in the war against France, James Bicheno preached a fiery sermon against the government. Printed as *A Word in Season*, Bicheno's sermon drew on apocalyptic exegesis to argue that the current conflict would be fatal to the nation if it continued. Bicheno cautioned his readers to look to the Jews to know the current times. A restoration of Jewish fortunes, and signs that God's ancient people were preparing for their messiah, would be clear evidence that the

²²² *Look Before You Leap*, p. 6.

²²³ Henry Francis Offley, *Richard Brothers, Neither a Madman nor an Impostor* (London, 1795), p. 9.

²²⁴ Taylor, *Additional Testimony*, p. 10.

²²⁵ Taylor, *Additional Testimony*, pp. 6–7.

destruction of the fourth monarchy was at hand. As with Offley and Taylor, Bicheno therefore viewed the Jews as a barometer of God’s purposes in the world. By treating them well, and by observing the movements of providence towards them, it was possible to know God’s timetable and ensure that one was on the right side of his judgement.²²⁶

While historians have sometimes noted the way in which restorationism could be used to attack the establishment,²²⁷ the flexibility of prophecy is illustrated in the fact that conservative writers were utilising identical ideas of Jews and divine judgement at the same time as “radicals” such as Brothers.²²⁸ The position of government supporters provides further evidence for the difficulty of establishing firm divisions between “conservative” and “radical” branches of prophecy during the Brothers controversy. For example, the anonymous author of *Antichrist in the French Convention* argued that the French Republic represented the second beast in Revelation 13, and that God would bless the English for fighting against them. Like Bicheno and Brothers, the author also highlighted the possibility of Jewish restoration as an imminent event, and one that would see the completion of God’s purposes.²²⁹ While Brothers brought issues of Jewish restoration to the forefront of debate, he was not solely responsible for its discussion. Rather, the concept of restoration, linked closely to national judgement, reverberated through discussions of prophecy, both “conservative” and “radical”. A good illustration of this crossover is a work published the year following Brothers’s incarceration. Charles Jerram, an evangelical at Magdalen College, Cambridge linked to Charles Simeon’s party, won the 1796 Norrisean Prize for his essay on the future restoration of the Jews. The essay used many of the same arguments that Brothers had employed in order to defend the necessity of his prophetic role. Jerram argued that God had established an eternal covenant with Abraham that meant that any Jewish claim to Palestine “will always be reasonable and just”.²³⁰ He used both unfulfilled Old Testament prophecy and Romans 11 to show that there would be a restoration of the Jews. As Brothers had argued that

²²⁶ James Bicheno, *A Word in Season: or, A Call to the Inhabitants of Great Britain* (London, 1795), pp. 12–17.

²²⁷ Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 65–66.

²²⁸ Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, pp. 167–178.

²²⁹ England is portrayed as the nation sheltering the church in the wilderness. *Antichrist in the French Conventions* (London, 1795), pp. 13–33.

²³⁰ Charles Jerram, *An Essay Tending to Shew the Grounds Contained in Scripture for Expecting a Future Restoration of the Jews* (Cambridge, 1796), p. 9.

the prophecy required a Davidic leader, so the Cambridge scholar pointed to the promise of a Davidic king in Ezekiel 37: “If language convey any meaning, it would be absurd to apply this prophecy to any past event”.²³¹ Of course, Jerram was no radical. His methods of exegesis differed greatly from those of Brothers, and displayed evidence of engagement with contemporary theories on the historical context of scripture. Yet his arguments suggest that the logic of Judeo-centric restorationism could operate similarly across different religious and political traditions.

This chapter has traced the way in which the restorationism developed across the course of the later eighteenth century. The controversy surrounding Brothers introduced a new and potentially unsettling idea into restorationist thought—the idea of “hidden” Jews. On one level, this significantly complicated the picture of national identity presented by Judeo-centrists, who presumed the ultimate superiority of native Israel and an auxiliary role for their own nation. But Brothers’s claims did not present as many problems to this viewpoint as it might first appear. In arguing that only some of the English were “hidden” Jews, Brothers in fact reiterated the essential separation of Jews and gentiles, while also finding a special role for his nation. The five-point restorationist structure therefore still held. First, God chose the nation to restore the Jews. England was so highly favoured that God had chosen to incorporate some Israelites into its heritage, while still keeping the majority separate. This provided an eschatological role for England in restoring both “hidden” and visible Jews to Palestine, while maintaining the gentile character of the majority. This was, in other words, an intensification of the logic seen in the previous points of encounter between England and Israel traced throughout this book. Secondly, for Brothers and his supporters, this provided a distinct national mission. The nation was held to higher standards than others, and was badly failing God’s test in the way in which it treated both Jews and its enemies in the wars. Thirdly, national response to Brothers would reverse judgement against England for their sins. The restoration of the Jews would allow sinful colonial ambitions and warfare to cease. At the same time, it would maintain and sanctify the nation’s naval power. Fourthly, the nation was therefore at a rhetorical tipping point. Only by listening to Brothers could it be saved. Finally, championing the restoration would ensure England’s survival. As God preserved the Jews as a nation with the aim of restoring them, so England could be reassured of

²³¹ Jerram, *An Essay*, pp. 39–40.

her survival through involvement with them. A God who could maintain the Davidic ancestry from ancient Judea to Paddington Street was more than capable of preserving the nation.

Brothers was to remain in an asylum for 11 years, in growing anonymity. Released in 1806, he lived the rest of his life with John Finlayson, who remained a loyal supporter,²³² while others turned to the Devonshire prophet Joanna Southcott and her successors instead. The future of Judeo-centric restorationism belonged to those like Jerram—educated and ambitious evangelicals, often close to the heartbeat of power. When Brothers had believed he saw England’s ships carrying Jews homewards, his opponents had scoffed at his visions as fantasies. In the following century, the Foreign Secretary would contemplate it as national policy.

²³² Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 289–291.



“Direct the Eyes of the Jews to England”: The Jerusalem Bishopric Controversy, 1840–1841

On 20th November 1842, the Methodist lay preacher Mary Tooth received a forwarded letter from Griffith Jones, a former member of her Sunday morning class. Now serving in the Royal Navy and anchored off Joppa, Jones’s ship welcomed aboard Michael Solomon Alexander, newly installed Anglican bishop in Jerusalem. As the bishop preached from John 12 and Jeremiah 23:5–8,¹ Jones undertook an imaginative journey. He recollected being back at the Sunday morning classes, hearing Tooth describe Palestine from the Bible. He recalled his own imaginative response to private reading, and how accurately he had envisioned the Holy Land. He followed the bishop’s finger as he gestured to the land left barren as a judgement against the people for rejecting Christ. Finally, as Alexander urged the sailors “to pray for the restoration of God’s People Israel &c.”, he placed himself within a wider eschatological framework, as a foreigner on what had been “the Coast of War for Centenaries”. Now, perhaps, he had a role to play in its final peace: “I at last as a wandering rebel came here to the last scene; and to finish for the preasant the War with the Rebelious [*sic*] Nations”.² In fifty years, the idea of an

¹ A prediction of the restoration of God’s people to Palestine. Verse 8: “they will say, ‘As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.’ Then they will live in their own land”.

² John Rylands Methodist Archive, MAM FL 4.2/8. All spellings as in original.

English-led military mission to Palestine had transformed from the fantasy of a “lunatic” to the active policy of the British government. No wonder Jones imagined that he might have a role to play in Jeremiah’s prophesied restoration.

The later 1790s and beginning of the nineteenth century, marked by Bonaparte’s rise and the fear of invasion of England, have often appeared to historians as the seedbed for a prophetic revival.³ This led to a renewed flourishing of prophetic exegesis and theological controversy. Debates between pre- and postmillennialists became key elements in discussions of social, political, and economic policy.⁴ In the atmosphere of renewed apocalyptic engagement, the future position of the Jewish people played a key role. Buoyed by geopolitical events, from Bonaparte’s call for Jewish restoration in 1799 to debates over the alleviation of civil disabilities for non-Anglicans throughout the nineteenth century, discussions of Jewish restoration took on new importance. As Britain came to command unchallenged mastery of the seas after Trafalgar, and the Ottoman Empire appeared ever more unstable, so the possibility of a national restoration of the Jews to Palestine became an increasingly realistic proposal.

This chapter examines the way in which these ideas developed, culminating with the founding of the Jerusalem bishopric in 1841. Historians who have examined Judeo-centrism’s relationship to national identity in this period have sometimes seen the renewed interest in Palestine as symptomatic of imperial concerns, driven by practical anxieties over access to India.⁵ This certainly played a part in most arguments for British involvement in the Holy Land—for example, Lord Ashley’s emphasis on the stra-

³ Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, pp. 18–60; Gribben, *Evangelical Millennialism*, pp. 71–76; Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists*, pp. 42–67; Smith, *More Desired*, pp. 144–145.

⁴ The most forceful statement of this position has been Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought 1785–1865* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988). For recent debate on this see Ralph Brown, “Victorian Anglican Evangelicalism: The Radical Legacy of Edward Irving”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 58:4 (2007), pp. 675–704; and Martin Spence, “The Renewal of Time and Space: The Missing Element of Discussions about Nineteenth-Century Premillennialism”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 63:1 (2012), pp. 81–101. Hilton defended his position in “Evangelical Social Attitudes: A Reply to Ralph Brown”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 60:1 (2009), pp. 119–125.

⁵ Nabil I. Matar, “The Controversy over the Restoration of the Jews: From 1754 until the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews”, *Durham University Journal*, 82:1 (1990), pp. 42–43; Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, pp. 60–66.

tegic importance of Palestine in his discussions with Lord Palmerston in 1839.⁶ However, for those who held to it, Jewish restoration was about more than merely ensuring the security of the empire. Instead, it offered both the opportunity of redemption and the legitimation of Britain’s imperial engagements. Evangelical supporters of restoration viewed it as both a way of removing the judgement that hung over the nation for its prior treatment of Jews, and of providing a humanitarian justification for the empire as a whole. By restoring the Jews, they imagined that they were preparing the way for the Jewish imperium to supersede them in the millennium.

1 RESTORATIONISM AND ENGLISH CULTURE IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

With the immediate excitement of 1795 receding, and Richard Brothers safely out of the public eye, Judeo-centric speculation seemed likely to fall out of fashion. The continuing war with France, combined with a number of seemingly important prophetic developments, however, helped to keep prophecy current. The path of popular prophecy after 1795 broadly divided in two directions. First, the continuation of Brothers’s mission in the person of Joanna Southcott (1750–1814) and her successors. Second, a popular restatement of Anglican historicist interpretation that boomed in the first decades of the century. Both reflected a continued interest in Jewish restoration, and while there were connections between them, Southcottian prophecy is important and distinctive enough to examine in its own right.

Southcott was a Devon domestic servant who began receiving visions in 1792. She initially believed in Brothers’s mission, and came to London in an attempt to secure his release in May 1802. Although they never met, the two prophets engaged in a bitter row in print over their conflicting interpretations of Eve in Genesis 3 and Southcott’s claim to be the woman clothed in the sun of Revelation 12. While Brothers wrote against her, Southcott hoovered up his remaining followers and fully claimed his mantle.⁷ She would go on to become infamous for her claim, at the age of 64,

⁶ Ashley, Entry for August 1 1840 in Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2, f. 27v.

⁷ Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, pp. 261–291.

to be pregnant with the messiah in 1814. She died in December of that year, with Southcottian groups surviving into the present day.⁸

One area of Brothers's theology criticised by Southcott was his focus on the rebuilding and possession of a literal Jerusalem. She condemned this as driven by spiritual pride and a desire for worldly recognition. Instead, she argued primarily for a spiritual fulfilment of God's promises to the Jews in Christians. Yet Southcott's approach to the Jews in general was more subtle than has sometimes been recognised. Matthew Niblett has pointed out her desire to have her mission validated by Jews, therefore explaining their presence at the staged trial of her prophetic credentials in 1804, and her direct appeal to a Jewish audience in 1814. However, while he characterises works such as her *Third Book of Wonders... with a call to the Hebrews* as representing a return to supersessionism,⁹ her writing is more subtle. She believed that the Jews would return to Palestine: but only when they recognised Shiloh as their messiah, and accepted him as their leader.¹⁰ As Jonathan Downing notes, although political restorationism was less important for Southcott's theology than it was for Brothers's, she still maintained the importance of the land.¹¹

While Southcott's ideas might mark her out as a radical, her political beliefs were broadly conservative—she abhorred Thomas Paine, did not wish her supporters to leave the Church of England, and discouraged political involvement amongst her followers.¹² As Philip Lockley has shown, the prophets who assumed leadership of the movement after her

⁸ On Southcott see Matthew Niblett, *Prophecy and the Politics of Salvation in Late Georgian England: The Theology and Vision of Joanna Southcott* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015); James Hopkins, *A Woman to Deliver Her People: Joanna Southcott and English Millenarianism in an Era of Revolution* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982); Philip Lockley, *Visionary Religion and Radicalism in Early Industrial England: From Southcott to Socialism* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), pp. 1–25; Juster, *Doomsayers*, pp. 216–258; Harrison, *Second Coming*, pp. 86–134; Garrett, *Respectable Folly*, pp. 213–223.

⁹ Niblett, *Prophecy and the Politics of Salvation*, pp. 139–150.

¹⁰ Joanna Southcott, *The Third Book of Wonders* (London: W. Marchant, 1814), sects 9 and 25.

¹¹ Downing, “Prophets Reading Prophecy”, pp. 221–225. Bar-Yosef, on the other hand, argues that Southcott was ambiguous about the location of the true Jerusalem (*Holy Land*, pp. 48–51).

¹² Niblett, *Prophecy and the Politics of Salvation*, pp. 171–180.

death had other ideas.¹³ The Southcottians split into two branches, the “old believers” who rejected any successor prophets, and the followers of Leeds merchant, and former Brothers supporter, George Turner (d. 1821) who claimed her prophetic mantle.¹⁴ Turner returned to Brothers’s position on Jerusalem, believing that when Shiloh came he would restore the city and establish it as a supreme kingdom.¹⁵ Unfortunately for Turner, his fate also mirrored Brothers’s. His prediction of apocalyptic events for 28th January 1817 had the misfortune to coincide with an attack on the Prince Regent’s coach at the state opening of parliament, leading to government suspicion and his arrest. His followers had apparently already begun to prepare for departure to Jerusalem in several areas of the north of England, and came under some mild suspicion of plotting revolutionary actions in league with Jews.¹⁶ Turner was committed to an asylum in York until 1820, dying the following year.

A far more dramatic engagement with Judaism followed for the Southcottian new believers in the shape of John Wroe (1782–1863). After receiving visions in 1819, he gave up his work as a woolcomber and visited synagogues in North West England to discuss religion with Jews. When these meetings were less than satisfactory, Wroe joined with the Southcottians in Bradford who suggested that they might be hidden Jews. In August 1822, the Spirit revealed to Wroe that he was Turner’s successor, leading to a number of missionary trips to Europe. As Lockley has recently shown, these trips were (unsuccessful) attempts to reach Jerusalem and proclaim God’s word there.¹⁷ Following these, Wroe instituted Old Testament law (including circumcision) for his followers from their base in Ashton-under-Lyme. The group’s building projects and regulation of life in the growing town aimed to provide a model of the New Jerusalem; a template for the millennium to come that represented an intensification of Brothers’s ideas about “hidden Jews”.¹⁸ Wroe has lived on in popular culture because of his downfall in 1831, which involved charges of sexual impropriety involving

¹³ Lockley, *Visionary Religion*, pp. 82–99.

¹⁴ Harrison, *Second Coming*, pp. 121–134.

¹⁵ Madden, *Paddington Prophet*, p. 281.

¹⁶ Lockley, *Visionary Religion*, pp. 88–91. The report to Lord Sidmouth was alarmist and recognised as such upon further investigation.

¹⁷ Lockley, *Visionary Religion*, pp. 108–110.

¹⁸ Lockley, *Visionary Religion*, pp. 110–124; Harrison argues that Ashton was seen as *the* New Jerusalem, a position disputed by Lockley (Harrison, *Second Coming*, pp. 137–147).

seven virgins.¹⁹ Undeterred, he continued to spread his message both in Britain and internationally, and died in Melbourne in 1863.²⁰

The development of Southcottianism is important as it represents the ways in which Brothers's heritage continued into the nineteenth century. However, Judeo-centric thought developed in multiple directions. In many ways, it returned to take a more respectable place within English religious life. Many of the writers discussed in the previous chapter continued to produce commentaries on the end times. Bicheno was especially prolific. His 1797 *The Probable Progress and Issue of the Commotions which have Agitated Europe since the French Revolution* was followed by a significant new and expanded edition of *Signs of the Times* in 1799, and a direct meditation on Judeo-centric prophecy in 1800's *The Restoration of the Jews, the Crisis of All Nations*. Bicheno remained an active opponent of war with the French and England's obstinacy. Despite clear proofs of God's judgement: "scarcely any sensation is produced, unless of regret, and of indignation against the instruments God sees fit to employ".²¹

Bicheno was an outsider to the establishment, and while hardly a revolutionary, his politics clearly located him apart from the religious and political authorities of his day. As Jerram's prize winning 1796 essay had suggested, however, Judeo-centric prophecy began to appear more regularly in sermons and commentaries from within the Church of England. Commentators and preachers, especially Bishop of Rochester (and later of St Asaph's) Samuel Horsley (1733–1806), evangelical commentator Thomas Scott (1745–1821), and Lincoln College Fellow and prophetic writer George Stanley Faber (1773–1854) had a major influence on the respectability of prophecy in the early nineteenth century. All, unlike Bicheno, displayed a patriotic dislike of the French Revolution and support for the establishment.

Horsley was a well-known defender of the Church. His spirited response to Priestley's anti-trinitarianism between 1789 and 1793 had made him a popular figure, and he secured his heroic status among conservatives

¹⁹Harrison, *Second Coming*, pp. 146–147. This incident was the basis of Jane Rogers' historical novel *Mr Wroe's Virgins* (London: Faber, 1991) and a BBC TV adaptation.

²⁰The Southcottian movement continued, with the next notable prophet John "Zion" Ward believing he was the manifestation of Shiloh. He increasingly questioned the Bible's historicity and God's concern about righteousness. He was imprisoned for blasphemy in 1832. For more on Ward see Harrison, *Second Coming*, pp. 151–169.

²¹James Bicheno, *The Signs of the Times, in Three Parts, a New Edition* (London: Johnson, Matthews and Knott, 1799), p. iv.

through his impassioned defence of Church and king against revolutionary principles in his martyrdom day sermon at Westminster on 30th January 1793. He had earlier prepared the (somewhat mistitled) publication of Isaac Newton’s *Omnia Opera* in the 1780s, and it is possible that the scientist’s commentaries influenced his apocalyptic thought. Horsley’s sermons, commentary on Hosea, and particularly his interpretation of Isaiah 18, contributed to the popularisation of Judeo-centrism. Scott, whose spiritual autobiography was responsible for John Henry Newman’s teenage conversion to evangelicalism, wrote a highly popular four-volume commentary on the Bible, published between 1788 and 1792, which served as the standard evangelical reference tool at the start of the nineteenth century.²² Faber, on the other hand, was of a different generation. Prophecy was central to his initial rise to prominence. The *Two Sermons* he preached before Oxford University on 10th February 1799 argued that prophetic speculation was in no way connected with enthusiasm, was a part of the Anglican tradition, and (most importantly) that it showed the inevitability of French defeat.²³

These Anglican prophetic writers reiterated the standard historicist positions of the seventeenth and eighteenth century, self-consciously forming them into a respectable prophetic tradition. As Faber told his Oxford audience, “Mede, the two Newtons, and Warburton have been my guide; and while under *their* direction, I have no fear of incurring the imputation of fancifulness or enthusiasm.”²⁴ Across the early nineteenth century, commentators returned repeatedly to their seventeenth-century forebears for inspiration on prophetic system, all the while challenging the specifics of their exegesis. Joseph Mede (“who may justly be styled *the father of prophetic interpretation*”²⁵) remained the most regularly cited commentator,²⁶ but he was placed alongside Thomas Brightman, Pierre

²² See Donald Lewis, *Origins*, pp. 40–42. For Scott’s restorationism see Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments: With Original Notes and Practical Observations* (London: Bellamy and Robarts, 1792), Vol. 3, pp. 505–510; Vol. 4, p. 739.

²³ George Stanley Faber, *Two Sermons Preached Before the University of Oxford, Feb. 10 1799* (Oxford: OUP, 1799), pp. 35–38.

²⁴ Faber, *Two Sermons*, p. 7.

²⁵ George Stanley Faber, *A Dissertation on the Prophecies that Have Been Fulfilled* (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1806), Vol. I, p. 161.

²⁶ Gribben, *Evangelical Millennialism*, pp. 76–77. Not all commentators were so enamoured: the ultra-Tory George Croly described Mede’s work as “singularly strained, obscure, and gratuitous” (*The Apocalypse of St John* [Philadelphia: E. Littell, 1827], p. 7).

Jurieu, Nathaniel Homes, William Whiston, and other lesser known writers. From the eighteenth century, Thomas Newton's commentaries remained the most regularly cited.²⁷ In 1828 Andrew Panton was advertising works by "Mede, Lowth, Lowman, Brightman [and] Fleming" for sale at his bookshop,²⁸ while Joshua Brooks's 1835 *Dictionary of Writers on the Prophecies* offered readers ready access to the key positions of earlier commentators.²⁹ Despite this, contemporary writers enjoyed a significant advantage over their predecessors in one key area: dating. The French capture of Rome and exile of the papacy in 1798 became a key date by which to track the downfall of the beast described in Daniel 7 and Revelation 13. Although there was more disagreement between commentators than is sometimes suggested by historians, the French Revolution as a whole provided a useful base point from which to argue about the timing of the vial judgements and fulfilment of the 1260 days.³⁰

Two major political and cultural developments combined to aid the growing interest in Judeo-centrism. First, Britain's war against the French opened up a practical engagement with Palestine. Bonaparte had led a French expedition to Egypt and Syria in 1798, making the Levant a front in the Anglo-French wars. The Royal Navy engaged in the Holy Land in 1799, when they assisted the Ottoman defenders of Acre by bombarding French forces. As Eitan Bar-Yosef has argued, this brought the Holy Land

²⁷ See, for example: Henry Kett, *History, the Interpreter of Prophecy* (Oxford: Hanwell and Parker, 1799), Vol. II, p. 201; Faber, *A Dissertation*, Vol. II, pp. 47–95; James Hatley Frere, *A Combined View of the Prophecies of Daniel, Esdras, and St. John* (London: J. Hatchard, 1815), pp. 41–42

²⁸ Advertisement placed in Basilicus [Lewis Way], *Thoughts on the Scriptural Expectations of the Christian Church* (London: Andrew Panton, 1828), p. 106.

²⁹ Joshua Brooks, *A Dictionary of Writers on the Prophecies* (London: Simpkin, Marshall and co., 1835).

³⁰ On the widespread use of the Revolution as a date-setting tool see David Hempton, "Evangelicalism and Eschatology", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 31:2 (1980), pp. 179–183; Earnest Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800–1930* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 4–7. While most commentators agreed on the Revolution's importance, not all dated the "fatal head wound" of Revelation 13 to 1798, or even agreed on their identifications of who the beast was. Faber, for example, focused on France's turn to infidelity rather than the capture of Rome, but left the 1260 days to expire in 1866 (Faber, *Dissertation*, Vol. 1, pp. 3–59). Frere, on the other hand, dated the end of the 1260 days to 1792 (James Hatley Frere, *A Combined View of the Prophecies of Daniel, Esdras, and St. John* [London: J. Hatchard, 1815], pp. 49–53).

much more firmly into the public imagination.³¹ For those interested in prophecy, an even more striking development came out of the campaign, as the French issued an official call for the Jews to return to Palestine in April 1799. The official proclamation made use of Old Testament prophecy and arguments that were familiar to Judeo-centrists, such as the claim that the Jews had remained separate from other nations in order to ensure their restoration.³² For readers at the time, it was hard to encounter news of the proclamation without thinking of prophecy. As the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* noted: “This is an age of wonders! The Pope overthrown, Turks and Christians united in a war of religion, and the Jews restored!”³³ While the French appeal was opportunistic rather than ideological (Napoleon had earlier made extravagant promises to local Muslims), the declaration stirred up renewed debate about England’s eschatological role that continued throughout the nineteenth century. Rumours of French restoration plans had already circulated in 1798. An anonymous letter (supposedly from the Italian Jewish community to their French brethren) appeared in the French (and subsequently English) press, calling for a united Jewish approach to the Directory to secure restoration.³⁴ Given the mystery at the time surrounding the aims and destination of Bonaparte’s fleet after it departed France, the rumour spread “with some degree of credit, that the intention of the French, in the late expedition from Toulon, is to attempt the restoration of the Jews”.³⁵ The idea gained considerable traction during the summer months, the *Morning Post* reporting in July that Jews viewed “BUONAPARTE as their *Messiah*, who is to re-establish the Mosaic Republic in Palestine, in its ancient splendour”.³⁶ Similar rumours re-emerged in 1806, when Napoleon called together a new Sanhedrin in Paris.³⁷ In conversation as he prepared to take

³¹ Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, pp. 45–49.

³² For the full text of the declaration see Franz Kobler, *Napoleon and the Jews* (Jerusalem: Massada Press, 1976), pp. 55–60. Initial reports of the call, and the supposed arming of “great numbers” of Jews appeared in *The Times*, 17th May 1799.

³³ *Salisbury and Winchester Journal*, 13th May 1799, p. 4.

³⁴ For example: *St James’s Chronicle*, 14th July 1798, p. 2; *Evening Mail*, 15th June 1798, p. 1; *The Star*, 22nd June 1798, p. 2. Franz Kobler accepted the letter as genuine. However, Jeremy D. Popkin has suggested, more plausibly, it was part of a French government disinformation campaign around Napoleon’s voyage (“Zionism and the Enlightenment: The ‘Letter of a Jew to His Brethren’”, *Jewish Social Studies* 43:2 (1981), pp. 113–120).

³⁵ *Lloyd’s Evening Post*, 25th June 1798, p. 3.

³⁶ *Morning Post and Gazetteer*, 9th July 1798, p. 2.

³⁷ Although called in April 1806, the Sanhedrin did not meet until February 1807.

the former emperor to exile on Elba in 1814, Captain Thomas Ussher recalled, “I told him it was generally thought in England that he intended to rebuild Jerusalem, and that which gave rise to the supposition was his convening of the Sanhedrim [*sic*] in Paris”. Although the Frenchman laughed this off, it demonstrates the resilience of belief in his restorationist motives.³⁸

A second factor that led to greater interest in Jewish restoration was the rise of missionary societies. In the closing years of the eighteenth century, and early years of the nineteenth, several major mission societies formed, including the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS, 1792), London Missionary Society (LMS, 1795), Anglican Church Mission Society (CMS, 1799), and British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS, 1804).³⁹ In part, postmillennial hopes of mass conversion helped drive these societies. They were part of the wider optimism that, despite the chaos of revolution, a general Christianisation of the world could still take place.⁴⁰ As these societies developed, increased diversification led to a focus on specialised missionary skills for reaching particular people groups. Against this background, it is perhaps unsurprising that missionaries began to contemplate missions targeted particularly towards the Jews. This led to the formation in 1809 of the most well-known philosemitic organisation of the nineteenth century: The London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, more commonly known as the London Jews’ Society (LJS). As Donald Lewis has pointed out, many of these societies actively drew from the examples of German pietism. German missionaries were often used by the early societies when British volunteers proved hard to recruit or unsuitable for the role. Pietism had given birth to a number of missionary movements, including some aimed particularly at converting Jews. In 1728,

³⁸ Thomas Ussher, *Napoleon’s Last Voyages, Being the Diaries of Admiral Sir Thomas Ussher* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1906), p. 102.

³⁹ As Bob Tennant has noted, missionary societies were not entirely new in the period. The venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK, 1698) and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG, 1701) both continued to be active in this period (see *Corporate Holiness: Pulpit Preaching and the Church of England Missionary Societies* [Oxford: OUP, 2013], pp. 1–15). The chairman of the SPCK had discussed Jewish conversion with the German missionary Stephen Schultz in 1749, where he had affirmed “there were many laymen in London zealous for the conversion of the Jews” (quoted in W.T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, From 1809 to 1908* [London: LJS, 1908], p. 11).

⁴⁰ On the pre-eminent position of postmillennialism see Lewis, *Origins of Christian Zionism*, pp. 36–66.

Johann Callenberg founded the *Institutum Judaicum* as a training group for missionaries in Jewish life and culture. The *Institutum* taught and published in Hebrew and Yiddish, and used a shared messianic expectation as a way of introducing Christianity to Jews. Although there is historiographical disagreement as to whether or not it advocated restorationism,⁴¹ the *Institutum* served as a model for the early work on the LJS, as they recognised in later years.⁴²

The Society could trace its genesis to Joseph Samuel C.F. Frey (1771–1850), a German Jewish convert. Frey arrived in England in 1801 to work for the London Missionary Society, in anticipation of a posting to Africa. On the night of his arrival, Frey dreamed that he was to be a missionary to his fellow Jews and swiftly informed his new employers of the change of plan. After studying at David Bogue’s Congregationalist seminary at Gosport until 1805, he began a weekly lecture series for Jews in London. Growing increasingly frustrated at what he saw as a failure to fund distinctively Jewish evangelism, in 1808 he formed the snappily titled “London Society for the Purpose of Visiting and Relieving the Sick and Distressed, and Instructing the Ignorant, Especially such as are of the Jewish Nation”. Unfortunately, the length of the Society’s name contrasted with the brevity of its existence, and it collapsed within the year. Undeterred, Frey established the LJS on non-denominational grounds in 1809. The Society attracted widespread evangelical support, including luminaries such as William Wilberforce and Charles Simeon, as well as royal patronage. A crowd of 20,000 watched the Duke of Kent lay the foundations for its headquarters in 1813. Yet the LJS’s early years were controversial. This was both for its apparent bribery of converts and Frey’s

⁴¹ Yaakov Ariel has claimed that it did—see “From the Institutum Judaicum to the International Christian Embassy: Christian Zionism with a European Accent”, in Göran Gunner and Robert O. Smith (eds), *Comprehending Christian Zionism: Perspectives in Comparison* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), pp. 204–207. Lewis, however, argues that the “fascination with the physical restoration of the Jews was not a pietist distinctive” (Lewis, *Origins*, p. 54). For more on the Institute in general see Yaakov Ariel, “A New Model of Christian Interaction with the Jews: The Institutum Judaicum and Missions to the Jews in the Atlantic World”, *Journal of Early Modern History* 21 (2017), pp. 116–136.

⁴² See, for example, Edward Bickersteth, *The Restoration of the Jews to their Own Land, in Connection with their Future Conversion and the Final Blessedness of our Earth* Second Edition (London: R.B. Seeley and W. Burnside, 1841), p. lxxvii; M. Brock, “Love of Christians to Jews the Signal of God’s Returning Mercy”, in *Israel’s Sins and Israel’s Hopes, Being Lectures Delivered During Lent, 1846, at St. George’s, Bloomsbury* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1846), pp. 261–263.

supposed sexual misconduct.⁴³ Regardless of the truth of these accusations, the LJS had run up a £14,000 debt by 1815. In that year it was reconstituted as an Anglican society, with its debts cleared by Lewis Way (1772–1840), a former lawyer who had been gifted a massive fortune and was to play a key role in its organisation into the 1820s. The Society expanded its efforts into overseas, as well as home, mission work, and grew over the period. Frey was quietly removed, although he went on to have a successful career as an evangelist in the United States.⁴⁴

The extent to which restorationism was involved in the LJS's foundation and ongoing operation has proved controversial. The Society's official history, written in 1908, was keen to distance it from claims of prophetic excess: "the duty of supporting Missions to the Jews was altogether a thing apart from the necessity of holding any special views on prophecy".⁴⁵ Some historians have found this disingenuous. Bar-Yosef argued that restoration to Palestine was "the *raison d'être* of the Society",⁴⁶ with Earnest Sandeen describing the LJS's greatest success "as an advocate of Protestant Zionism".⁴⁷ Recent research on the Society's library has suggested that they began to focus increasingly on collecting books on prophecy from the 1820s, with textual analysis of their catalogues finding progressively common combinations of the words "England" and "restoration" in book titles up to 1852.⁴⁸ Other historians have noted the conflicted nature of official restorationist pronouncements, with Clyde Binfield arguing that

⁴³ For an exposé of Frey's methods and adultery see M. Sailman, *The Mystery Unfolded: Or, an Exposition of the Extraordinary Means Employed to Obtain Converts of the London Society* (London: Published for the Author, 1817).

⁴⁴ The official early history of the LJS is W.T. Gidney, *The History of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, From 1809 to 1908* (London: LJS, 1908). For more recent examinations see Scult, *Millennial Expectations*, pp. 90–123; Lewis, *Origins*, pp. 49–66; Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, pp. 34–38. On Way see Stanley and Munro Price, *The Road to Apocalypse: The Extraordinary Journey of Lewis Way* (London: Notting Hill Editions, 2011).

⁴⁵ Gidney, *History of the London Society*, p. 35.

⁴⁶ Eitan Bar-Yosef, "Christian Zionism and Victorian Culture", p. 25.

⁴⁷ Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, p. 12. For the view that the LJS's restorationism has been overplayed see Nancy Stevenson, "The Jews as a Factor in Mission: Scottish and English Motive into Action 1795-c.1840", Position Paper 81, Currents in World Christianity Project (Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, 1997).

⁴⁸ Jemima M.S. Jarman, "Uncovering the Narrative of a Forgotten Library Through the Analysis of Its Catalogue Records: The Case of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews' Missionary Library" (Unpublished MA Thesis: UCL, 2016), pp. 25–30; 50–52.

many used coded language. Restorationism was rarely at the front and centre of the LJS’s official publications, but the language used appealed to those who knew what to look for.⁴⁹ Bar-Yosef’s conclusion that such language provides evidence for the LJS’s embarrassment at Judeo-centrism, and thus popular disapproval of the belief, is difficult to reconcile with his claim that the Society existed explicitly to pursue restoration. Instead, it suggests that the LJS was trying to appeal to as wide a demographic as possible. Like most missionary societies, its members did not agree on all matters of theology. Involvement in any mission society might be motivated by prophecy, personal concern for a particular group, or by a philanthropic drive. Using coded language was more a matter of political expediency to broaden appeal. Edward Cooper provided a particularly astute example when he declared in the 1819 LJS anniversary sermon “the attentive observer will discover some signs, which may encourage him without presumption to hope” that the “captivity of Zion” might be nearing its end. Listeners could reach their own conclusion as to whether this “captivity” was only spiritual, or also applied to the Jews’ exile.⁵⁰ Other preachers were more direct. So William Bushe, secretary of the LJS’s Dublin Auxiliary, began his 1821 anniversary sermon with a subtle intermingling of literal and spiritual fulfilment, before declaring more bluntly: “Here then, are gracious promises contained in these two citations from Ezekiel: the reunion of the tribes; their restoration to their own land; their acknowledgement of Christ, and subjection to his Gospel”. Promises, he added, which he believed the LJS would be key in fulfilling.⁵¹

These developments fundamentally changed the way in which restorationists viewed the prospect of Jewish return. The French declaration moved the possibility of Jewish restoration to Palestine out of the realms of prophetic speculation and into the world of political policy. The foundation of the LJS, combined with missionary optimism, provided a Christian organisation focused on the Jewish people for the first time in

⁴⁹ Clyde Binfield, “Jews in Evangelical Dissent: The British Society, the Herschell Connection and the Pre-Millenarian Thread”, in Michael Wilks (ed.), *Prophecy and Eschatology*. Studies in Church History 10 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 240–245.

⁵⁰ London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, *The Eleventh Report of the Committee of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews* (London: A. Macintosh, 1819), p. 12.

⁵¹ London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, *The Thirteenth Report of the Committee of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews* (London: A. Macintosh, 1821), p. 33.

England. For those used to looking for signs of God's providence in day-to-day life, these appeared as auspicious indicators that the final prophetic puzzle pieces were moving into place. Combined with Britain's military success, they also suggested that the nation could play a particular role in these momentous events.

Before moving on to the specific links between Judeo-centrism and national identity in the period, it is important to mention one final shift that took place in the early nineteenth century. The LJS's formative years corresponded with a period of fundamental change in English eschatology, in which premillennialism re-emerged as a respectable belief. Although Mede was widely read in the eighteenth century, his popularity did not extend to his premillennial views. This began to change in the early nineteenth century. The prevailing optimism of the early years of the century collapsed for some commentators under the weight of economic recession and lack of visible missionary progress. Infidelity seemed to be on the rise, and churches appeared increasingly lukewarm by the 1820s. Many of the generation succeeding the respectable and cultured leaders of Clapham Sect evangelicalism therefore condemned their forebears for naïve accommodation with the world and an obsession with utopian social projects. Where postmillennialists believed in the gradual improvement of the world, premillennialists condemned it as inherently corrupt. Only the physical return and personal reign of Christ on earth could bring about the transformation predicted in Revelation 20. These ideas, fitting in with the romantic sensibility of the age,⁵² emerged over the course of the first decades of the century. The works of the Anglican commentator James Hatley Frere (1779–1866), who enjoyed success after correctly predicting Napoleon's downfall in advance of the fact⁵³ and argued that "the personal reign of Christ" was necessary for the fulfilment of prophecy, were particularly influential. Whether this was a physical or a spiritual coming was unclear.⁵⁴ As Donald Lewis notes, Frere's ideas chimed with an increasing scepticism over the value of human effort, as expressed in James Haldane Stewart's *Thoughts on the Importance of Special Prayer for the General*

⁵² David Bebbington, *The Dominance of Evangelicalism: The Age of Spurgeon and Moody* (Dowers Grove: IVP Academic, 2005), pp. 148–183; For the specific application of this to premillennialism see Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, pp. 84–86.

⁵³ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 80.

⁵⁴ Frere, *A Combined View*, p. 141. Bebbington argues that Frere held to a spiritual coming (*Evangelicalism*, pp. 82–83).

Outpouring of the Holy Spirit (1821) which sold 90,000 copies.⁵⁵ The ideas of both men were taken up by the fiery Scottish preacher Edward Irving (1792–1834). Irving had been an assistant to Thomas Chalmers in Glasgow, before moving to take charge of the Church of Scotland’s Caledonian Chapel in London in 1822. There, somewhat implausibly, he became a preaching sensation—his sermons received positive notices in the House of Commons and fashionable carriages clogged the streets outside the chapel. Lord Liverpool apparently resorted to climbing through a window in order to attend a sermon. However, Irving’s star waned over the 1820s—he criticised the optimism and (to his mind) unbiblical operations of missionary societies in the anniversary sermon he preached for the LMS in 1824, and was increasingly involved in controversy over Christology and gifts of the Spirit, until removed by the Church of Scotland in 1833. Sidelined in the new denomination he established (The Catholic Apostolic Church), he died a broken man in 1834.

Irving’s premillennialism emerged most forcefully in his 1827 translation of the Chilean Jesuit Manuel Lacunza’s *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*. Written under a Jewish pseudonym (“Ben Ezra”), the work predicted the premillennial coming of Christ and restoration of the Jews, both themes that Irving explored in his 193-page preface to the book. Irving’s translation was key in the promotion of premillennialism in general. In December 1826, as he was completing his translation, he attended a conference of premillennialists at Albury Park in Surrey. Organised by the financier and MP Henry Drummond, a close friend of Lewis Way and fellow member of the LJS board, the conference included, among others, Frere, Way, Irving, the LJS missionary Joseph Wolff, and Spencer Perceval, MP (son of the assassinated prime minister). The conference agreed on six points: the cataclysmic end of the church age; the physical restoration of the Jews to Palestine; coming judgement on Christian nations; the millennium subsequent to this; Christ’s premillennial return; and the dating of the 1260 days from Justinian’s reign to the French Revolution. These became the basis for more determined premillennialism over the coming years, and the foundation for Drummond and Irving’s prophetic journal *Morning Watch*, published from 1829–1833.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Lewis, *Origins of Christian Zionism*, pp. 72–75.

⁵⁶ On Albury see Lewis, *Origins*, pp. 80–87; Sandeen, *Roots*, pp. 20–25; Mark Rayburn Patterson, “Designing the Last Days: Edward Irving, The Albury Circle and the Theology

The meeting served as the precursor for the Powerscourt conferences on prophecy, held in Dublin from 1831–1833. These gatherings encouraged a new form of interpretation, which drew from Albury and Irving, and developed through the thought of the Irish cleric John Nelson Darby (1800–1882). The new “premillennial dispensationalism” was destined to become the most influential form of prophetic interpretation in twentieth-century America. In its early form, it advocated separation from established churches, and a radical division of biblical promises between Jews and Gentiles. The church, as God’s heavenly people, had promises distinct from the Jews, God’s earthly people. The next event on the prophetic calendar, according to Darby, was the removal of the church through the rapture, and the great tribulation that Jews and non-Christians would have to endure before Christ’s return. Political involvement was both pointless and sinful for the Christian, whose focus should be on heavenly concerns. Christians would therefore not be present to witness the restoration of Israel, which would occur after the rapture.⁵⁷ These positions meant that dispensationalism had little impact on the story of mainstream restorationism in mid-nineteenth-century England. Nonetheless, it is important to be aware of its emergence at this point, both because of its later influence in the United States, and to avoid confusion between dispensational and non-dispensational commentators as the former emerged in the 1840s.

It is also essential to recognise that while dispensationalists strongly disapproved of political engagement, mainstream restorationists did not, regardless of their millennial position. Historians have often argued that premillennialism militated against projects for worldly improvement, as it presumed an ever-worsening world and coming judgement. Boyd Hilton has suggested that while premillennialists were willing to engage in paternalistic social action that would discourage general sin, they were pessimistic about the success of missionary work or general attempts to improve the world. At the centre of this was their understanding of providence. Premillennialists held that God operated through special providences, punishing or rewarding directly and actively against corporate acts of unrighteousness. The government therefore had a responsibility to legis-

of the *Morning Watch*” (Unpublished PhD Thesis: King’s College London, 2001), pp. 47–62.

⁵⁷Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, pp. 62–67; Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, pp. 50–55; Smith, *More Desired*, pp. 158–161.

late against economic sin (including slavery and working hours) but should expect no long-term improvement as a result. Postmillennialists, on the other hand, held to a doctrine of enlightenment-influenced general providence, in which rewards and punishments sprang naturally from good or bad behaviour. Hilton’s point was not that postmillennialists denied the possibility of special providences, but that premillennialists rejected the implications of general providence and its more mechanistic vision of the world.⁵⁸ They therefore focused their energy on moral and religious improvements.⁵⁹

Against this, Ralph Brown and Martin Spence have recently argued that premillennialism was not only mainstream, but also encouraged adherents to become involved in projects with broader practical impacts, including missionary work. Brown is right to highlight the importance of Irving’s emphasis on national covenants here. Irving, returning to the theology of the seventeenth-century covenanters, believed that the established churches of England and Scotland had special responsibilities before God to oppose Catholicism in return for his blessing. National obedience was therefore vital in order to avoid the more serious judgements that breaking the covenant would result in. While Irving eventually advocated greater scepticism towards missionaries, his covenantal thought provided a further justification for premillennial involvement in both national politics and missionary societies.⁶⁰ The concept of national responsibility would play a key role in developing views of Judeo-centrism.

Secondly, as Spence notes, while premillennialism presumed the evil of the current age, it also valourised the physical, as Christ’s reign with the saints would be bodily.⁶¹ Given that the majority of premillennialists remained historicists, their view of history was much more positive than Hilton recognised. For them, it was the essential sphere of God’s action. The distinction between special and general providence was therefore more of a theological nicety than a practical impediment to action.⁶² Neither was “special” providence as arbitrary and unreadable as Hilton suggests. “Special” providences, in which God directly intervened in the

⁵⁸ Hilton makes this point in his response to Ralph Brown. See Boyd Hilton, “Evangelical Social Attitudes”, pp. 119–121.

⁵⁹ Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement*, pp. 13–17.

⁶⁰ Ralph Brown, “Victorian Anglican Evangelicalism”, pp. 686–690.

⁶¹ Martin Spence, *Heaven on Earth: Reimagining Time and Eternity in Nineteenth-Century British Evangelicalism* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015), pp. 146–203.

⁶² Martin Spence, “The Renewal of Time and Space”, pp. 81–101.

world to punish, could also operate on a basis close to natural law. Certain actions had specific consequences—train accidents on a Sunday were a natural consequence of breaking God’s command not to work on the Sabbath, for example. Even if the judgement did not immediately follow the sin, specific punishment would eventually be “naturally” meted out, whether for nations or for individuals. Premillennialists were far more accepting of general providence than Hilton argued, as God worked through the historical process.⁶³ Again, this has important consequences for understanding Judeo-centrism’s view on national and individual judgement for attitudes towards Jews. Judgements against nations, which had a crucial function in demonstrating God’s will, had to be discernible in the political sphere, and promote political change.

Premillennialism, far from advocating withdrawal from the political sphere, could therefore encourage involvement in it. While the world might be on a downward trajectory, the Christian’s responsibility, particularly the well-connected Christian, was to defend the righteous elements within the present system for as long as possible.⁶⁴ In other words, both postmillennialists and premillennialists agreed that it was their duty to work for particular aims, such as the conversion and restoration of the Jews, although they might differ on how extensive their success would be. Postmillennialists could hope that their efforts would be part of a general outflowing of the gospel on earth. Premillennialists could argue that God alone would choose the time of Jewish restoration, but that he was also working through history in order to achieve it. This is why restorationist premillennialists, such as Drummond, rejected the admission of Jews to parliament. Incorporating Jews into the national legislature would discourage them from recognising that their future lay in Palestine.⁶⁵

Political agency was therefore involved for both post and premillennialists. As Frere stated, God had set in motion plans for his ultimate victory, but “the appointed means is through the agency of his creatures; and surely the furthering the accomplishment of his will, which may constitute the chief happiness of Heaven, ought by all to be esteemed the greatest on

⁶³ Ralph Brown, “Evangelical Social Thought”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 60:1 (2008), pp. 128–129; Spence, *Heaven on Earth*, pp. 213–216.

⁶⁴ Markku Ruotsila, “The Catholic Apostolic Church in British Politics”, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 56:1 (2005), pp. 75–91.

⁶⁵ Ruotsila, “Catholic Apostolic Church”, p. 80. I discuss this issue further at the end of this chapter.

earth”.⁶⁶ Stewart’s caution on missionary enthusiasm had simply pointed out the implausibility of believing that the societies would result in the Christianisation of the world. Such efforts, he argued, should nonetheless continue.⁶⁷ This explains why figures such as Way could be active in the political sphere, while at the same time cautioning against the dangers of hoping in politics for salvation. Recognising this provides an important basis for understanding how both pre- and postmillennialists employed Judeo-centric thought in the nineteenth century. Their conceptions of providence and the use of means to achieve prophetic ends were not as divided as is sometimes thought. Co-operation between evangelicals of different theological stripes was not only possible, but was actively encouraged.

2 JUDEO-CENTRISM AND THE NATION IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

Given Mede and Newton’s continued popularity, it is unsurprising that nineteenth-century Judeo-centric belief showed continuity with the eighteenth-century tradition. Yet, as the discussion of shifts in millennial positioning suggests, changes took place as well. The most important was a move away from the standard eighteenth-century position that the Jews would return to Palestine only after their conversion to Christianity. Now commentators were willing to allow that restoration was possible prior to the Jews accepting Christ. As has been widely recognised, this represented the most important shift in restorationism at the start of the nineteenth century.⁶⁸ Some, such as Horsley, maintained

⁶⁶Frere, *Combined View*, p. 303.

⁶⁷“God himself has directed the use of means; our duty is obedience to His commands. This is that which He regards, not the success which attends our efforts”. James Haldene Stewart, *Thoughts on the Importance of Special Prayer*, Fourth Edition (London: Edward Page, 1827), p. 8.

⁶⁸Matar, “Controversy...From 1754”, pp. 31–33; Vreté, “The Restoration of the Jews”, pp. 3–50; Smith, *More Desired*, pp. 145–146; Lewis, *Origins*, pp. 42–47. This is against Michael Ragussis’s assumption that conversion remained a prerequisite for their return (*Figures of Conversion*, pp. 90–92). Sizer, in his analysis of covenantal premillennialism in the nineteenth century, also presumes that proponents saw the Jews returning as a converted nation (Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, pp. 34–41). As the remainder of the chapter shows, restorationists were keen to point out that this was not the case, allowing for new political as well as theological interpretations of the Jewish return.

the older position.⁶⁹ However, the majority embraced the new possibilities that restoration in unbelief opened up. Bicheno argued that the Jews would return unconverted, and initially reluctantly, preferring assimilation in Europe.⁷⁰ As Henry Kett (1761–1825) argued, older commentators had erred in treating conversion and restoration as the same thing when they were “*distinct* events, which the darkness and bigotry of former ages have considered as *necessarily* inseparable”.⁷¹ Given the lack of success that had followed previous efforts at convincing Jews to accept Jesus as messiah, restoration prior to conversion provided more fuel for the fire of prophetic belief. It also suggested that the return to Palestine might be imminent. As Lewis noted, the Jews became a divine timepiece. Along with the French Revolution, which provided a firm date for the expiration of the 1260 and 1335 days/years, observing Jewish propensity for restoration offered firm evidence of the imminent fulfilment of God’s promises.⁷²

If the Jews returned prior to their conversion, and their restoration would occur presently, then it made sense to speculate on how it might happen. This is where nations came into play. The idea that England would have this exalted role had, as previous chapters have shown, been raised during the Whitehall Conference, Jew Bill controversy, and in earlier discussions of the French Revolution. But it received additional impetus in the early nineteenth century due to Napoleon’s declaration. Napoleon’s call to the Jews allowed commentators to argue that not only were scripture prophecies lining up with contemporary politics, but that they were doing so in England’s favour. Many felt that the Jews’ conversion, as championed by the LJS, was a prerequisite for larger missionary success. Paul had described the conversion of Israel as being akin to “life from the dead” (Ro. 11:15). As early as 1806, the LMS’s David Bogue had warned that the Society’s activities would always have limited success

⁶⁹ Samuel Horsley, *Critical Disquisitions on the Eighteenth Chapter of Isaiah* (London, 1799), pp. 102–105. See also William Cuninghame, *A Dissertation on the Seals and Trumpets*, Second Edition (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1817), pp. 337–340, which returns to the idea of a partial conversion prior to restoration.

⁷⁰ James Bicheno, *The Restoration of the Jews, the Crisis of All Nations* (London: Bye and Law, 1800), pp. 65–70.

⁷¹ Henry Kett, *History the Interpreter of Prophecy, Or, a View of Scripture Prophecies* (Oxford: Hanwell and Parker, 1799), Volume III, pp. 217–218.

⁷² Lewis, *Origins*, pp. 40–42.

until the Jews converted.⁷³ For others, the converted Jews would become the heralds of the millennium. “Let but the veil, of unbelief and carnal prejudices, be removed from their heart”, noted Scott, “then behold your missionaries in France, Spain, Italy, Germany; even in Pagan and Mohammedean countries”.⁷⁴ Conversion, thought Faber, would lead to the nations rushing to Jerusalem to hear God’s word.⁷⁵ The “high honour of evangelizing the world” belonged to the Jews, and “no great success will attend the labours of missionaries amongst the Heathens until the iniquity of Israel be purged”.⁷⁶ The only way to bring blessing to the world, wrote Way, was “to be earnest in continual supplication to God for the JEWS”, whose coming in would lead to mass conversions.⁷⁷

This provided the background for a new popularisation of the idea that England’s role in the end times was to restore the Jews. Horsley was instrumental here. His 1799 *Critical Disquisitions on the Eighteenth Chapter of Isaiah* was a response to the eccentric antiquarian Edward King, who had granted the French the honour of restoring Israel. The bishop rejected the idea that the “atheistical” republic would be responsible.⁷⁸ He instead highlighted the attributes of the country Isaiah identified: a global maritime power and trading nation, actively engaged in protective alliances and exploration.⁷⁹ The nation must have powerful fleets to offer the Jews, and would be one in which “the literal sense of those [prophecies] which promise the restoration of the Jewish people, will be strenuously upheld: and where these be so successfully expounded, as to be the principle means, by God’s blessing, of removing the veil from the hearts of the

⁷³ David Bogue, “The Duty of Christians to Seek the Salvation of the Jews”, in *Four Sermons, Preached in London at the Twelfth General Meeting of the Missionary Society* (London: T. Williams, 1806), pp. 89–91.

⁷⁴ Scott, *The Jews: A Blessing*, p. 26.

⁷⁵ Faber, *General and Connected View*, pp. 91–97.

⁷⁶ A Presbyterian of the Church of England, *Obligations to Christians to Attempt the Conversion of the Jews*, Fourth Edition (London: B.R. Goakman, 1813), p. 23.

⁷⁷ Way, *The Latter Rain*, pp. 31–40 (quote at p. 31). For more on the link between Jewish conversion and missionary success see Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*, pp. 14–56.

⁷⁸ King’s reasoning was also rejected on historical grounds—he argued that “the land shadowing with wings” (Isa 18:1) referred to contemporary maps in which France was “winged” by Germany and Spain. Horsley argued that since the prophet had never seen a map, let alone an eighteenth-century one, it was somewhat unlikely that this was what Isaiah had in mind (Horsley, *Disquisitions*, pp. 28–33).

⁷⁹ Horsley, *Disquisitions*, pp. 44–48.

Israelites”.⁸⁰ Nowhere did Horsley name the country, but readers had little difficulty in working out who he meant.⁸¹ His comments on the importance of prophetic exegesis served to make the *Disquisitions* itself evidence of the process of prophetic fulfilment, something that perhaps explains why it became a “treasure trove” for millenarian writers who continued to cite it for the next fifty years.⁸² As Lewis Way declared triumphantly to the LJS annual meeting of 1817, “Had a venerable prelate of our Church been living in this day, he would *no longer* have had recourse to geographical relation or critical inquiry, to ascertain ‘*the land shadowed with wings;*’ he would have found its character in existing circumstances”.⁸³

It therefore became much more common for preachers and commentators to emphasise England’s role. Most followed Horsley in cautioning that their interpretation was speculation, while at the same time surrounding it with detailed exegesis and geopolitical arguments to eliminate uncertainty. Faber, for example, cautioned that it was “*a mere conjecture*” that England would be the nation to restore the Jews. The fact that the approaching end of the 1260 days combined with “*a mighty protestant maritime power, arriving with rapid strides at the most complete naval superiority*”, however, suggested a basis in firm evidence.⁸⁴ Elsewhere he suggested that the Devil would be particularly fierce in his attacks on England in the coming days. However, “in vain shall he assemble his enslaved multitudes against *that mighty maritime* nation, which is destined to take the lead in turning the captivity of God’s ancient people”.⁸⁵ The prophecy writer William Cuninghame noted that there was “reason to conjecture, that we are probably the people marked out by prophecy, for commencing the conversion and restoration of Judah”.⁸⁶ Was it unlikely, asked Kett, that “*this maritime, commercial, Protestant* kingdom

⁸⁰ Horsley, *Disquisitions*, p. 90.

⁸¹ See, for example, a letter criticising the bishop in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, in which Horsley’s work is said to evidence “his own latent sentiment, that the deliverance of the Jews... may possibly be effected by means of England” (*The Gentleman’s Magazine*, July 1799, p. 549).

⁸² Vreté, “The Restoration of the Jews”, pp. 9–12.

⁸³ Lewis Way in *The Ninth Report of the Committee of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews, Read at the General Meeting, May 9, 1817* (London: A. Macintosh, 1817), pp. 10–11. A footnote in the text identifies the “venerable prelate” as Horsley.

⁸⁴ Faber, *General and Connected View*, pp. 103–108.

⁸⁵ Faber, *Dissertation*, Vol. 2, p. 134.

⁸⁶ Cuninghame, *A Dissertation*, p. 348.

should take the lead in executing the Divine will on such an occasion?”⁸⁷ Lewis Mayer, writing in 1803, suggested that “from the general tenor of prophecy”, England would, “display her banners on the Gallic shores, extend her influence over the continent of Europe and Asia, re-establish the Jews in their ancient possessions, and give universal peace to the world”.⁸⁸ When C.T. Maitland composed a commentary specifically for the use of the poor and unlearned in 1814, he made sure to include a section on “the ships of some great maritime nation” restoring the Jews, in order that “a lively interest might be excited in the breasts of my countrymen in behalf of that extraordinary people”.⁸⁹ As one correspondent wrote to *Blagdon’s Political Register* during the Napoleonic wars: “Sir, this is the favoured nation of ships, and whenever the Jews are to be restored to their ancient home from maritime parts, this country will surely be foremost in that divine undertaking... there can be no doubt but a British fleet will convey them”.⁹⁰ Way’s 1824 poem *Palingenesia* included passages for “ENGLAND addressed as the messenger people” to restore the Jews.⁹¹

Some preachers used the prophecy in Jewish evangelism. In an 1810 sermon preached for the CMS, the Scottish missionary Claudius Buchanan recounted how he had asked Jews he encountered in India to interpret Isaiah 18. Having responded that it dealt with their final restoration to Palestine, they listed four attributes of those predicted to help them: a powerful, maritime nation, west of the Nile, who would send out messengers across the world, particularly in a time of political chaos. As Buchanan told his audience, “When I endeavoured to shew that all these characters centred in Great Britain, and that she was actually sending forth messengers at this time to all nations, the Jews were alarmed at their own interpretation”.⁹² Buchanan had tricked them into admitting that the consummation of the promises was imminent.

⁸⁷ Kett, *History the Interpreter of Prophecy*, Vol. III, p. 229.

⁸⁸ Lewis Mayer, *The Prophetic Mirror: Or, a Hint to England* (London: Parsons and Son, 1803), p. 36.

⁸⁹ C.T. Maitland, *A Brief and Connected View of Prophecy* (London: J. Hatchard, 1814), p. 87.

⁹⁰ Reprinted in *Leicester Journal, and Midland Counties General Advertiser*, 31st August 1810, p. 2.

⁹¹ Lewis Way, *Palingenesia: The World to Come* (London: Martin Bossanage, 1824), pp. 139, 268.

⁹² Claudius Buchanan, *Two Discourses Preached Before the University of Cambridge* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1812), p. 109.

At first glance, these prophecies might appear to support British imperialism.⁹³ After all, it was now possible to make a political case alongside the scriptural case for Jewish restoration. Whereas the press mocked Brothers's plans for Palestine in 1795 for their apparently far-fetched nature, the political arguments began to have some effect. So *St James's Chronicle* reported in July 1798 that while the French Directory's rumoured schemes to restore the Jews initially appeared unrealistic, they were in fact politically sound.⁹⁴ On another occasion, it warned: "The French project of a *Jewish Republick*, however absurd and impracticable it may seem at first blush, requires the utmost vigilance of the European governments".⁹⁵ Faber's reflection on the reasons that might move the government to support restoration worried that the decision "will be somewhat *alloyed* by worldly motives, and will not be adopted *simply* from a desire to promote the glory of God".⁹⁶ The *Bath Chronicle* had suggested just these sorts of motives in 1803, when it speculated that, "England in possession of Palestine, may acquire, by the restoration of the Jews to their own country, a most useful number of money-lending subjects".⁹⁷ Bicheno took up this argument, and applied it directly to geopolitics. He imagined the French speculating on the possibility of using the Jewish desire to return to Palestine as "a formidable weapon... for effecting [their] purposes!" Britain, he argued, should counter this possibility by engaging with both prophecy and policy:

At once to secure the honor of being the instruments of recovering the unhappy Jews from the misery of their wandering condition, and of restoring them to their own land; and at the same time to supersede the deep policy of our enemy, who, perhaps already meditates such a project as the above, let the rulers of this country use their influence with the Porte to give up that part of their territory from which the Jews have been expelled, to its rightful owners... Wild project!!!—It may well be so: but, I very much suspect if we do not pursue some such measure as this, we shall repent when it will be too late.⁹⁸

⁹³ Matar, "Controversy...from 1754", p. 40; Clark, *Allies for Armageddon*, pp. 66–72.

⁹⁴ *St James's Chronicle*, 19th July 1798, p. 3.

⁹⁵ *St James's Chronicle*, 12th July 1798, p. 4.

⁹⁶ Faber, *General and Connected View*, p. 51.

⁹⁷ *Bath Chronicle*, 16th June 1803, p. 1.

⁹⁸ Bicheno, *Restoration of the Jews*, pp. 95–96.

As the Napoleonic wars raged, some commentators imagined further political benefits. Returning Jews might engage with the French in the final battle in Palestine. Faber suggested that while France restored Jews in unbelief, Britain would convert and restore bands of Jewish converts to fight against them in a thirty-year war.⁹⁹ Frere, who believed that Napoleon was the Antichrist, argued that the French would fight combined British and Russian forces at Armageddon.¹⁰⁰ The possibility of a Russian alliance was certainly not far-fetched, as demonstrated by Lewis Way’s dramatic journey across Europe to meet with the pious and mystically inclined Tsar Alexander I in 1817. Earlier that year, the Tsar had issued a *ukase* granting converted Jews land in Crimea, and on arrival in Moscow Way had four meetings in which the two men discussed prophecy and Jewish restoration. Alexander facilitated Way’s involvement at the Aix-la-Chapelle conference of the great powers in November 1818, and the Englishman addressed the delegates on the importance of Jewish rights, with all five powers endorsing his proposals for ameliorating Jewish suffering.¹⁰¹

For all of the political benefits that the nation would accrue in restoration, support for it was not simply a case of imperial and religious interests combining. Firstly, they would not necessarily act alone. Way’s willingness to work with Russia in order to achieve restoration highlights the fact that although restorationists believed England would restore the Jews, they did not dismiss working as part of a broader alliance. Chosen nationhood did not imply the rejection of all other nations. Secondly, in line with the tradition of Judeo-centric thought, the Holy Land was not England’s to claim. The Jews, once restored, would have dominance and empire in the world. This was part of what Lewis has described as a “teaching of esteem” towards the Jews that was common in England at the time, but goes

⁹⁹Faber, *General and Connected View*, pp. 28–97. The thirty years cover the period between the 1260 and 1290 days.

¹⁰⁰Frere, *Combined View*, pp. 467–474.

¹⁰¹On this see Price and Price, *The Road to Apocalypse*, pp. 38–71. It was rumoured at the time that Way had addressed the conference on Jewish restoration. A letter to a Brussels newspaper from Way, reprinted in *The Times* set this straight: “my object was neither the conversion of the Jews, nor their restoration to Palestine, but a reasonable appeal to the justice and to the liberality of an enlightened age, relative to the amelioration of their moral and political condition under the several Governments of Europe”. (*The Times*, 17th December 1818, p. 2). A copy of the proclamation, and some of Way’s letters to Alexander, was printed in 1819. The letters directly refer to restoration. See *Mémoires sur L’état des Israélites, Dédies et Présentés, a leurs Majestés Impériales et Royales, Réunies au Congrès d’Aix-la-Chapelle* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1819).

beyond this in actively identifying Jews as superior.¹⁰² “If there be any meaning in words”, warned Bicheno, “they will stand up a great army... and be instruments of bringing about the awful and grand designs of the deity in revolutionizing the world”.¹⁰³ According to Mayer, they would be “exalted to an eminence in the political world, superior to any of the existing kingdoms of the earth”.¹⁰⁴ As Scott reminded the LJS, the Jews would be “the most distinguished and extraordinary people on earth; and be, in many respects, honoured and made a blessing to the nations above all others of the human race”.¹⁰⁵ Even some critics of the LJS, such as Thomas Witherby, based their objections on the inherent superiority of the Jews. He worried that the Society’s focus on mission and prophecy would encourage Jews to rely on the English for help, rather than clearly bringing the gentile nation into their service. In the former scenario, Jews “would be degraded, indeed, into the character of needy suppliants”.¹⁰⁶ While England could aspire to a role as protector of the new Jewish state, it would also be its inferior.

This is where providence united both pre- and postmillennialists in their interpretation. The renewed emphasis on providence in the early nineteenth century led to a heightened focus on the rewards and punishments linked to the Jews. An LJS publication from 1813 made this clear: when the Jews converted, God would “judge the nations, and punish the oppressors of Israel”.¹⁰⁷ According to Witherby, at Christ’s return he would “reward those of the nations who have kindly cherished and administered to the necessities of Israel his people”, while he would punish those who had not done so.¹⁰⁸ Way warned England that she faced destruction if she rejected her role: “*The nation that oppresseth Israel/Or will not serve her, sinketh!*”¹⁰⁹ John Aquila Brown, a member of the non-conformist Philo-Judean Society,¹¹⁰ argued that the British faced judgement for their

¹⁰² Lewis, *Origins of Christian Zionism*, pp. 63–66.

¹⁰³ Bicheno, *Restoration of the Jews*, pp. 70–71.

¹⁰⁴ Lewis Mayer, *Restoration of the Jews: Containing an Explanation of the Prophecies*, Third Edition (London: C. Stower, 1806), p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ Scott, *The Jews: A Blessing*, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ Witherby, *Vindication*, p. 82.

¹⁰⁷ Presbyterian, *Obligations*, p. 16.

¹⁰⁸ Witherby, *Vindication of the Jews*, p. 244.

¹⁰⁹ Way, *Palingenesia*, p. 139.

¹¹⁰ Formed in 1826 in order to press for Jewish temporal relief in the face of supposed LJS inaction. Some members would be part of both societies. See Scult, *Millennial Expectations*, pp. 132–133.

treatment of the Jews: “with [the nation’s] dreadful statutes and murderous edicts yet unrepealed, are bound, as they may expect the vindication of Divine justice to repair the breach”.¹¹¹ One LJS writer held out a terrifying vision of what England could expect if she failed to treat Jews rightly: “our cities in flames, and our liberties annihilated, I think (and it is a thought of much reflection) that we should then call to mind this cause, amongst others of our distress—THE NEGLECT OF THE JEWS”.¹¹²

In some writers, there was an element of anxiety in discussions about their country’s role. As Brown’s rhetoric suggested, Judeo-centrists were aware of England’s past persecution of Jews, as well as the Jewish background to their Christian faith. This generated a sense of guilt and obligation often expressed in economic terms.¹¹³ England, they argued, owed the Jews a debt both for their salvation, and for their prior mistreatment of them. Scott imagined a cloud of witnesses calling this in: “demanding the payment of the mighty debt, which we owe them”.¹¹⁴ Another writer for the LJS sternly noted “we have a debt to pay, which cannot be withheld without the most flagrant dishonesty”.¹¹⁵ Edward Cooper’s 1819 sermon for the Society took this further. Should Christians not “wipe the foul reproach which our holy religion has sustained, by having suffered her followers so long to trample on this oppressed and injured people? Can it be too early at the expiration of so many ages to exhibit to them a just specimen of real Christianity... Have we forgotten that original promise of the Almighty to Abraham, ‘Them that bless thee, I will bless?’”¹¹⁶ In an article praising the LJS, the *British Review and London Critical Journal* recounted English persecution, and warned that medieval Jews “have left the account to be settled by their posterity, and we fear that a heavy balance remains against us”.¹¹⁷ These ideas highlight the extensive use of economic language in soteriological discussion.¹¹⁸ They also provide evi-

¹¹¹ James Aquila Brown, *The Jew, the Master-Key of the Apocalypse, in Answer to Mr. Frere’s ‘General Structure’* (London: Hatchard and Sons, 1827), p. xvi.

¹¹² Presbyter, *Obligations*, p. 20.

¹¹³ For more on this idea see Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*, pp. 89–126 and Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, pp. 129–132.

¹¹⁴ Scott, *The Jews: A Blessing*, p. 17.

¹¹⁵ A Presbyter, *Obligations*, p. 14.

¹¹⁶ LJS, *Eleventh Report*, p. 13.

¹¹⁷ “State of the Jews”, *London Review and Critical Journal* 16:32 (1820), p. 360.

¹¹⁸ Hilton, *Age of Atonement*, pp. 36–70.

dence for where England sat in God's economy of nations. The nation had not replaced Israel, but found its role in relationship to her.

This allowed some writers, particularly those opposed to war against the French in the early nineteenth century, to place England on a rhetorical knife-edge. For anti-war writers, including Bicheno, there was a fear that England's sin in fighting against revolutionary (and thus anti-Catholic) France would result in her losing the opportunity to fulfil her eschatological destiny. God would pass over the nation and turn to France instead. England was in danger of becoming like Tyre, destroyed for its "excessive passion for trade".¹¹⁹ Given French influence in the Holy Land, and Britain's continued alliance with papal powers, it seemed most likely that the republic would be responsible for restoration: "I cannot help fearing that we are not the favoured nation".¹²⁰ W.H. Oliver has described this as the embryo of what became a philosophy of the "apostate nation" in the work of Irving and the Albany Circle. As England had rejected her covenanted role, she faced severe punishment. True believers, that is, those who held to the prophetic hope, were currently holding this judgment back.¹²¹ The idea that a nation could abandon its God-given role drew from a number of examples, not least Israel's failure to recognise Christ. It linked to concepts of nationhood that have been traced across this book, particularly to the ideas of the covenanters in the seventeenth century and the jeremiad tradition. Indeed, it was more widespread than Oliver recognises, given the preponderance of covenantal ideas of nationhood in the early nineteenth century.¹²²

What was new in the period was the fear that God had not only removed the nation's chosen role and its blessing, but that he had directly chosen an immediate rival for that role. This concern was genuine, but nonetheless also held out the hope of England playing a part in fulfilling prophecy if reform took place. Preachers threatened the loss of a defining national role in order to encourage repentance. While the Albany circle were gloomy about the prospects of this, the majority of writers were confident that the nation would heed their warning, and England assume the lead role that God had prepared for them. Positive signs of England's

¹¹⁹ James Bicheno, *The Probable Progress and Issue of the Commotions Which Have Agitated Europe Since the French Revolution* (London, 1797), p. 68.

¹²⁰ Bicheno, *Restoration of the Jews*, p. 65.

¹²¹ Oliver, *Prophets and Millennialists*, pp. 108–123. See also Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*, pp. 90–92.

¹²² Brown, "Evangelical Social Thought", pp. 686–690.

prospects could always be found alongside evidence of the nation’s perversity: “the Isles being peculiarly noticed, I cannot think there is any presumption in cherishing the hope I have expressed; and I am encouraged in this hope by the reflection that a great desire hath arisen in the British Isles to our blessed Saviour’s command to ‘go and teach all nations’”.¹²³ Even for premillennialists, England had a divinely established role. As Way noted (in block capitals to emphasise its importance): “THE SPIRITUAL WELFARE OF GOD’S ANCIENT PEOPLE HAS, BY THE DISPOSITIONS OF PROVIDENCE, BEEN SPECIALLY CONSIGNED TO THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND”.¹²⁴

3 THE JERUSALEM BISHOPRIC AND POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR RESTORATION, 1838–1845

The 1830s and 40s have often been seen as a key point for restorationist political impact in Britain.¹²⁵ This mainstream popularity has recently been questioned by Eitan Bar-Yosef. While popular among some evangelicals, he argues that the majority viewed it as a symptom of eccentricity (or even madness).¹²⁶ This could certainly be the case, as the unfortunate Dublin heiress Marianne Nevill discovered in 1837. Her scheming family had her declared insane after spending money on a speculative project to restore the Jews to Palestine via colonies in Idumea. Irish preachers apparently refused to preach at the LJS’s anniversary sermons for some years afterwards, fearful that they would suffer the same fate.¹²⁷ More famous is the anecdote told about the Earl of Shaftesbury in his role as head of the Commission on Lunacy in 1862. When an unfortunate doctor discretely told him that a woman’s membership of the LJS was clear proof of her madness, the amused peer informed him that he was the Society’s presi-

¹²³ Witherby, *Vindication of the Jews*, p. 285.

¹²⁴ Lewis Way, *The Latter Rain, With Observations on the Importance of General Prayer for the Special Outpouring of the Holy Spirit* (London: John Hatchard, 1821), p. 54.

¹²⁵ Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, pp. 107–205; Sarah Kochav, “Biblical Prophecy, the Evangelical Movement, and the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine 1790–1860”, in *Britain and the Holy Land* (London: UCL, 1989), pp. 14–20.

¹²⁶ Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, pp. 182–246.

¹²⁷ Nevill also funded churches for converts in Liverpool and Bristol, and was in correspondence with several Anglican bishops and officials in Ali’s government. See Philip Alexander, “Christian Restorationism in Ireland in the Early Nineteenth Century: The Strange Case of Miss Marianne Nevill”, *Jewish Historical Studies* 47:1 (2015), pp. 31–47.

dent.¹²⁸ As Sarah Kochav noted, biographers in the later nineteenth century therefore sometimes played down the prophetic interests of their subjects to avoid embarrassment.¹²⁹

Yet while it is true that some papers and preachers condemned the English fascination with Jewish restoration, its widespread nature suggests that Bar-Yosef's judgement is overly harsh. Affirmations of restorationism appeared outside of specialist LJS publications. The *Church of England Quarterly Review*, for example, stated, "the belief in the final restoration of the Jews is so very general among modern Christians [...] that it would be tedious to bring forward evidence on the subject".¹³⁰ *The Times* and other papers published material on restorationism as a matter of course. For example, a March 1840 memorandum to the powers calling for Jewish restoration to Palestine was reported without any negative comment.¹³¹ The conservative and Anglican Plymouth paper *Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* can serve as an example of this. An edition of April 1840 found the editor reprinting sections of *The Athenaeum* on the possibility of Moses Montefiore undertaking Jewish restoration. The paper noted: "on more than one occasion we called attention to the signs, of one kind or another, by which the exiles of Israel are beginning to express their impatience for the accomplishment of the prophecies that point to their restoration".¹³² In Ireland, four years after Nevill was declared insane, the residents of Carlow held a public meeting under the Dean of Leiglin to petition the British government to return the Jews to Palestine. It was signed by both Protestants and "many Roman Catholics also, both clergy and laity".¹³³ While there was never universal assent to restorationism, it was nonetheless mainstream and influential. Bar-Yosef inadvertently affirms this when he argues that Lord Palmerston supported the Jerusalem bishopric in an attempt to curry political favour with restorationists.¹³⁴ If this was the case, it presumes a certain level of influence and respectability

¹²⁸ This is cited widely: e.g. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, p. 187; Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, pp. 186–187. The original anecdote is in Edwin Hodder, *The Life and Works of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury* (London: Cassell & Co., 1893), Vol. III, p. 139.

¹²⁹ Kochav, "Biblical Prophecy", pp. 17–19.

¹³⁰ "State and Prospects of the Jews", *Church of England Quarterly Review* 8:7 (1840), p. 135.

¹³¹ *The Times*, 9th March 1840, p. 3.

¹³² *Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 25th April 1840, p. 4.

¹³³ *Jewish Intelligence* 7:6 (1840), p. 136.

¹³⁴ Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, pp. 194–195.

for restorationism. Of course, the LJS were aware that many viewed them as enthusiasts and cranks.¹³⁵ But this does not mean that the belief was marginal, and in the early nineteenth century at least, criticism reflected common attacks on missionary organisations.¹³⁶

Evidence of the continuing popularity of restorationism is evident in the controversy surrounding the Jerusalem bishopric. British interest in Jerusalem grew alongside the general focus on Jews and prophecy from the 1820s. This was, in part, down to the political changes that had taken place in the region. Palestine and the near east had emerged as an area of general political interest following Bonaparte’s defeat, with Britain now keenly aware of the importance of a land bridge to India. The “Eastern Question”—the debate about how to prop up the Ottoman Empire as it faced internal collapse, while maintaining a balance between the great powers—remained one of the major issues of nineteenth-century foreign policy. By the later 1830s, Syria and Palestine had become a key part of European powers’ concerns in the East. After Napoleon withdrew from Egypt, the power vacuum had been filled by Albanian soldier Muhammad (or Mehmet) Ali. Often referred to in England by his honorific title as “the Pasha”, Ali was notionally the Sultan’s governor, but in reality operated independently. While he used his troops to support the Porte throughout the 1820s (extracting greater powers in return), in 1831 he invaded and occupied Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. Due to Ali’s desire to court western influence, access to Jerusalem became easier for European visitors. As interest in the Holy Land grew, a flood of travel literature appeared, offering English readers the opportunity to experience the Levant from a distance.¹³⁷ At the same time, Ali introduced greater religious toleration, allowing more freedom for both Jewish and Christian communities in Syria and Palestine.¹³⁸ This contributed towards growing missionary hopes for the area. The LJS was active in Jerusalem from 1823, establishing a permanent presence through their Danish missionary John Nicolayson ten years later.

¹³⁵ Kochav, “Biblical Prophecy”, pp. 17–19; Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*, pp. 14–56.

¹³⁶ Andrew Porter, “Religion, Missionary Enthusiasm, and Empire”, in Andrew Porter (ed.), *Oxford History of the British Empire Vol. III: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), p. 228.

¹³⁷ Lewis, *Origins*, pp. 137–141. Bar-Yosef has argued that the popularity of these texts has been exaggerated (*Holy Land*, pp. 66–73).

¹³⁸ Lewis, *Origins*, pp. 125–133.

Frustrated attempts to obtain permission for an Anglican church in the city, ideally on Mount Zion, preoccupied the Society for much of the next decade.

Political events in Palestine contributed to a growing sense of excitement about prophetic fulfilment. In 1838, Lord Melbourne's government established a British vice-consul (later full consul) at Jerusalem, tasked with protecting both British visitors and Jews in general.¹³⁹ William Lewis, the LJS's first missionary in Jerusalem, had recognised the necessity of a consul as early as 1824. The city's rabbis, he claimed, were crying out for rescue to "the King of England".¹⁴⁰ The LJS added the new vice-consul, William Tanner Young, to their committee immediately on his appointment, due to his existing sympathy for their cause.¹⁴¹ Young took his orders to protect Jews so seriously that his superior in Alexandria reprimanded him for showing them undue favour.¹⁴² National sympathy for Jews was also evident in the uproar surrounding the persecution of Jews in Damascus and Rhodes in 1840. The re-emergence of the blood libel in Damascus—the charge that Jews were using Christian blood in Passover bread—led to national outcry and support for the persecuted Jewish com-

¹³⁹The special orders to protect Jews, while drawing on restorationist sympathies, were also an attempt to limit Russian influence. The Russian consul in Jaffa claimed the right to protect Jews, although this was rarely invoked. See R.W. Greaves, "The Jerusalem Bishopric, 1841", *English Historical Review* 64: 252 (1949), p. 329. Palmerston's policy in the mid-to-late 1830s was to frustrate Russian ambitions in the East, and this can be seen as part of that objective (see David Brown, *Palmerston: A Biography* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010], pp. 216–224).

¹⁴⁰William Lewis, quoted in Lewis, *Origins of Christian Zionism*, p. 219. The missionary's advice was apparently to tell them to look to the "King of Kings" instead (see Kelvin Crombie, *For the Love of Zion* [London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991], p. 20).

¹⁴¹Young's relation to the LJS is controversial. Mayir Vreté argues that Young had no link to the LJS and showed little interest in the Society even when honoured by them ("Why was a British Consulate Established in Jerusalem?", *English Historical Review* 85:335 [1970], pp. 316–345). However, this does not explain Lord Ashley's enthusiasm at his appointment (see his diary entry for 29th September 1838 in Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 f.7v) or Alexander McCaul's commendation of the vice-consul as "a gentleman professing great interest in the cause of Jewish conversion" in 1845 (*The Jerusalem Bishopric* [London: Hatchard and Son, 1845] p. 9). Moreover, Young's own correspondence suggests restorationist sympathies. For example, in a letter to Palmerston in March 1839 he described Britain as the "natural protector" of Jews "unto whom God initially gave this land" (quoted in Crombie, *For the Love of Zion*, p. 25).

¹⁴²Crombie, *For the Love of Zion*, p. 26.

munity in Syria. The involvement of the French consul as their chief antagonist also provided a further target for patriotic anti-Catholicism.¹⁴³

These political events led to a growing sense of anticipation. Developments in the Holy Land appeared to be preparing the way for greater freedom to evangelise the Jews. This combined with an erroneous belief that there was widespread Jewish expectation that the Messiah would appear in 1840, and that large numbers of Jews were beginning to immigrate to Palestine.¹⁴⁴ In an 1839 sermon, later reprinted in the second edition of his influential *The Restoration of the Jews to Their Own Land* (1841), the evangelical leader Edward Bickersteth (1786–1850) argued that the appointment of a vice-consul was a vital step in favouring the

¹⁴³The fullest account is Jonathan Frankel, *The Damascus Affair: ‘Ritual Murder’, Politics, and the Jews in 1840* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997). See also David Feldman, “The Damascus Affair and the Debate on Ritual Murder in Early Victorian Britain”, in Sander L. Gilman (ed.), *Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Collaboration and Conflict in the Age of Diaspora* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2015), pp. 131–151; and Rubinstein and Rubinstein, *Philosemitism*, pp. 3–13. Where most historians, including Frankel, have seen the response in Britain as evidence of strong opposition towards antisemitism, Feldman points out that press coverage at the time also published opinions that suggested the charges might be true. The LJS were consistently opposed to the charges. Fifty-six Jewish converts, including Michael Solomon Alexander, signed a statement condemning the blood libel. For full details on the LJS’s responses see *Jewish Intelligence* 6:8 (1840), pp. 209–259.

¹⁴⁴This was reported from the early 1830s. See, for example, *Monthly Intelligence of the Proceedings of the London Society* 1: 6 (1830), p. 91 and 2:8 (1831), p. 130. One of the reasons for this belief was the prominence of Cambridge Hebraist Rabbi Joseph Crooll, whose focus on the date was well known (Francis Knight, “The Bishops and the Jews, 1828–1858”, in Wood (ed.), *Christianity and Judaism*, pp. 392–393). The theme was returned to in the early 1840s, with James Haldane Stewart recording a well-attended prayer meeting in Liverpool in 1840 as occurring in “the year when the Jews expect the coming of the Messiah” (*Jewish Intelligence* 6:6 [1840], p. 136). For both expectation and mass emigration see Alexander R.C. Dallas, “The Certainty of the Restoration of Judah and Israel”, in *The Destiny of the Jews, and their Connexion with the Gentile Nations* (London: John Hatchard & Son, 1841), pp. 435–437; and T.S. Grimshawe, “Introductory Lecture”, in William Robert Fremantle (ed.), *Israel Restored: Or, the Scriptural Claims of the Jews upon the Christian Church* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1841), pp. 20–22. Even when their own missionaries reported low numbers of Jews in Jerusalem, the LJS were prone to dismiss their calculations. A letter from the medical missionary Pietitz reported “the number of Jews here is nothing like what you think in England. Mr. Nicolayson thinks it is, in all, 5000; and this is the highest number I have heard yet”. The *Jewish Intelligence* dismissed this by noting, “It is well known that the Jews are in the habit of studiously concealing their real numbers” (*Jewish Intelligence* 5:1 [1839], p. 8).

Jews.¹⁴⁵ Alongside this, Sir Moses Montefiore's dramatic attempts to improve the lot of his co-religionists also inspired excitement. These had included an 1839 proposal for restoration, when Montefiore reached an agreement with Ali to purchase Jewish colonies and religious freedoms in Palestine. This fell apart in the chaotic political situation of 1840, but represented a further sign of the times.¹⁴⁶ The LJS were also excited at the departure of an official Church of Scotland delegation, including Alexander Keith, Robert Murray M'Cheyne, and Andrew Bonar, to survey the conditions of Jews in Europe and the Levant in 1839, which further fuelled beliefs that Jews were preparing for restoration.¹⁴⁷ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* spoke for many in March 1840 when they concluded that "The remarkable determination of European politics towards Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt [...] look not unlike signs of the times [...] some preparatives for that great providential restoration of which Jerusalem will yet be the scene".¹⁴⁸

Direct political interventions also bolstered this sense of anticipation. Lord Ashley (1801–1885), the future Earl of Shaftesbury, played a key role in this area. As an influential MP and step-son-in-law of Foreign Secretary (and later Prime Minister) Lord Palmerston, Ashley had enviable access to those in power. In 1838, he penned a review of Lord Lindsey's *Letters on Egypt, Edom and the Holy Land* for the *Quarterly Review*, a book that had further confirmed the trustworthiness of biblical history to him.¹⁴⁹ Ashley used his review to argue that Christian and Jewish interests in the restoration to Palestine were intersecting. The land was now barren, and would only be cultivated properly once its original inhabitants returned. Britain had already shown that she would take the lead through the LJS's missionary work and attempts to build a "pure and apostolical"

¹⁴⁵ Bickersteth, *Restoration*, p. 138. See also p. 257 for similar sentiments in an 1838 sermon. Bickersteth was rector of Watton, a former CMS secretary, and an important writer and philanthropic leader among evangelicals. His friendship with Lord Ashley was key in the latter's growing interest in Jews. On Bickersteth see Kochav, "Biblical Prophecy", pp. 10–14.

¹⁴⁶ Tuchmann, *Bible and Sword*, pp. 194–195.

¹⁴⁷ See, for example, reports in *Jewish Intelligence* 6:6 (1840), p. 134. On links with prophecy see Crawford Gribben, "Andrew Bonar and the Scottish Presbyterian Millennium", in Crawford Gribben and Timothy Stunt (eds), *Prisoners of Hope*, pp. 186–189.

¹⁴⁸ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, XLVII: 3 (March 1840), p. 357. I owe this reference to the approving quotation in *Jewish Intelligence* 6:5 (1840), p. 114.

¹⁴⁹ Ashley records the impact of the book in a diary entry for 3rd October 1838 (Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2, f.8r).

church in the city.¹⁵⁰ Significantly, Ashley argued the case for Jewish restoration along political lines. Palestine could provide cotton, silk, and olive oil for the empire. The presence of a vice-consul, who could act as “a mediator between their people and the Pasha” would encourage vast Jewish immigration.¹⁵¹ Above all, it would generate support for Britain in every Jewish community in the world, promoting the nation’s interests and political capital in any country with a Jewish presence. Restoration was, therefore “truly a national service: at all times it would have been expedient, but now it is necessary”.¹⁵²

Ashley’s influence was important for the LJS, as it enabled the Society to deny that it was attempting to influence government policy, while at the same time supporting Ashley as he attempted to do exactly that. LJS preachers therefore walked a tricky line: affirming that means had to be used to fulfil prophecy (and therefore justifying the LJS’s existence) while discouraging members from direct political action to restore the Jews. It was through “the blessing of heaven, resting on human agency” that the Jews would convert, Charles Longley, bishop of Ripon, told an audience at the LJS’s Episcopal Jews Chapel in 1841.¹⁵³ Two years earlier, Thomas Tattershall had preached on the same theme. The question, he suggested, “is not What need has God for our help? but What will the Lord have us do? [*sic*]”. Yet restoration was another matter: “we have no concern of an active nature, with it whatsoever [...] It is not their restoration about which we need to busy ourselves, but their conversion and salvation”.¹⁵⁴ In practice, this distinction made little difference. As the consensus was that Jews would convert only after their restoration to Palestine, prayer and active support for political restoration were compatible with the LJS’s overarching objectives. In other words, the LJS was not to operate as a political lobbying group, and individual members were not to try to force providence. As the official LJS organ, *Jewish Intelligence*, concluded in November 1840: “It is no object of ours to promote colonization schemes, or to call in the aid of political influences to accomplish the great purposes of the Almighty God. But it is our privilege humbly to watch the ways of

¹⁵⁰[Ashley], “Review of *Letters on Egypt, Edom, and the Holy Land* by Lord Lindsay”, *Quarterly Review* 63 (1838), pp. 186–188.

¹⁵¹[Ashley], “Review”, pp. 188–189.

¹⁵²[Ashely], “Review”, p. 189.

¹⁵³Charles Longley, *Fruits of the Fall and Fulness of the Jews* (London: n.p., 1841), p. 12.

¹⁵⁴Thomas Tattershall, *A Sermon Preached at the Episcopal Jews’ Chapel... May 2, 1839* (London: A. Macintosh, 1839), pp. 24–25.

Divine Providence hastening on the grand consummation”.¹⁵⁵ The writings of prominent members of the Society suggest that “humbly watching” providence did not mean simply observing. It included prayer, lobbying in favour of the Jews, and (when the providential signs were right) supporting political projects aimed to aid them. Active support for these political developments then pushed aside concerns of political meddling, and instead raised questions of national duty. If supporting restoration was a requirement for the nation to be blessed (as many LJS preachers believed it to be) then support for such a policy, paradoxically, became a requirement. Political events soon bore this out.

In a diary entry for 8th October 1838, Ashley had speculated about the possibility of a bishopric at Jerusalem with responsibility for Anglican congregations across the Mediterranean.¹⁵⁶ In December, he discussed the plan with Chevalier Christian Karl Bunsen (1791–1860), the former Prussian ambassador to Rome, who was to become a key figure in the establishment of the bishopric. This seems to have proceeded no further at the time.¹⁵⁷ In the meantime, Ashley approached Palmerston in August 1840 to encourage him to pursue Jewish restoration as a national policy.¹⁵⁸ Buoyed by the initial meeting, Ashley prepared a rationale for Jewish restoration, which he sent on 25th September.¹⁵⁹ The memorandum called for the European powers to establish a protectorate in Palestine, in which Jews would be free to practise their faith and trade. By doing so, they would regenerate the land and attract commerce. Ashley nowhere stated which power would govern Palestine, and mentioned prophecy only to state that he would be passing over it without comment.¹⁶⁰ These efforts were successful. Palmerston wrote to Lord Ponsonby, ambassador to the Sultan, to put the scheme to the Ottoman government.¹⁶¹ This was very much Palmerston’s initiative—it would be wrong to conclude that resto-

¹⁵⁵ *Jewish Intelligence* 6:11 (1840), p. 351.

¹⁵⁶ Ashley, Entry for 8th October 1838, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 f.10v.

¹⁵⁷ Kelvin Crombie, *A Jewish Bishop in Jerusalem: The Life Story of Michael Solomon Alexander* (Jerusalem: Nicolayson’s, 2006)

¹⁵⁸ Ashley, Entries for 31st July 1840 and 1st August 1840, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 ff. 26v-27v.

¹⁵⁹ Ashley, Entry for 23rd September and 25th September 1840, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2, ff. 32r-33r.

¹⁶⁰ The memorandum is reprinted in Edwin Hodder, *The Life and Works of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury* Vol. 1 (London: Cassell & Co., 1893), pp. 168–169.

¹⁶¹ Ashley, Entry for 24th August 1840, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2, f. 28r.

ration was now government policy, particularly as Ponsonby was far from enthusiastic in following the Foreign Secretary's instructions.¹⁶² Nonetheless, Ashley had demonstrated that he could make a strong political case for restoration.¹⁶³

Ashley made his proposal at a time when events in the East had taken a decisive turn in Britain's favour. In July 1840, concerns grew that Ali had destroyed the delicate balance of power with the Ottomans. Britain, Prussia, Russia, and Austria had attempted to secure agreement to limit his power and territorial influence in return for recognition of his hereditary rule over Egypt, Sudan, and Syria. After he rejected this offer, the powers attacked in September. This out-manoeuvered the French, whose support Ali had been depending on, and they switched sides. The peace returned Syria, including Palestine, to Ottoman control after Ali's defeat.¹⁶⁴ The powers vied with each other as to how to use their enhanced political capi-

¹⁶² Crombie is therefore incorrect to describe restoration as an “official proposal” (*For the Love of Zion*, p. 33)—it had not, for example, been discussed in cabinet. Indeed, at the time Palmerston was fighting colleagues over his support for the Sultan and negativity towards Ali. There were worries that his position might lead to war with France; the Queen was apparently agitating to have him replaced as Foreign Secretary by the more pro-French Clarendon (see Brown, *Palmerston: A Biography*, pp. 230–232).

¹⁶³ Palmerston's support for Ashley's scheme, and for the later bishopric, has surprised historians. Palmerston had little concern with either religious matters or Jewish concerns. However, there were reasons why the scheme might be politically attractive. It is likely that the idea that a Jewish homeland supported by Britain would decrease French influence over Ali and Russian influence on the Sultan played a part in his decision. Likewise, Ashley's emphasis on the generation of good will towards Britain in world Jewry, and especially in Russia (whose influence in the East he was keen to curb) were factors in the scheme's favour. His close personal friendship with Ashley, on whom he later relied when Prime Minister for ecclesiastical advice, was perhaps the decisive reason for his support—indeed, this was Ashley's own opinion (Entry for September 23, 1841, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 ff. 71v–72r). However, as John Wolfe has recently argued, Palmerston was not irreligious, had a personal faith and his own religious politics, and was quite capable of going against Ashley's advice on religious matters (John Wolfe, “Lord Palmerston and Religion: A Reappraisal”, *English Historical Review* 120:488 [2005], pp. 907–936). While it is unlikely that Palmerston would have listened to such schemes had they not come from Ashley, he was likely convinced by the political reasoning behind them. Bar-Yosef has argued that he also hoped to gain political support from restorationists (Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, pp. 194–195). At a time when Melbourne's government was in the process of collapse, this offers a plausible further motive for support, although it goes against Bar-Yosef's own position that restorationism lacked national influence.

¹⁶⁴ For a full account of the crisis, including the rapidly changing positions of the powers, see Brown, *Palmerston: A Biography*, pp. 215–236.

tal with the Porte. In July 1841, Prussian king Frederick William IV dispatched Bunsen to London with a proposal for a range of endeavours, including a joint Anglo-Prussian bishopric in Jerusalem.¹⁶⁵ In a hectic round of discussions, he met with Ashley, Palmerston, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishop of London, and Queen Victoria, with the scheme approved by Palmerston, the Archbishops, and the Queen by late July. The plan clearly favoured the Church of England over the Prussian church. Although the choice of bishop rotated between Britain and Prussia, the Archbishop of Canterbury could veto any choice from Berlin, while the Prussians had no right to object to British selections. The Prussian king gave £15,000 towards the bishop's endowment, while the British government paid nothing. The LJS immediately donated £3000 and began a fund raising campaign.

With Melbourne's government on the verge of collapse, all parties moved quickly. LJS missionary and Hebraist Alexander McCaul (1799–1863), the first choice for the post, declined, recommending instead Michael Solomon Alexander, former LJS missionary and professor of Hebrew at King's College London. As both a native Prussian and a convert from Judaism, Alexander was in many ways the ideal candidate: "a native Hebrew appointed under God", as Ashley commented in his diary.¹⁶⁶ Despite Peel's new government, and a sceptical Lord Aberdeen replacing Palmerston,¹⁶⁷ Alexander's consecration took place in November and he left for Jerusalem the following month. The bishopric's supporters celebrated the prospect of a Jewish bishop ministering on Mount Zion. "So the beginning is made", Bunsen recorded in his diary, "for the restoration of Israel".¹⁶⁸

The bishopric took advantage of the belief that God had charged the English Church with specially blessing the Jews. There were several reasons for this. The predominant role of the LJS in publicising Jewish concerns

¹⁶⁵The account of the founding of the bishopric is condensed here due to space. For full accounts see Crombie, *A Jewish Bishop*; Greaves, "Jerusalem Bishopric", pp. 328–352; P.J. Welch, "Anglican Churchmen and the Establishment of the Jerusalem Bishopric", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 8:2 (1957), pp. 193–204.

¹⁶⁶Ashley, Entry for 12th November 1841, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 f. 80v.

¹⁶⁷Aberdeen was not keen on the scheme, telling Bunsen that although "it was a good plan for the conversion of the Jews", it would achieve little except create trouble with the other powers and the Porte. He told the Prussian that he was bemused as to why Palmerston had embraced the plan so vigorously; as Ashley noted "I have been the instrument there [...] What providence that Bunsen came while Palmerston was in office!" (Entry for 23rd September 1841, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 ff. 71v–72r).

¹⁶⁸Quoted in Crombie, *Jewish Bishop*, p. 80.

meant that the Anglican establishment was often involved in appeals for the Jews in the public sphere. Of course, it was the LJS's position as an Anglican society that guaranteed its prominence, helping it to attract influential supporters such as Ashley and Sir Thomas Baring, as well as the respectability of (initially limited) episcopal patronage. The smaller Philo-Judaen Society, established on cross-denominational lines to press for Jewish temporal relief in 1826, enjoyed neither the prestige nor influence of its establishment cousin. The LJS's Anglicanism also had a profound influence on the way in which it viewed the nation. While, as Donald Lewis points out, the Society enjoyed wide support from Scotland, Ireland, and Wales,¹⁶⁹ discussions of practical, political projects that would further the goal of Jewish restoration all envisaged a central role for the Church of England. Although this did not preclude the help of other churches (particularly those of Scotland and Prussia), LJS supporters viewed Anglican liturgy and church government as the means by which both Jews and Eastern Orthodox Christians would convert to Protestantism. Restoration might be Britain's duty, but a distinctly English church would be God's instrument of choice.

Echoing Way's praise of the Church of England, restorationism affirmed the importance of a state church in fulfilling prophecy. In an 1840 article, the politically conservative *Fraser's Magazine* affirmed the restoration of the Jews, while condemning dissenters for the fact that “no expression of interest in the state and destinies of Israel has escaped the lips of their most distinguished leaders”.¹⁷⁰ *The Times* similarly attacked dissenters for their interpretation of prophecy, condemning them for appropriating Israel's promises for themselves and presuming that Jews would “melt down and be lost in the Christian Church”.¹⁷¹ This explains why LJS leaders and Anglican evangelicals greeted the bishopric with such enthusiasm. As Lewis has noted, the LJS saw the Anglican Church as especially suited to converting Jews.¹⁷² Jews, they argued, ignored Christianity because of the decayed forms they witnessed in Catholic and Orthodox countries. Pure Anglican worship would remove this prejudice, while its liturgy, translated into Hebrew by McCaul, would combat the erroneous belief “that Christianity is a Gentile system”.¹⁷³ Experiencing Christianity in its “pure

¹⁶⁹ Lewis, *Origins*, pp. 59–60.

¹⁷⁰ “The Present State and Prospects of the Jews”, *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country* 129 (1840), p. 275.

¹⁷¹ “The State and Prospect of the Jews”, p. 3.

¹⁷² Lewis, *Origins*, pp. 58–60.

¹⁷³ *Jewish Intelligence* 4:3 (March 1838), p. 52.

and apostolical form” would overcome the “mummery” of the Eastern churches.¹⁷⁴ As M. Brock argued in an 1846 sermon, God blessed nations, churches and individuals if they treated the Jews well: “In this respect the interest taken by us in the Jews has given us an advantage over other Churches, and over our Dissenting brethren”.¹⁷⁵

Unsurprisingly, the bishopric angered some. For those associated with the high church Oxford Movement, the project appeared both disrespectful to the historic churches of the East, and to suggest a rejection of Catholicity in affirming the non-episcopal Lutheran church.¹⁷⁶ John Henry Newman remembered the bishopric as the point at which he finally despaired of his Anglicanism.¹⁷⁷ Amongst dissenters, concerns arose surrounding the official pronouncements that seemed to denigrate the Prussian Protestant churches when compared to the “more perfect” Church of England.¹⁷⁸ Both groups shared worries about increasing government control of religion, and joined with many in the Prussian church in suspecting (not without reason) that the scheme was part of Frederick William’s plan to introduce episcopacy through the backdoor.¹⁷⁹ The LJS, on the other hand, was jubilant, taking credit for planting the initial idea in Bunsen’s head.¹⁸⁰ He was a guest of honour at their 1841 annual meet-

¹⁷⁴ Ashley, “Review”, pp. 187, 191.

¹⁷⁵ M. Brock, “Love of Christians to Jews”, in William Marsh (ed.), *Israel’s Sins and Israel’s Hopes, Being Lectures Delivered During Lent, 1846, at St. George’s, Bloomsbury* (London: James Nisbet and Co., 1846), p. 289.

¹⁷⁶ See, for example: A Member of the Church of England, *Examination of an Announcement Made in the Prussian State Gazette* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1842); James R. Hope, *The Bishopric of the United Church of England and Ireland at Jerusalem, Considered in a Letter to a Friend*, Second Edition (London: C.J. Stewart, 1842); William Palmer, *Aids to Reflection on the Seemingly Double Character of the Established Church, with Reference to the Foundation of a “Protestant Bishopric” at Jerusalem* (Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1841).

¹⁷⁷ John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (London: Longmans, 1908), pp. 142–146.

¹⁷⁸ John Middleton Hare (trans.), *The Anglican Bishopric of Jerusalem: A Respectful Letter to Mons. William Howley...from a French Protestant* (London: James Dinnis, 1843).

¹⁷⁹ See, for example, [Anon], *The Anglo-Prussian Bishopric of St. James, in Jerusalem, to which are appended remarks on Dr. McCaul’s Sermon at the Consecration of Bishop Alexander by the Rev. W. Hoffman* (London: Thomas Ward & Co., 1842). For more on the high church concerns over the bishopric see Welch, “Anglican Churchmen”, pp. 198–202.

¹⁸⁰ “It must be deeply gratifying to the friends of the London Society to know, that the whole of this glorious and all-important plan was suggested by the efforts which they have made to erect a church upon Mount Zion”. *Jewish Intelligence* VII: 11 (November 1841), p. 383.

ing, and during the Prussian king’s visit the following year helped facilitate a meeting between the monarch and LJS luminaries such as Ashley and their president Sir Thomas Baring.¹⁸¹

The bishopric raised pertinent questions about England’s national role in the end times, and the duty of the nation. It is important to remember that mainstream restorationists were not dispensationalists. They were both more optimistic in their assessment of the world than those who held to Albury style premillennialism, and less extreme in their division of God’s promises between Jews and gentiles. Nonetheless, there were some similarities—principally a sustained attack on allegorical interpretations of prophecy. A series of lectures on the Jews in London in 1841 was notable for repeated attacks on the “paralyzing system to interpretation, which is called ‘*spiritualizing the promises*’”,¹⁸² “What an unworthy stigma have Christians cast upon the New Testament, when they have gone to the Jew and said, All this is spiritual [*sic*]”.¹⁸³ An 1840 article in *Fraser’s Magazine* wished that preachers “would task their fancy and torture the prophecies less [...] It is a plain book, if people would only believe it”.¹⁸⁴ Christians should interpret prophecies of restoration in a way that would have made sense to their original hearers.¹⁸⁵ This emphasis on a literal application of the prophecies was stated so often that former Albury delegate Hugh McNeile (now returned to a more mainstream position in the Church of England), confessed that it was “now so generally admitted” that listeners were probably bored of hearing it defended.¹⁸⁶

This appreciation of the literal sense meant that it was necessary to apply Old Testament prophecies to the Jews. Bickersteth condemned Christians for “robbing” the Jews of their promises and acting as “aliens wresting away from them their mercies”.¹⁸⁷ Preachers in a London series on Jewish restoration in the 1840s spoke of the gentiles as occupying “a

¹⁸¹ For an account of this, see Ashley, Entry for 3rd February 1842, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 f. 90v.

¹⁸² Grimshawe, “Introductory Lecture”, p. 32.

¹⁸³ C.J. Goodhart, “The Covenant with David”, in Fremantle (ed.), *Israel Restored*, p. 144.

¹⁸⁴ “The Present State and Prospects of the Jews”, p. 274.

¹⁸⁵ Thomas Tattershall, “Rules to Be Observed in the Interpretation of the Prophetic Scriptures”, in *Destiny of the Jews*, pp. 42–63.

¹⁸⁶ Hugh McNeile, *Popular Lectures on Prophecies Relative to the Jewish Nation* (London: J. Hatchard and Son, 1830), p. 124.

¹⁸⁷ Bickersteth, *Restoration of the Jews*, pp. 46, 240.

parenthesis as it were in the covenant”;¹⁸⁸ as being “an intermediate branch” in Israel’s tree, “preparatory to the final glory of the nation”.¹⁸⁹ Alexander, as a Jew returning to Jerusalem, therefore became a symbol of the literal fulfilment of prophecy and the certainty of the promises. In his final sermon before departing, the new bishop admitted that few would have believed his current position possible ten years previously: “yet, brethren, here I stand, a monument of the Divine sovereignty and power [...] Surely, no one will now venture to doubt the possibility of the literal fulfilment of God’s promises to Israel”.¹⁹⁰ His body became a visible sign of the certainty of God’s plan for the Jews. Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna’s 1843 novel *Judah’s Lion* echoed this idea. Here the young English Jew Alick Cohen acted as a synecdoche for the Jewish nation. Abandoning his assimilationist hopes of a parliamentary career as he became acquainted with prophecy, Alick experienced each of the prophesied stages of restoration: carried on an English ship to Palestine, he converted firstly to Orthodox Judaism, was persecuted by Muslim bandits and corrupt rulers, and finally, converted to Christ and became both a missionary and proto-Zionist. He ended the novel convinced that England would restore the Jews to the Holy Land.¹⁹¹

At the same time that restorationists focused on the application of promises to the Jews, they were keen to emphasise that the Old Testament promises still pertained in some sense to English Christians. This was where they differed most clearly from dispensationalists.¹⁹² In a detailed hermeneutical introduction to his lectures on restoration, Bickersteth argued that it was legitimate to continue to apply some Old Testament promises spiritually as long as the earthly promise for the Jews was also recognised. While Christians should avoid robbing the Jews, they should also be careful they were not “impoverishing our own store of blessings”.¹⁹³ This might seem to imply that Jews and gentiles would experience equality once converted. Yet while restorationists believed that every Christian

¹⁸⁸ T.R. Birks, “On the Principles of Prophetic Interpretation”, in Fremantle (ed.), *Israel Restored*, p. 100.

¹⁸⁹ William Fremantle, “Old Testament Promises Confirmed by Zachariah’s Hymn”, in *Destiny of the Jews*, p. 336.

¹⁹⁰ Michael Solomon Alexander, *Farewell Sermon, preached at the Episcopal Jews’ Chapel* (London: B. Wertheim, 1841), p. 5.

¹⁹¹ Charlotte Elizabeth [Tonna], *Judah’s Lion* (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1843).

¹⁹² For more on this differentiation see Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, pp. 34–42.

¹⁹³ Bickersteth, *Restoration of the Jews*, p. xxiv.

could be saved only through a personal application of Christ’s blood, at the same time they held to a continuing national distinction after conversion. As McNeile argued, even if some Jews converted to Christianity, it did not abrogate their uniqueness as a nation any more than the fact that some Englishmen were ignorant meant that the country as a whole was ill-educated.¹⁹⁴ Even within the covenant of grace, national distinctions survived. Thomas Birks, Bickersteth’s curate for many years, explained this in more detail in an 1841 sermon. While it was true that the partition wall between Jew and gentile had been broken down in Christ (Eph. 2:14–16), divisions of rank still existed. The gentiles were now admitted to the temple of God, “but within the temple itself, there are outer and inner courts, and various degrees of privilege of glory”.¹⁹⁵ These divisions meant that there was space for national division, and Jewish pre-eminence, even within the salvation offered in Christ. This had important implications for thinking about England as a “chosen nation”. Restorationists writing in the excitement of the 1840s emphasised the way in which God worked through distinct nations. This sprung from recognition of Israel’s territorial integrity as a sign of God’s faithfulness. To a far greater extent than seen in previous periods examined in this book, prophecy writers now emphasised the survival of a distinct Jewish nation into the millennium (perhaps even after the Petrine conflagration). As Bickersteth argued, “whatever change may take place on the earth, the geographical distinctions of countries will remain discernible, so far at least as will be necessary to distinguish Palestine from all the other countries of the earth”.¹⁹⁶ This reaffirmed the way in which God worked through nations to fulfil his plans, and suggested that national distinctions would survive even in the unity of the millennial church.

This emphasis on the continuity of nations provided further support for restorationists to argue for the centrality of England’s predicted role. Ashley’s *Quarterly Review* article recalled Horsley’s interpretation of Isaiah as “peculiarly interesting in the present position of eastern politics”.¹⁹⁷ and the idea that England was to restore the Jews provided a framework through which to understand victories in Syria and the subsequent

¹⁹⁴ McNeile, *Popular Lectures*, p. 51.

¹⁹⁵ Birks, “Principles of Prophetic Interpretation”, p. 71.

¹⁹⁶ Bickersteth, *Restoration of the Jews*, p. xxvii. See also McNeile, *Popular Lectures*, p. 159; Alexander McCaul, *The Jerusalem Bishopric* (London: Hatchard and Son, 1845), p. 15; *Jewish Intelligence* 7:7 (1841), pp. 182–183.

¹⁹⁷ Ashley, “Review”, p. 170.

Jerusalem bishopric. McCaul, while noting that too readily applying prophecy to current events tended to “fanaticism”, also argued (via Isaiah) that gentile nations would begin projects that would restore the Jews. This was anticipated as early as March 1840, when a petition from Jewish convert and missionary E.S. Calman was sent to the Protestant princes urging, on the basis of the Abrahamic land covenant, “what may be the probable line of duty on the part of Protestant Christendom to the Jewish people”.¹⁹⁸ Other restorationists echoed this. The appointment of a Jewish bishop, sanctioned by two of the greatest gentile nations, “proclaim, that, if the set time to favour Zion has not fully arrived, it can hardly be far distant”.¹⁹⁹ In an 1841 sermon, Stewart argued that Isaiah 60 showed that God had commanded the “British Isles” to begin the process of Jewish restoration as “the chief of nations”.²⁰⁰ Many Christians at the time interpreted events in Palestine through this lens. A letter from a navy chaplain serving near Acre to the *Ecclesiastical Gazette* in March 1841 explored his feelings on his nation’s role in victory over the Pasha. Not only had the victory weakened Rome and humbled Muslim “fanaticism”, but it “direct[s] the eyes of the Jews to England as the instrument by which ‘the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel shall return and be builded up at last’”.²⁰¹

On 22nd February of the same year, a public meeting in the Irish town of Carlow under the Dean of Leighlin met to implore the government to begin the restoration of the Jews. In a memorial sent to Palmerston on 2nd March, they reminded the Foreign Secretary that it was “foretold also that the ships of Tarshish shall be employed in conducting the dispersed tribes of Israel to their home: and who are more likely to be employed in this service, or could more easily accomplish it, than the nation whose fleets have long engaged in protecting and succouring the wretched, and which have access to most of the countries where the Jews are found?”²⁰² In May 1841, the *Jewish Intelligence* reprinted extracts from the American Jewish paper *The Orient*, which described the LJS’s “chief efforts” as being “to induce the Jews to take possession of Palestine”. This was

¹⁹⁸ *The Times*, 9th March 1840, p. 3. This was also widely reprinted in the local press.

¹⁹⁹ McCaul, *Jerusalem Bishopric*, p. 21.

²⁰⁰ James Haldane Stewart, “Practical Improvement of the Whole Course”, in *Destiny of the Jews*, pp. 561–562.

²⁰¹ Dated 9th March 1841, and reprinted in *Jewish Intelligence* 7:5 (1841), p. 131.

²⁰² *Jewish Intelligence* 7:6 (1841), p. 136. An interesting element of this petition was the paper’s admission that along with the Protestant signatories, “Many Roman Catholics also, both clergy and laity, freely affixed their signatures”.

explained by reference to their interpretation of Isaiah 18 (“as if it referred to Great Britain as the country from whence Israel’s deliverance [...] is to be begin”) and their desire to make use of the providential ordering of the times. Although the Jewish writer was sceptical of this as a motive, it suggests how widely known the national application of Isaiah had become by the 1840s.²⁰³ A June 1841 *Orient* article on Colonel Churchill’s speech to Jews of Damascus demonstrated a more receptive audience in the Levant. His fervent reference to the coming fulfilment of the prophecies was apparently interrupted by the Jewish crowd chanting “May God grant it!—To England alone do we look!”²⁰⁴

This focus on prophecy combined with a renewed emphasis on providence. As with earlier Judeo-centrism, this revolved around a combined sense of national duty, debt to the Jews, and fear of punishment for those who mistreated them. The nation’s unique position therefore called her to fulfil her responsibilities. Some, remembering England’s past attitude towards Jews, argued that the nation’s leading role in Jewish restoration was necessary in order to atone for the nation’s sins.²⁰⁵ As Charles Longley asked the LJS’s 1839 annual meeting, given the nation’s cruelty towards the Jews, “shall not England be the first to welcome them back again?”²⁰⁶ A year later, William Pym, rector of Willian, implored the Society to remove the debt that England currently owed for their cruelty towards the Jews: “Let it be our duty and inclination now to wipe away those foul stains”.²⁰⁷ Yet it was more common to characterise England’s role as a divinely appointed task. As W.R. Fremantle concluded in an 1841 sermon, because they had a special calling to restore the Jews, the nation needed to “act up to our high and unspeakable privileges”.²⁰⁸ While disavowing direct political speculation, Thomas Tattershall argued that it was “at least, the duty of a Christian nation and government like our own, so far as to remove all

²⁰³ *Jewish Intelligence* 7:5 (1841), pp. 124–125. *The Orient* believed that the LJS’s real motive for restoration was to set up a Jewish colony in which residents would be denied access to their co-religionists, and therefore offer easier targets for evangelisation.

²⁰⁴ Quoted in *Jewish Intelligence* 7:8 (1841), p. 259.

²⁰⁵ Andrew Porter notes a similar example in the 1841–1842 Niger Expedition, which was viewed by some as “recompense” for previous British mistreatment of Africans. See Porter, “Religion, Missionary Enthusiasm, and Empire”, p. 235.

²⁰⁶ *Jewish Intelligence* 5:6 (1839), p. 128.

²⁰⁷ *Jewish Intelligence* 6:6 (1840), pp. 136–137.

²⁰⁸ W.R. Fremantle, “The Present Dispensation a Moral Warning to the Gentiles”, in W.R. Fremantle (ed.), *Israel Restored*, p. 280.

hindrances, all stumbling blocks, out of the way” of restoration.²⁰⁹ Stewart suggested that it was this promise that had prompted the government to appoint a vice-consul to Jerusalem.²¹⁰ Indeed, the Jews played an important role in understanding national providence. They offered a site in which general and special providence could meet, a way of reading God’s providential pattern for nations. Alexander Dallas summarised this in an 1841 Lent sermon series on Jewish prophecy. God governed nations by natural law, to the extent that “the Almighty hand need not be acknowledged by the infidel”. The Jews, however, had a miraculous history, in which “the laws of nature are made altogether to bend”. This provided a clear testimony to God’s providential workings in the world.²¹¹ This meant that while general providence continued to govern the operation of individual nations, where those nations became involved with the Jews special providence could apply. In other words, it provided a providential link and explanation for England’s contemporary situation.

Historians commenting on restorationism in the 1840s have sometimes seen it as a tool for promoting British imperialism.²¹² This is largely unfair. It is true that some restorationists did engage in imperialist fantasies. Hugh Stowell’s speech to the LJS annual meeting in 1840 “would have for our beloved Queen no two titles more exalted [...] than Protectoress of Protestants, and the Patroness of Israel”. Such titles would “emblazen Victoria’s name to the latest day of England’s duration”.²¹³ *The Times*, in a positive piece on Ashley’s *Quarterly Review* article, argued that political leaders and prophecy watchers had an equal interest in the Jews, and that the subject of their restoration “is deserving of the consideration of a people possessing an oriental empire of such vast extent”.²¹⁴ Yet these were exceptions. While restorationists were not apolitical, they agonised over using political means to make their case. As Bickersteth warned, restoration was “full of promises of good to ourselves”, but at the same time “there is no small national danger in unrighteously meddling with their restoration and using them only for selfish ends”.²¹⁵ Of course, they

²⁰⁹ Tattershall, “Rules to Be Observed”, p. 91.

²¹⁰ Stewart, “Practical Improvement”, in *Destiny of the Jews*, p. 562.

²¹¹ Alexander Dallas, “The Restoration of Israel to be Anticipated from the Unchangeable Nationality of the Jews”, in Fremantle (ed.), *Israel Restored*, p. 357.

²¹² Matar, “Controversy... From 1754”, p. 40; Clark, *Allies for Armageddon*, pp. 66–72.

²¹³ *Jewish Intelligence* 6:6 (1840), p. 142.

²¹⁴ “The State and Prospect of the Jews”, *The Times*, 24th January 1839, p. 3.

²¹⁵ Bickersteth, *Restoration of the Jews*, p. lxxxix.

remained aware that it was possible to make a political argument for Jewish return. Bickersteth had himself suggested that a Jewish buffer state between the Pasha and the Sultan made good strategic sense, and protect British India. God had, after all, used political reasons to encourage Cyrus to restore the Jews in the Old Testament.²¹⁶ This echoes the strategy that Ashley had used in both his *Quarterly Review* article, and in his 1840 meeting with Palmerston. In the first, he had argued that Palestine would provide useful products for the empire, such as cotton, silk, and olive oil. In the meeting, Ashley bemoaned the fact that he was “forced to argue politically, financially, commercially; these considerations strike [Palmerston] home” rather than using prophecy.²¹⁷ The memorandum to the Foreign Secretary, which recommended a Jewish protectorate as a way to attract capital and regenerate a desolate land, went so far as to appeal to “the avarice of man”²¹⁸ In the midst of the Damascus Affair a year later, having caught wind of Ashley’s meeting with Palmerston, *The Times* concluded that restoration was “no longer a matter of speculation, but of serious political consideration”.²¹⁹ Ashley’s diary entry for 29th August reveals a mixture of excitement and fear over this development, which saw “the newspapers teem with documents about the Jews [...] The motion of *The Times* has stirred up an immense variety of projects and opinions”. The fear that many of these projects appeared politically motivated, rather than prophetically sound, seems to have been at the root of Ashley’s nervousness.²²⁰ This squeamishness over political arguments for restoration militates against a straightforward imperialist reading. The Judeo-centric

²¹⁶Bickersteth, *Restoration of the Jews*, p. lxxxv.

²¹⁷Ashley, Entry for 1st August 1840, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 f.27v. Of course, Palmerston was well aware of Ashley’s prophetic interests—thus his comments to Ponsonby that promoting restorationism would make the religious public favourable towards the government.

²¹⁸Quoted in Hodder, *Life and Works*, Vol. 1, p. 168.

²¹⁹“Syria—Restoration of the Jews”, *The Times*, 17th August 1840, p. 3.

²²⁰Entry for 29th August 1840, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 f. 29v. The “excitement” saw speculation that Sir Moses Montefiore’s mission to aid the Jews of Damascus was a front for restoration (*The Age*, 30th August 1840, p. 279); denials of the plausibility of such a scheme (e.g. *John Bull*, 23rd August 1840, p. 403); a petition of January 1839 calling for the powers to restore the Jews to Palestine in fulfilment of prophecy, which Palmerston had passed on to the queen (*The Times*, 26th August 1840, p. 5); and reprints of the original *Times* article of 17th August in various local papers (e.g. *Essex Standard*, 21st August 1840; *Newcastle Journal*, 22nd August 1840; *Woolmer’s Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 29th August 1840).

basis of restorationist belief instead led its proponents to look for the coming imperial superiority of the Jews, while their belief in England's status as a chosen nation led to anxieties over the nation's responsibilities. The fear of becoming the "apostate nation" continued to loom large, and this justified restorationist political pressure. The scriptural promises to the Jews presumed both blessing for action and judgement for inaction. In an 1840 address to the LJS's annual meeting, Stowell praised the Church for being "first in the field", but warned it would be "shame... if the Church of Scotland should be coming forward... and leave the Church of England far behind".²²¹ If England did not "precede Israel [...] and help guide them to Zion", the nation would have only the "shameful honour" of catching at their skirts as others returned them.²²² Echoing the Book of Esther, the Carlow memorandum warned Palmerston that if the government did not restore the Jews, God would raise up some other power to do so.²²³ Speaking to the LJS's 1839 annual meeting, Ashley reminded the delegates that "To England it has been granted to begin this great work of hope, prayer, and expectation, and will it not be her own fault if she fail to complete it, or fall short of the promises of reward?"²²⁴

This rhetorical call to fulfil the nation's prophetic destiny often returned to the Abrahamic blessing. In the midst of uncertainty and political crisis, blessing the Jews acted as an anchor point and a guarantee of God's blessing. Henry Girdlestone, rector of Landford in Wiltshire, imagined himself summoning Britannia to hear her responsibility to the Jews. God, he argued, would speak to her heart to recall the promise that "*I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee*".²²⁵ Bickersteth pointed towards Isaiah 50:12, and the warning that the nation that did not serve the Jews would perish: "How then can we obtain national security? [...] if we do, as a nation, serve Zion, we shall not perish".²²⁶ In his 1839 address to the LJS, Ashley despaired of the nation's morals, but reiterated his belief that their concern for the Jews "will be our safeguard in the hour of

²²¹ *Jewish Intelligence* 6:6 (1840), p. 140.

²²² *Jewish Intelligence* 6:6 (1840), p. 142.

²²³ *Jewish Intelligence* 7:6 (1841), p. 135. In this, the writers echoed a popular theme. See, for example *Monthly Intelligence* 1:11 (1830)—"If we shirk from the work, the loss will be our own, and it may surely be said to each, *'If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.'*" (p. 166).

²²⁴ *Jewish Intelligence* 5:6 (1839), p. 128.

²²⁵ Henry Girdlestone, "The Last Tribulation of the Jews", in Fremantle (ed.), *Israel Restored*, p. 414.

²²⁶ Bickersteth, *Restoration of the Jews*, p. 104.

danger, and serve us as a buckler and armour of defence”.²²⁷ In a later diary entry, recalling the Archbishop of Canterbury’s remark that the Jerusalem bishopric was “deeply rooted in the heart of England”, Ashley confided that “this incarnation of love for God’s people is the true ‘conservative’ principle and will save the country”.²²⁸

While England was a specially chosen nation before God, with unique responsibilities, the nation would not act alone. As had been the case in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, England was a part of a Protestant international, albeit with the Anglican Church at the forefront. Prophetic writers therefore often referred to other Protestant nations, particularly Prussia and Scotland, as key partners in the restoration of the Jews. Bickersteth, with a nod towards the Church of Scotland delegation, argued that the cause of the Jews provided a special bond between established national churches.²²⁹ This was not, therefore, straightforward imperialism. The nation found its meaning and national mission only in relationship with Jewish interests. The predominance of the British Empire was itself only temporary, fated to wither under the Jewish imperium restorationists found predicted in the Bible; what McNeile described as their “precedence and royalty of influence and dominion over all people”.²³⁰ As Bickersteth noted, national chauvinism was one of the root causes of disbelief in restoration: “The subordination of the Gentile States to the Jewish nation, though plainly predicted (Is. Xiv.1;lx.3.14; lxi.5–19; Ezek. Xvi.61) is disbelieved”.²³¹ Ashley attributed opposition to the Jerusalem bishopric, and particularly to a Jewish bishop, to the same cause. He remembered McCaul convincing him that the Jews’ “future dignity shall be commensurate with [their] past degradation”. This now caused him little difficulty: “I can rejoice in Zion for a capital, in Jerusalem for a church, and in a Hebrew for a king”.²³²

While not inherently imperialistic itself, restorationism did share some elements with a wider cultural and imperial worldview in the nineteenth

²²⁷ *Jewish Intelligence* 5:6 (1839), p. 129.

²²⁸ Ashley, Entry for 12th October 1841, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 f. 75v.

²²⁹ Bickersteth, *Restoration of the Jews*, p. ii.

²³⁰ Hugh McNeile, “The Glorious Advent”, in *Destiny of the Jews*, p. 505. For similar statements see M. Brock, “Love of Christians to Jews the Signal of God’s Returning Mercy”, in Marsh (ed.), *Israel’s Sins and Israel’s Hopes*, pp. 273–292; C.J. Goodhart, “The Covenant with David”, pp. 145–155.

²³¹ *Jewish Intelligence* 4:9 (1838), p. 209.

²³² Ashley, Entry for 18th November 1841, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 ff. 81r–82v.

century. As well as fitting in with prevailing trends in cultural romanticism, in particular, it supported a concept of “informal imperialism”. This focused on religious influence, “civilization”, and commercial power rather than territorial gains.²³³ Abigail Green has noted that British interest in the Jews was part of this wider philosophy. Support for the Jews, seen as part of project of spreading toleration and civil rights to persecuted minorities in the Ottoman Empire, was one element of an “imperialism of human rights”. Green sees restorationism only as the “most prominent” part of this interest.²³⁴ Placing restorationism within this wider moral/political framework suggests a reason for the shared policy interests of restorationists, politicians such as Palmerston, and mid-nineteenth-century imperialists, without reducing the prophetic interest to disguised imperialism. For restorationists, prophecy provided one way of understanding Britain’s eminent role in world affairs. If God had exalted the nation above all others, and established her as the dominant maritime power, he had done so for a reason: in order that she may fulfil her appointed role and restore the Jews to Palestine. National predominance among the *gentile* nations after Israel’s restoration would depend on this. As the converted Alick concluded in *Judah’s Lion*: “I love England, I desire to see her noble lion supreme among the nations; and to insure [*sic*] this, I would see him ever closely allied to the Lion of Judah”.²³⁵ In this sense, prophecies of Jewish restoration acted as a legitimisation of an “informal” empire of civilisation. This was not Britain ruling the world, but a political ascendancy preparatory to the renovation of the world in the Jewish millennium.

Given these links between national prosperity and Jewish restoration, was there genuine interest in English Jews from restorationists? As early as 1828 Edward Swaine had attacked restorationists for supporting Jews out

²³³The term was first coined by John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson to refer to British policy focused on expanding free trade rather than territorial gains (“The Imperialism of Free Trade”, *Economic History Review* Second Series, 6 [1953], pp. 1–15). Martin Lynn notes the way in which the policy also focused on the idea that trade would spread “civilization”, although he suggests that the term “informal imperialism” fails to recognise the way in which local societies limited the success of these efforts. See “British Policy, Trade, and Informal Empire in the Mid-Nineteenth Century”, in Andrew Porter (ed.), *Oxford History of the British Empire Volume III: The Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), pp. 102–121.

²³⁴Abigail Green, “The British Empire and the Jews: An Imperialism of Human Rights?”, *Past and Present* 199 (2008), pp. 201–205.

²³⁵Tonna, *Judah’s Lion*, p. 405.

of “selfishness” for the blessings they would bring rather than shared humanity.²³⁶ This “fetishistic” view of Jews, combined with the focus on conversion, has led historians to attack restorationism as antisemitic. In Ragussis’s words, restorationists believed that Jewish particularity “ultimately legitimized their eradication by another means, through conversion”;²³⁷ as Tuchman put it, for the LJS the Jews “were not a people, but a mass Error [*sic*]” whose only purpose was to convert in order to trigger the second coming.²³⁸ Yet while it is true that restorationists looked for the conversion of the Jews, this is unsurprising given that they were evangelicals. As Lewis has pointed out, they looked for the conversion of all human beings, regardless of their backgrounds.²³⁹ As offensive as this was to Jews, it was an essential part of the evangelical worldview.²⁴⁰ At the same time, restorationists were not culturally naïve. As *Fraser’s Magazine* noted, the LJS was superior to other missionary organisations, which “regard the Jew and the South Sea Islander as precisely the same; and one missionary apparatus, therefore, as equally suitable to both”.²⁴¹ One of the justifications for the LJS’s existence was the unique requirements of Jewish culture. Jewish distinctiveness, far from being an “error”, was an essential part of God’s plan. This distinctiveness would not end with conversion, or even with Christ’s second coming. Far from trying to eradicate Jewishness, restorationists saw it as outlasting any gentile cultural distinctions. The Jews were the original nation, destined to be predominant, and always marked out by national and cultural distinctiveness. For restorationists, conversion was therefore not an eradication of Jewish culture replaced by gentile norms, but an embracing of the full covenantal, messianic promises of the Old Testament. While nineteenth-century Jews strongly disagreed with this position, restorationists were far from seeking their cultural annihilation. When Ashley wrote to Alexander prior to his departure for Jerusalem, he therefore celebrated the bishop’s Jewishness and the permanence of Jewish culture: “one of that nation hitherto scattered and faded,

²³⁶ Edward Swaine, *Objections to the Doctrine of Israel’s Future Restoration to Palestine* (London: Holdsworth & Ball, 1828), pp. 150–151.

²³⁷ Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*, p. 171.

²³⁸ Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, p. 178.

²³⁹ Lewis, *Origins*, pp. 12–13.

²⁴⁰ A point noted by the Rubinsteins. See *Philosemitism*, pp. 129–133.

²⁴¹ “Present State and Prospects”, p. 275.

before whom we gentiles must eventually fade, to whom everything is promised and to whom everything belongs".²⁴²

Of course, a focus on the glorious future promised to Jews might contrast negatively with the current, supposedly "degraded", Jewish community in England.²⁴³ This led to humanitarian work among Jews. The *Jewish Intelligence* and reports of LJS annual meetings reveal genuine concern for Jews in poverty and distress, and attempts to ameliorate it. Their response to the Damascus Affair, which included printing statements of London Jewish communities in favour of their co-religionists,²⁴⁴ and synagogue prayers celebrating the Princess Royal's birth in order to demonstrate Jewish loyalty to the crown, show a willingness to promote the idea that Jews functioned as part of the national community.²⁴⁵ In July 1841, the *Intelligence* printed a five-page list of Jewish charitable societies to dispel the popular misconception that Jews were uncharitable.²⁴⁶

The flipside to this was that the permanent distinction of nations, even after conversion, meant that most restorationists were opposed to the extension of Jewish political rights in England.²⁴⁷ Historians have often interpreted this as a sign of antisemitism amongst restorationists,²⁴⁸ although Lewis has recently defended them against this charge by highlighting the importance they placed on blessings and political prominence for Jews in Palestine.²⁴⁹ Certainly, this was the basis of Ashley's objection

²⁴² Lord Ashley to Michael Solomon Alexander, 9th November 1841, Lambeth Palace Mss 3997, ff. 146–147.

²⁴³ For this argument, see Agnieszka Jagodzińska, "'For Zion's Sake I will not Rest': The London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews and Its Nineteenth-Century Missionary Periodicals", *Church History* 82:2 (2013), pp. 381–387 and Robert Michael Smith, "The London Jews' Society and Patterns of Jewish Conversion in England, 1801–1859", *Jewish Social Studies* 43: 3/4 (1981), pp. 280–282.

²⁴⁴ *Jewish Intelligence* 6:7 (1840), pp. 196–208.

²⁴⁵ *Jewish Intelligence* 7:1 (1841), pp. 1–34.

²⁴⁶ *Jewish Intelligence* 7:7 (1841), pp. 220–225.

²⁴⁷ There were notable exceptions to this. In particular, the first bill for Jewish emancipation in 1830 was introduced by Robert Grant in the Commons and Nicholas Vansittart (Lord Bexley) in the Lords. Both were committed members of the LJS and had spoken at its annual meetings; Bexley was a vice-patron. Both were also members of the Philo-Judean Society. On their involvement in emancipation, see Scult, *Millennial Expectations*, pp. 130–135 and Israel Finestein, "Early and Middle 19th-Century British Opinion on the Restoration of the Jews: Contrasts with America", in *Britain and the Holy Land 1800–1914* (London: UCL, 1989), pp. 80–83.

²⁴⁸ Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, pp. 188–189; Ragussis, *Figures of Conversion*, p. 171.

²⁴⁹ Lewis, *Origins*, p. 172.

to admitting Jews to parliament, and many of his contemporaries echoed it. William Fremantle argued that granting Jews political influence in England “were pandering to the low grovelling feelings of our nature” when Jews had unsurpassed glories to look forward to in Palestine.²⁵⁰ In *Judah’s Lion*, both Alick and his father come to see that seeking political emancipation in England was a denial of Jewish heritage and their rights to the Holy Land.²⁵¹ To admit Jews “to the high places in the land”, Hugh Stowell told the LJS’s annual meeting in 1838, was to discourage them from looking “with wistful eyes to the time when Jerusalem shall be [their] home”²⁵² Bickersteth therefore characterised admitting Jews to parliament as selfish ignorance of Jewish promises on behalf of England.²⁵³ Yet while Lewis is right to emphasise these motivations for rejecting Jewish emancipation (and Ashley’s later enthusiasm for Jews in both the Commons and Lords), restorationist attacks on Jewish admission to parliament were not free from antisemitism. Indeed, their arguments sometimes went back to those made in the debate on the Jew Bill a hundred years earlier. Ashley condemned attempts at emancipation in the *Quarterly Review* for ignoring prophecies that the Jews should “dwell alone”²⁵⁴ Bickersteth characterised emancipation as “marked evidence of national apostasy” that rejected Christ and justified the crucifixion.²⁵⁵ For others, inviting Jews into the political structure was likened to allowing an enemy to dwell in one’s house.²⁵⁶ While Ashley was milder in his diary, where he denied that Jewish admission to parliament would endanger the state, he nonetheless viewed it as “an insult to Christianity”²⁵⁷ These statements demonstrate that while views of Jews and Judaism had changed significantly over the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many of the fears of Jewish incorporation into the national body remained in the 1840s. As much as Judeo-centrism focused on the superiority of the Jews over gentile nations, this did not necessarily translate either to greater Jewish rights, or to more

²⁵⁰ Fremantle, “The Present Dispensation”, p. 279.

²⁵¹ Tonna, *Judah’s Lion*.

²⁵² *Jewish Intelligence* 4:6 (1838), p. 130.

²⁵³ Bickersteth, *Restoration of the Jews*, p. xc. These arguments echoed those of Anglican bishops opposed to emancipation in parliamentary debates. See Knight, “The Bishops and the Jews”, pp. 387–390.

²⁵⁴ Ashley, “Review”, p. 190.

²⁵⁵ Bickersteth, *Restoration of the Jews*, p. 225.

²⁵⁶ *Jewish Intelligence* 4:8 (1838), pp. 181–182.

²⁵⁷ Ashley, Entry for 12th March 1841, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 f. 45v.

positive views of their communities. Restorationists projected their glory into another geographical and chronological horizon, which could become a justification for denying them political rights in the present. The allosetimic impulse, in which Jews were always other, meant that restorationists were able to swing towards supporting Jewish rights in some areas, while denying them in others.

Restorationism was a complex belief, and its adherents had different personal experiences of Jews and Judaism, and consequently differing attitudes. However, the five broad points traced throughout this book apply equally to the nineteenth-century belief. First, the nation found its meaning and mission primarily in relation to the Jews. For the LJS, this meant focusing particularly on the role of the Church of England, although allowing some part for other Protestant churches, particularly those of Scotland and Prussia. Second, restorationists shared a sense that the Jews would be superior when restored to Palestine, and that this restoration was never in doubt. This mission was part of a wider covenantal view of the nation's responsibility towards Jews. Third through restoration, England's past debt towards the Jews would be redeemed, and anxiety about judgement dissipated. This led, fourthly, towards political involvement, in an attempt to avoid becoming the "apostate nation". Restorationists came together to pray, and when the moment presented itself, to work politically for that restoration to happen. This necessitated using political arguments, but was not imperialistic in sense that Matar argued. Where Bernardini and Lucci suggested that eighteenth-century projects to restore or emancipate Jews focused on the utility of Jews to the state,²⁵⁸ the same was not entirely true of nineteenth-century English restorationists. They believed that Jewish restoration benefitted the state in as much as it ensured God's providential care of the nation in fulfilling their prophetic role. Rather than focus on the geopolitical expansion of Britain's overseas interests, its long-term project would result in the diminution of empire and its eclipse by the restored Israel. Of course, restorationists were aware that Jewish return would lead to short-term political gains before the fulfilment of the prophecies, but these were a secondary result of their schemes, rather than their ultimate aim.²⁵⁹ Any benefits to

²⁵⁸ Bernardini and Lucci, *The Jews: Instructions for Use*, pp. 9–12.

²⁵⁹ For example, Grimshaw extolled the benefits of a neutral Jewish buffer state between the Pasha and Sultan at the 1841 LJS annual meeting (*Jewish Intelligence* 7:7 [1841], p. 173).

England were a result of the nation fulfilling their prophetic role and receiving the blessings promised to them, rather than furthering the empire. Palestine was Israel’s land, not England’s, and English rule in Jerusalem was ultimately as unacceptable as Turkish dominance: “Whatever nation of all the world have rule in Jerusalem except the people of Israel, Jerusalem is still trodden down of the Gentiles”.²⁶⁰ For restorationists, prophecy, not imperial glory, was their main concern. Finally, this led them to see in the Jews the legitimation of their nation and understand their own current prominence in world affairs. Reminders that God preserved the Jews as a separate nation went so far as to affirm the survival of national boundaries even after the commencement of the millennium. Involvement with Jewish restoration was thus a guarantee of national survival on a variety of levels.

The point of encounter for nineteenth-century Anglican restorationists therefore imagined that restoration would legitimate the concept of informal empire and the values of the established church. An Anglican church on Mount Zion represented the exchange between England and the Jews. Nobody demonstrates this better than Alexander. Like Alick in *Judah’s Lion*, he was a synecdoche for the Jewish people, and the first fruits of their return. As he pointed to his own body, standing before fellow restorationists as he prepared to leave England aboard a British warship, so he became the living incarnation of the point of encounter—the Jew transformed through his encounter with Englishness. It is little wonder that his death in 1845 caused Ashley such psychological torment: “Have we run counter to the will of God? Have we conceived a merely human project and then imagined it to be the decree of the Almighty, when we erected a Bishopric in Jerusalem and appointed a Hebrew to exercise the function?” Yet as with apocalypticism in general, restorationism’s flexibility was its greatest strength. Apparent failure was nothing but another opportunity: “And yet short-sighted, feeble creatures as we are, all this may be merely a means to a speedier and ample glory!”²⁶¹

²⁶⁰ Alexander Dallas, “Certainty of the Restoration”, p. 419.

²⁶¹ Ashley, Entry for 15th December 1845, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/3, f. 47r.



Conclusion

English interest in the restoration of the Jews did not end with the Jerusalem bishopric. If anything, it intensified in the following years, with Palestine taking on an ever more important position in British foreign policy. Historians have told the story of Britain's part in Jewish restoration from 1850 until the Balfour Declaration in numerous volumes since the Foreign Secretary sent his "memorandum of understanding" to Lord Rothschild in November 1917. As writers as different as Barbara Tuchman and Eitan Bar-Yosef have observed, the Declaration has become a sort of teleological magnet to historians over the years.¹ No matter how tightly they lash themselves to the mast of historical contingency, Balfour usually slowly emerges, siren-like, from the fog to issue its enticing cry. As the mists clear, their histories set a course towards the Declaration, which becomes the inevitable destination of all that has gone before.

On one level, this is entirely understandable. The Declaration often represents a convenient ending to a narrative that has spanned the *longue durée*. It provides a tangible outcome after discussions of (often obscure) theological points and eccentric personages. It is near enough to the end of World War I to represent the end of a longer era—the shifting of European politics away from Victorian imperialism towards something more recognisably "modern". Above all, it offers a neat conclusion to the

¹Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, pp. xv–xvi; Bar-Yosef, "Christian Zionism", p. 9.

story. The messiness of the British Mandate, or the turbulent waters swirling around the birth of the Israeli state, not only complicate the picture, but risk touching awkwardly on the current political situation in Palestine. The dramatic image of Tuchman tearing up the pages she initially wrote on the Mandate period due to their polemical nature, neatly illustrates the challenges of coming too close to contemporary political issues.² Those studies that have continued the story have often been openly political, usually either for or against contemporary Christian Zionism.³ This is not to argue that they lack value or interest because of this, but to highlight the reasons as to why Balfour often represents a *terminus ad quem*.

This study has attempted to avoid a teleological focus by ending in 1850. This may disappoint those readers hoping to follow through the usual timeline to the Balfour Declaration. Nonetheless, this is a logical place to end the book's examination. The key theological ideas driving restorationist thought into the next century were all in place by the 1850s. Ashley, now as Earl of Shaftesbury, remained the single most important figure for the remainder of the nineteenth century, although there were other individuals of note, and periods of particular prophetic excitement. For example, in 1852 Lieutenant-Colonel George Gawler (1796–1869) established the short-lived “Association for Promoting Jewish Settlement in Palestine” to press the Porte to allow mass Jewish immigration to Palestine. The 1865 founding of the Palestine Exploration Fund led to prophetic excitement, archaeological discoveries, and mapping of the land by the British Army.⁴ The purchase of the Suez Canal in 1875, and British protectorate of Cyprus in 1878, both directed eyes towards Palestine. Meanwhile, the sometime diplomat, spy, MP, and mystic Laurence Oliphant (1829–1888) was another who continued to advance practical suggestions for Jewish colonisation. His 1878 scheme for restoration, backed by Disraeli and Lord Salisbury, lost official backing only after he offended the Sultan during a face-to-face meeting.⁵ These existed alongside a variety of schemes for Jewish resettlement. The legal writer Henry

²Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, pp. x–xi.

³For example, Sizer, *Christian Zionism*; Clark, *Allies for Armageddon*; Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *The Politics of Apocalypse: The History and Influence of Christian Zionism* (Oxford: One World, 2006); Crombie, *For the Love of Zion*; Donald E. Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon* (Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1995).

⁴For an overview of the Palestine Exploration Fund see Bar-Yosef, *Holy Land*, pp. 165–179.

⁵Norma Claire Moruzzi, “Strange Bedfellows: The Question of Laurence Oliphant's Christian Zionism”, *Modern Judaism* 1:1 (2006), pp. 55–73.

Edwards claimed in 1846, for example, that prophecy suggested that England would stand alone with “the newly formed government of Judea” against Catholic and Muslim powers.⁶ The ships of Tarshish, he noted, were “understood by all Scripture commentators, to [refer to] our own country”.⁷ More particularly, evangelicals justified British involvement in the Crimean War through reference to Ezekiel 38, and the idea that they had a sacred duty to defeat Russia and restore the Jews to Palestine.⁸ “When Greece and Rome, united in apostasy, are stricken down in Palestine” wrote Lancashire minister Walter Chamberlain in 1854, “then England, that modern Tarshish, will be found in the Lord... waiting to herald blessing to Israel, by *carrying back* her expectant sons to the loved country of their fathers”.⁹

Of course, each period examined in this book, and the events leading to the Balfour Declaration, are marked by important contextual differences. Nonetheless, this book has traced some common themes. I have suggested five key elements linking Christian Zionism and national identity that offered a helpful lens for viewing each of these periods. First, this form of national identity construction emphasised that God had chosen England, but only as a secondary nation to Israel. Jews were superior, and England’s mission and national destiny directly related to Israel. We have seen this emerge in discussions around the Whitehall Conference and Jew Bill, applied by both conservatives and radicals in the late eighteenth century, and become a common theme in discussions surrounding the Jerusalem bishopric. England’s chosenness therefore included a space for the Jews to remain as God’s “firstborn” nation. This conception of national identity relied, as Ragussis and Shapiro have emphasised in their models, on a form of othering.¹⁰ Building on Bauman’s concept of allosemitism, this was a positive othering.¹¹ The Jews were destined to be superior and, as such, to

⁶ Henry Edwards, *The Colonisation of Palestine* (London: Ebenezer Palmer & Son, 1846), p. 14.

⁷ Henry Edwards, *Colonisation*, p. 9. In an admittedly impressive piece of prediction, Edwards also suggests that British “flying machines” will be central to the future war he envisages (p. 13).

⁸ Eric M. Reisenauer, “Armageddon at Sebastopol: The Crimean War in mid-Victorian Britain”, in Alisa Clapp-Itnyre (ed.), *Perplexed in Faith: Essays on Victorian Beliefs and Doubts* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), pp. 58–65.

⁹ Walter Chamberlain, *The National Restoration and Conversion of the Twelve Tribes of Israel* (London: Wertheim and Macintosh, 1854), p. 384.

¹⁰ Ragussis, *Theatrical Nation*, pp. 32–34; Shapiro, *Shakespeare*, pp. 1–11.

¹¹ Bauman, “Allosemitism”, pp. 143–156.

have empire over the world. The contention that restorationism represented a concealed imperialism whether among the aristocracy (as per Matar)¹² or megalomaniac radicals (as in Bar-Yosef's reading of Brothers)¹³ is therefore unsustainable.

As Kumar suggested, no form of othering is absolute. There is always space for parts of the other in the self.¹⁴ This was most evident in the close affinity that many English writers felt to the Holy Land, but also in the belief that England could contribute something to the Jews' own elect nature. This contribution would take place as God once more glorified the Jewish people and they reclaimed their predominant role in the world. This "point of encounter" offered a brief moment of reciprocity in which England and Israel, self and other, fleetingly met. Those writing around Whitehall believed that England held the key to Jewish conversion through the purity of their Christian faith. For restorationists in the Jew Bill controversy, naturalisation in England would allow Jews to convert and absorb English wisdom and tolerance, before returning to Palestine. Brothers believed that England's brightest lights were secretly Jews—their identity revealed, they would offer their compatriots a chance to redeem their national identity. For Lord Ashley and the nineteenth-century evangelicals, although it was impossible to incorporate Jews fully into their nation, they could offer legitimation of Britain's exalted role on the world stage. The image of a Jewish bishop ministering in an Anglican church on Mount Zion became the living embodiment of this point of encounter. In each of these stages, England was able to offer something to the Jews, firm in the knowledge that she would receive back blessing and continued glorification into the millennial period. There was therefore no clash of competing "chosen" peoples in this model, as its proponents believed that national Israel was both superior and the only nation that was truly "elect".

Secondly, England's chosen identity provided a clear mission for the nation in restoring and blessing Israel. The precise details of this mission changed in the different cultural, political, and territorial disputes the nation was involved in at any particular moment, but the central idea of blessing the Jewish people through furthering their restoration to Palestine was powerful, while being malleable enough to fit itself to particular historical circumstances. While the central idea remained, the cultural

¹² Matar, "Controversy...from 1754", p. 40.

¹³ Bar-Yosef, "Green and Pleasant Lands", pp. 163–169.

¹⁴ Kumar, *Making*, pp. 61–62.

conditions that helped to promote it changed: ideas of a Protestant crusade to help establish the Fifth Monarchy moved some writers in the 1650s, while broad cultural romanticism influenced those speaking for restoration in the 1830s. Nonetheless, these ideas were able to tap into the providential logic of an underlying belief in national blessing, and to draw from both the missionary and covenantal forms of chosen nationhood that Anthony Smith identified.¹⁵ The nation had a covenantal duty to Israel, and faced punishment if they failed to meet it. They also had a missional duty to help convert Jews, and to promote the restored Jewish nation in order to enable the successful evangelisation of the world. As Thomas Scott argued in 1810, missionary societies should be looking for Jewish conversion: “then behold your missionaries in France, Spain, Italy, Germany; even in Pagan and Mohammedan countries”.¹⁶ This model did not advocate intemperate action to precipitate Jewish return, but it did encourage political involvement in order to help facilitate it. This included lobbying, petitioning, and using the public sphere to promote England’s responsibility. Figures such as Ashley, who had access to the highest echelons of government, were understandably rare—but Judeo-centrists at all levels believed that they were fulfilling their national duty in helping to promote restorationist ideals.

Third, the case studies examined in this book have shown how national response could operate to reverse judgement by reclaiming the chosen role. From the sixteenth century onwards, restorationists were deeply aware of England’s mistreatment of Jews over the medieval period. On the one hand, this was another way of condemning Catholicism. On the other, it generated a sense of existential guilt that restorationists channelled into a clear providential explanation for the woes the nation was currently experiencing. For Cromwell, favouring Jews through readmission offered a way to clear the providential fog after the disaster of the Western Design. Over the eighteenth century, the idea that judgements followed naturally upon mistreatment of the Jews slotted into the development of mechanical philosophy. In the nineteenth century, the belief could explain both the extent of Britain’s influence, and provide warnings over the nation’s sin. Tracking the nation’s fate through the treatment of Jews therefore offered a way through providential confusion.

¹⁵ Smith, *Chosen Peoples*, pp. 95–130.

¹⁶ Scott, *The Jews: A Blessing*, p. 26.

The fourth point follows. This model guarantees the nation a prominent eschatological role through prophecy. However, this did not reduce fear of the loss of this status to mere rhetoric. While Bercovitch highlighted the sense of hope that jeremiads extended to their hearers, his belief that they guaranteed that the nation would be able to fulfil its destiny can be questioned.¹⁷ Failure to live up to God's requirements and follow his mission might mean that the nation missed their calling, moving towards national apostasy. In the words of the *Monthly Intelligence* in 1830, "If we shirk from the work, the loss will be our own, and it may surely be said to each, *If thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place*".¹⁸

The final point relates to the ways in which this anxiety could be dissipated. The story of the Jews demonstrated God's ability to preserve nations even in the midst of sin. Their fall, separation from the gentiles, and return to glory, provided reassurance that no matter how far England seemed to have fallen, her God was capable of restoring her. While the gentile nation had neither replaced the Jews, nor inherited their blessings, they could still look to Israel as an exemplar. That God worked through a chosen national group, which he had preserved against all odds for thousands of years, provided reassurance that he would reciprocate such faithfulness to other nations. The Jews' survival as a nation therefore offered proof of the certainty of God's promises, and his ability to restore nations from apostasy. Initially, this might seem to contradict the idea that there was a genuine, rather than merely rhetorical, fear of losing chosen status. If God preserved the original apostate nation and restored her, why should England worry? This criticism, however, misses the subtleties of the position. Israel's survival showed that God worked through nations and could preserve them. However, the only nation *guaranteed* this preservation was Israel. As restorationists repeatedly reminded each other, Israel's survival while other nations had vanished was testimony to God's goodness. Recognition of this allowed anxiety to co-exist with reassurance. The only way to ensure the nation's survival into the end times was to ensure its relationship with Israel. As Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna had Alick note in *Lion of Judah*, "I love England, I desire to see her noble lion supreme among the nations; and to insure [*sic*] this, I would see him ever closely

¹⁷ Bercovitch, *American Jeremiad*, p. 23.

¹⁸ *Monthly Intelligence* 1:11 (1830), p. 166.

allied to the Lion of Judah”.¹⁹ When coupled with the Jews, England would be secure. The nation could be located in the pages of scripture as the “ships of Tarshish” bravely restoring God’s holy people. This would guarantee their survival. National behaviour therefore acted as a way of affirming the validity of restorationist exegesis. Denial of this link with Israel, however, questioned the whole scheme. It suggested that exegetes were wrong to find England in scripture, and removed the guarantee that otherwise would have been in place. This form of chosen nationhood therefore oscillated between poles of security and fear in which national attitudes towards Jews acted as the key providential marker. This is why Ashley wrote that restorationism was “the true ‘conservative’ principle and will save the country”.²⁰ It was a position that, paradoxically, both generated genuine anxiety and dispelled it at the same time.

For all of this, it is important to stress that Judeo-centrist restorationism was neither uncontested, nor necessarily the most widely accepted eschatological position within English Protestantism. Any book that traces a single theme across a variety of historical contexts and case studies runs the risk of exaggerating the importance of its subject, and of reducing the historical actors it examines to one-dimensional ciphers. While the restoration of the Jews was important to all of the figures examined here, it should also be clear that it was just one part of their wider faith world. Eschatology was an aspect of their belief, but not the only or the most important aspect (with soteriology usually fulfilling that role). Ashley’s interests in Jews, for example, should not eclipse his importance as a parliamentarian and active social reformer. Hopefully, the preceding pages have also made it clear that restorationism was contentious. Jewish readmission had numerous opponents in seventeenth-century England, while the bitterness of the Jew Bill debate suggests the passions aroused by the subject. In the nineteenth century, restorationism was sometimes linked with insanity and eccentricity. New challenges to restorationist readings of the Bible also appeared through the emergence of biblical criticism.²¹

¹⁹ Tonna, *Judah’s Lion*, p. 405.

²⁰ Entry for 12th October 1841, Southampton Broadlands SHA/PD/2 f. 75v.

²¹ For example, attempts to demonstrate the historical legitimacy of the Bible led some writers to find ancient designations of “Tarshish” in Isa. 18. This undermined the standard reading of the favourite text used to locate England in scripture. See Gareth Atkins, “‘Isaiah’s Call to England’: Doubts about Prophecy in Nineteenth-Century Britain”, in Frances Andrews, Charlotte Methuin and Andrew Spicer (eds), *Doubling Christianity: The Church and Doubt* Studies in Church History 52 (Cambridge: CUP, 2016), pp. 381–397.

Nonetheless, restorationist ideas retained strong and consistent support across a variety of theological contexts throughout the periods examined in this book. Although never held universally, they were not marginal.²² Neither was the idea of their popularity a posthumous invention to justify the Balfour Declaration.²³ Love for the Jews, and concern with their restoration to Palestine, had a long history in England, and exercised a deep affective power over its adherents. This is not to claim that restorationism was unproblematic. Like all forms of allo-Semitism, it maintained the potential for ambivalence—as in the debate over the 1753 “Jew Bill”, when images of Hebrew militarism and empire were used to fuel anti-Jewish polemic. Similar notions of Jews as what Cheyette termed “the dark double of empire” emerged in conspiratorial fears that Jewish financial interests drove Britain into the Boer War in order to fashion a Hebraic empire.²⁴ It would be interesting to investigate these claims in the light of restorationist discourse, as well as the emerging Zionist movement.

This book has aimed to problematise the way in which historians think about elect nationhood, and to complicate the role of alterity in these discussions. The five-point framework discussed above, while developed from an historical study of England up to 1850, has potential applications in studies of Christian Zionism and national identity in other contexts. Most obviously, it may help to shed light on the close connection that American Christian Zionists feel with Israel, and their concern to maintain government support for the Jewish state.²⁵ The model may also offer insights into the emerging studies of Dutch and German Christian Zionism,²⁶ particularly as it relates to understandings

²² This is against Bar-Yosef’s reading in *Holy Land*, pp. 182–246.

²³ Renton, *Zionist Masquerade*.

²⁴ Cheyette, *Constructions of ‘The Jew’*, pp. 53–93; quotation at p. 90.

²⁵ As both Aldrovandi and Goldman point out, contemporary US Christian Zionism is not *only* a theological movement. There are other justifications for support, such as shared democratic ideals and opposition to Islamic extremism and Iran. As with the historical cases examined earlier in this book, theological and temporal concerns merge (Aldrovandi, *Apocalyptic Movements*, pp. 130–134; Goldman, *God’s Country*, pp. 6–12).

²⁶ George Faithful’s examination of the German Protestant “Sisterhood of Mercy” suggests ways in which they reversed the tropes of nationalism in order to undertake penance for national sins during the Holocaust. This included treating Israel as a superior nation. In terms of the model discussed in this book, this represents a switching of the allo-Semitic impulse as the Jews move from negative to positive others. Examining this in terms of whether it, as with the English case studies examined here, included a “point of encounter” might offer fruitful insights into the phenomenon. See George Faithful, “Inverting the Eagle

of guilt linked to the Holocaust in those nations.²⁷ These are speculative claims, and without further detailed research it is difficult to know how well the English pattern fits with other national contexts. Arbitrary comparisons risk ignoring deep contextual differences, whether geographical, cultural, or historical.²⁸ Nonetheless, the flexibility of the model in providing insight into a variety of periods of English restorationism suggests that it is elastic enough to work in a wider range of contexts.

The central providential drive to support Israel, and the mission of the chosen nation, relied on certain religious preconceptions maintaining their strength within wider societal plausibility structures. That restorationism has lost its importance for the vast majority of English people today is unsurprising, given the nation's increasing secularity across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.²⁹ Britain's own complex relationship with Palestine through the British Mandate and subsequent withdrawal has also helped generate ambivalence towards the Holy Land. Even the most idealistic had to face the reality that governing Palestine was a deeply problematic and, at times, traumatic experience. That some Christian Zionists have been quick to incorporate Britain's failure into their own providential readings of the Middle East again suggests the adaptability of restorationist thought. Here, Britain's loss of empire, national prestige,

to Embrace the Star of David: The Nationalistic Roots of German Christian Zionism", in Göran Gunner and Robert O. Smith (eds), *Comprehending Christian Zionism: Perspectives in Comparison*, pp. 300–323.

²⁷ Faithful, "Inverting the Eagle", pp. 301–324; Zweip, "Alien, Everyman, Jew", pp. 117–134; Evelien Gans, "Disowning Responsibility: The Stereotype of the Passive Jew as a Legitimizing Factor in Dutch Remembrance of the Shoah", in David Wertheim (ed.), *The Jew as Legitimation: Jewish-Gentile Relations Beyond Antisemitism and Philosemitism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 173–195.

²⁸ A major difference between the British and American context relates to the links between American and Israeli frontier experience and theories of land use. On this see Walter Russell Mead, "The New Israel and the Old: Why Gentile Americans Back the Jewish State", *Foreign Affairs* 87:4 (2008), pp. 28–40.

²⁹ The extent to which Britain has secularised across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries is a subject of continued controversy among sociologists of religion. For the strongest argument on the loss of the Christian plausibility structure in British society see Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800–2000*, Second Edition (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009). Accepting Brown here does not necessarily entail a full acceptance of secularisation theory. For nuanced case studies of a variety of forms of religion in Britain today see Linda Woodhead and Rebecca Catto (eds), *Religion and Change in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 2012).

and perhaps her faith, become punishment for her betrayal of the Jewish people during the Mandate and Second World War. Even Churchill's 1945 election loss can be understood in these terms.³⁰

The flexibility of providential Christian Zionism suggests that it will continue to survive as a tool for national identity construction for as long as evangelical plausibility structures remain in place.³¹ When research for this book began, with Barack Obama in the White House and evangelical influence seemingly diminishing, there was much discussion of the eclipse of the Christian Zionist lobby.³² As I write this conclusion, with Donald Trump in the Oval Office on the back of a wave of evangelical support, commentators are once again concerned about the political power of the religious right, and particularly the influence of Christian Zionists on foreign policy.³³ The December 2017 decision to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem suggests at least that the Trump administration's Christian Zionism was more than a simple ploy to win votes.³⁴ Anyone who studies prophecy knows all too well that trying to predict the future usually ends in failure. To suggest any clear lines of development for the next decade would therefore be foolish. However, the providential flexibility of Christian Zionism leads me to suspect that it will not fade anytime soon.

³⁰ As the British Christian Zionist Rob Richards notes: "as we actively resisted the return of the Jews, following the Second World War, we lost our Empire with hardly a fight" (*Has God Finished with Israel?* [Milton Keynes: Authentic, 2002], p. 179). For the British Empire's culpability see John Hagee, *The Battle for Jerusalem* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003).

³¹ See Aldrovandi, *Apocalyptic Movements*, pp. 195–220 on the resurgence of premillennial plausibility structures in US society post-9/11.

³² Paul D. Miller, "Evangelicals, Israel and US Foreign Policy", *Survival* 56:1 (2014), pp. 7–26.

³³ Colter Louwse and Ron Dart, "Donald Trump and the Christian Zionist Lobby: Letter from Canada", *Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies* 16:2 (2017), pp. 237–243; Ben Sales, "Steve Bannon: 'I'm Proud to be a Christian Zionist'", *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 13 November 2017, <https://www.jta.org/2017/11/13/news-opinion/united-states/stephen-bannon-says-im-proud-to-be-a-christian-zionist>. Accessed 29 November 2017.

³⁴ Louwse and Dart ("Donald Trump...") note that Christian Zionist rhetoric has often been used in election campaigns, but is rarely fully followed through in policy decisions. They argue that as of mid-2017, the same was true of the Trump administration. This backs up Jonathan Rynhold's findings that during the Bush administration, despite their influence, Christian Zionists "did not determine any crucial decision" (Jonathan Rynhold, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict in American Political Culture* [Cambridge: CUP, 2015], p. 115). As the shock decision to move the US Embassy to Jerusalem suggests, we should nonetheless be cautious about making any predictions in regards to Trump's governance, which seems to thrive on unpredictability.

Nobody demonstrates this flexibility like William Koenig, who we last met in this book's introduction. As of November 2017, the new edition of *Eye to Eye* had expanded to cover over one hundred providential catastrophes, "updated through Hurricane Harvey, Sunday, August 27, 2017".³⁵ The continuing market for providential interpretations of catastrophe, explaining the pattern behind the seemingly arbitrary nature of horrific events, demonstrates the ongoing appeal of Christian Zionist providentialism. It allows believers to understand their national mission, and a clear way to reorient foreign policy. It offers a superior nation to serve, while ensuring the survival of one's own country. Echoing Lewis Way in 1824, it asserts that "*The nation that oppresseth Israel/Or will not serve her, sinketh!*"³⁶

Whether the United States sinks or swims is as yet unclear, and the future of Christian Zionism equally remains hidden in the mists of futurity. Regardless of what that future may be, the continued survival of providential restorationism in the United States speaks of a five hundred year old prophetic tradition that has demonstrated remarkable adaptability. Whatever its political implications (in past, present, or future) it has always spoken to a central hope, a time "when Israel shall no more be called forsaken, neither his land desolate, but men shall call them the people of the Lord, the holy people, yea, when they shall be called, 'sought out, a city not forsaken'".³⁷ While such a hope remains in place, I suspect, it will continue to offer a useful model for national identity construction.

³⁵ <http://www.christianpublications.us/product/eye-to-eye-facing-the-consequences-of-dividing-israel-book/>. Accessed 29th November 2017.

³⁶ Way, *Paligenesia*, p. 139.

³⁷ Thomas Page, "The Claims of Jews Upon the Sympathies and Aid of Christians", *Church of England Magazine*, IX: 225, 28th November 1840, p. 339.

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